

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

South West Community Assembly

Meeting held 24 January 2013

PRESENT: Councillors Andrew Sangar (Chair), Sue Alston, Sylvia Anginotti, Penny Baker, Rob Frost, Joe Otten, Colin Ross, Geoff Smith and Diana Stimely

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roger Davison, Keith Hill and Janice Sidebottom.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 There were no items identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Assembly held on 18th October, 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Petitions

5.1.1 There were no petitions reported to the meeting.

5.2 Public Questions

5.2.1 Crosspool

In response to a member of the public seeking progress on providing a warning sign to motorists on Sandygate Road, on the approach to Crosspool, requesting that they reduce their speed, Tammy Barrass, the Community Assembly Manager, advised that if local Ward funding was not available for the sign, consideration would be given for it to be included as part of the Streets Ahead, Private Finance Initiative.

5.2.2 Lydgate Junior/Infant School

Further to concerns raised over inconsiderate parking and safety issues when parents drop-off and collect their children from Lydgate Junior/Infant School, the meeting was informed

that Highway Services provided a mobile unit to monitor parking offences and that fines were issued. A local Ward Councillor acknowledged that the behaviour of parents was difficult to modify in respect of this matter but, if necessary, the School would be approached to request that they impress upon parents the need to act sensibly and reasonably.

6. SOUTH WEST COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY HIGHWAYS UPDATE

6.1 The Director of Development Services submitted a report giving an update on the progress on various schemes and requests for highways work within the Assembly area. In considering the report it was noted that the request for double yellow lines at the two junctions of Marston Crescent with Baslow Road should be included as part of the small highway schemes for Dore and Topley Ward and that under paragraph 4.22 the word "Road" should be substituted for the word "Street".

6.2 Public Questions

6.2.1 There were no public questions received.

6.3 **RESOLVED:** That, as amended at paragraph 4.22, and with the addition of double yellow lines at the two junctions of Marston Crescent with Baslow Road, the South West Community Assembly notes the progress with the various highways schemes and requests included in the report.

6.4 Reasons for Decision

6.4.1 To keep Members and the public informed of progress

6.5.5 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

6.5.1 No alternative options have been considered as the report only provided an update on the progress of various schemes and requests for highways work within the Assembly area.

7. PETITION REQUESTING SIGNS FOR THE EXISTING SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR MARKINGS ON PINGLE ROAD ON THE APPROACH TO AND AT THE ACCESS INTO DOBCROFT JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL

7.1 The Director of Development Services submitted a report in response to a petition requesting signs for the existing School Keep Clear markings on Pingle Road, on the approach to and at the access into Dobcroft Junior and Infant School.

7.2 Public Questions

7.2.1 Residents of Pingle Road at the meeting raised objections to the proposed measures being recommended in the report. It was stated that the proposals were too invasive and not what was requested through the petition. In particular, it was explained that

the restrictions were too onerous, that it was perceived that the measures would not improve safety and the scheme was too costly for what had been requested. It was further clarified that residents wanted the existing measures to be enforced. In response, it was stated that the proposed scheme was the most appropriate solution to the problems being experienced by residents and that a Traffic Regulation Order was necessary to enforce parking restrictions.

7.2.1 In addition, the residents' asked that the proposed bollards be withdrawn from the scheme, that all "School Keep Clear" markings remain and not be replaced by a single yellow line and that the restrictions be limited to 08.35 am to 09.05 am and 15.25pm to 15.55pm with signage provided accordingly.

7.3 **RESOLVED:** That:-

- (a) the petitioners be thanked for bringing their concerns to the attention of the Council; and
- (b) in light of the comments now made, authority be given for the Head of Transport, Traffic and Parking Services to advertise the intention to make a Traffic Regulation Order introducing no waiting between 08:35 and 09:05 hours and 15:25 and 15:55 hours in term time on the existing School Keep Clear markings on Pingle Road, along with appropriate signage and, subject to no objections being received, approval be given for the Order to be made in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended.

