

Democratic Services
Salisbury District Council
PO Box 2117
Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 2DF

officer to contact: James Chamberlain
Direct line: 01722 434428
fax: 01722 434478
email: jchamberlain@salisbury.gov.uk
web: www.salisbury.gov.uk

Minutes

Meeting of : City Area (Community) Committee
Meeting held in : The Alamein Suite, City Hall, Salisbury
Date : Tuesday 22 January 2008
Commencing at : 6.00 pm

Present:

Councillor M J Osment (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs C R Hill (Vice Chairman)

Councillors K A Cardy, Mrs E A Chettleburgh, I C Curr, B E Dalton, J M English, I M Evans, S J Howarth, A C Roberts, A A Thorpe, Miss M A Tomlinson and J M Walsh

Apologies: Councillors P M Clegg, S R Fear, Dr H McKeown, I R Tomes and C R Vincent

51. Public Questions/Statement Time:

There were none.

52. Councillor Questions/Statement Time:

There were none.

53. Minutes:

Resolved: that the minutes of the last ordinary meeting held on 13 November 2007 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

54. Declarations of Interest:

Councillor Curr declared that he had a personal, non-prejudicial interest in the matter set out under agenda item 11 (City Area Budget and Capital Programme 2008/09) as his son was a member and worked at the Victoria Park tennis club. He remained in the meeting, spoke and voted thereon.

Councillors Dalton and Evans declared that they had a personal, non-prejudicial interest in the matter set out under agenda item 7 (Salisbury Vision final document: Recommendations to Cabinet) in that they were Members of the Fair Liaison Group. They remained in the meeting, spoke and voted thereon.

55. Chairman's Announcements:

There