7.4 **Reasons for Decision**

7.4.1 The provision of a Traffic Regulation Order for the School Keep Clear markings on Pingle Road at various times in term time was in response to the residents' request and would aid better enforcement and discourage school related parking, hence improving road safety.

7.5 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

7.5.1 Proposed waiting restrictions in place of the School Keep Clear markings adjacent to the houses on Pingle Road was not supported by residents, although the Department of Transport advice is that to maintain motorists' respect for the concept of School Keep Clear markings they should only be provided at locations where there are large amounts of people crossing.

7.5.2 The provision of bollards in the footway in the turning head area to help reduce conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, especially at school opening and closing times, was not supported by residents.

8. **UPDATE ON SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL LOCALITY MANAGEMENT/COMMUNITY ASSEMBLIES**

8.1 Vince Roberts, Head of Locality Management with responsibility for

Community Assemblies, gave a brief presentation on the Council's proposals for the future of Community Assemblies. He referred to the Government funding cuts which required the Council to save £50 million during 2013/14. It was indicated that as part of the proposals being considered to make savings, Community Assemblies would cease to exist as part of the City Council's formal decision making structures. These it was suggested would be replaced by a Ward based structure to support partnership working and delivery of some City Council services and, would aid local Councillors in their community leadership role to work closely with their communities. It is proposed that the new structure would receive £580,000 per year, with £280,000 allocated to staffing costs and £300,000 allocated to discretionary grants. The proposals for a Ward based structure would generate £2 million savings per year.

8.2 Vince referred to the consultation process being undertaken on the proposal to introduce a Ward based structure in place of Community Assemblies and asked the public to give their views online, through a feedback form, or by telephoning to give their opinions by 28th January, 2013. Information on how people could give feedback was made available at the meeting.

8.3 Public Questions

8.3.1 Strong concern was raised over the short consultation period which ended on 28th January, 2013 which didn't give sufficient time for people to be notified and respond. A comment was made that the 28 Wards would still need to be supported by officers. In response it was stated that due to time constraints in the budget process, there was only a small amount of time for the consultation to be undertaken. However, the public were reassured that Cabinet Members would receive the responses returned. With regard to support for the Ward structure, it was stated that, whilst Members had a high level of skill and knowledge, discussions were taking place on how Members could be supported to fulfil their role in respect of community engagement. It was further stated that the mechanisms that needed to be in place would be different, as future meetings would not have the same executive decision making functions.

8.3.2 In response to a query regarding the immediate future for Community Assemblies, it was stated that they would continue to be operational until 31 March, 2013, but work with the community would still continue after this date.

8.3.3 Another view received expressed concern over how future meetings would be supported, with organisations competing for fewer grants and that it was feared there would be insufficient support for communities.

- 8.3.4 Members of the public asked Members to give their views on the proposals for a Ward based structure.
- 8.3.5 Councillor Andrew Sangar referred to the progress the Council had made in area working since the introduction of Area Panels in 1996, followed by the Community Assemblies in 2009 which saw some areas of corporate decision making decentralised. He stated that he was privileged to have been Chair of the South West Community Assembly and seen the progress made by Community Assemblies in a short space of time. He further stated that, whilst appreciating the Council needed to reduce budgets, he was opposed to the proposed move to a Ward based structure, with a reduced budget and officer support, which he perceived would require decisions to be taken centrally again.
- 8.3.6 Councillor Geoff Smith, as Cabinet Assistant with the Portfolio for Communities and Inclusion, stated that he was strongly supportive of area working and that the views of local residents would be heard by Councillors. He acknowledged what had been achieved by the Community Assemblies, but that it was his belief that the Ward based structure would be more effective in engaging with local communities. He also referred to the efficiency savings over the last two years and the impact of further reductions on the Council's budget. It was stated the Council's priorities included:
- Keeping the economy growing
 - Essential and statutory services
 - Supporting Vulnerable People.
- It was further stated that, whilst it was proposed £1.9 million pounds would be cut from area working, the Ward based structure would involve partnership working, listening to local people and holding officers to account. In addition, the meeting was informed that it was hoped that the new structure would grow when finances allowed.
- 8.3.7 Councillor Colin Ross stated that he was a big supporter of the Community Assembly structure which allowed, through the devolution of power, issues to be resolved at a local level, which might not have the same importance if dealt with centrally. He referred to the support given to the Friends of the Porter Valley and the Totley Sports Club and expressed concern that other services such as the South Yorkshire Police Service had organised its boundaries to be coterminous with the Assemblies. He also referred to the good work and support provided by Rebecca Maddox and more recently Tammy Barrass as the Assembly Managers. He further stated that the Assemblies provided an enhanced role for Councillors at a local level and it was urged that area working Executive Powers were not taken out of the Constitution, so that any

proposed structure could easily be built up to be more effective in time.

- 8.3.8 Councillor Penny Baker stated she felt strongly over the proposal to move to a Ward based structure and that empowerment given to local Councillors to get work done at a local level would be lost. She referred to the two very different Community Assembly areas she had served in and that in both areas the Assemblies had taken into account local views and needs in such matters as schools, shops and transport. It was stated that the new structure would be a challenge and that it was perceived without Community Assemblies opportunities would be missed. It was also added that the future funding should be shared fairly over the city area so that all areas see investment. Community Assembly officers and Vince Roberts were thanked for their support and the work they had undertaken for Members and the community.
- 8.3.9 Councillor Sylvia Anginotti supported the comments made over the proposed loss of Community Assemblies and expressed concern that the Ward structures would not be a constituted part of the City Council's decision making process. It was felt that they would be less effective particularly with the loss of spending power for local issues. Concern was also expressed that it would be difficult for partner services to attend so many Ward meetings and that Wards would be more isolated, with less cross boundary working to that undertaken by Assemblies.
- 8.3.10 Councillor Sue Alston stated that she considered that the consultation time on the proposed changes to Community Assemblies was insufficient and that, if implemented, Cabinet would not have the time to focus on local needs. It was felt that the responsiveness of Community Assemblies to local needs would be lost.
- 8.3.11 Councillor Geoff Smith reiterated that there would be money devolved to be distributed at a local level in the proposed Ward structure and that this could be built-up. He stated that the Ward structure would be more responsive to the needs of local people and that Wards would be able to work jointly if required. He also highlighted that a number of other local councils operated Ward based structures. In addition, it was stated that partner working would still continue using the Assembly boundary areas. He urged people not to be dismissive of the proposed changes, as Councillors would still have influence, be able to respond to local needs and hold officers to account. In conclusion, he acknowledged the hard work undertaken by the local Community Assembly staff.
- 8.3.12 Councillor Andrew Sangar concluded by advising the meeting

that the funding proposed to be allocated to the local Ward areas was considered to be a big reduction and he felt that the level of influence a local Councillor would have would be reduced without the existing structure and support of officers. He also advised that, subject to the Council's decision on 1 March 2013, the last Community Assembly meeting would be a celebration of its achievements over the last 3 years and to give further information on the proposed new local Ward structure.

8.4 **RESOLVED:** That (a) the Community Assembly officers and link officers be thanked for all their hard work in supporting the Assembly to meet its role and supporting the local Councillors, community groups and residents; and

(b) this Community Assembly (i) regrets the proposed decision to move from a Community Assembly to a local Ward based structure and the resulting loss of funding and officer support and (ii) subject to the proposed new structure being agreed, requests that the Council's Constitution is not amended in such a manner that Executive Powers were withdrawn from future devolved structures involved with area working, which would prevent them from taking decisions and authorising expenditure at a local level, when and if increased funding became available to the City Council.

(Note: Councillor Geoff Smith voted against paragraph (b) of the above resolution and asked for this to be recorded).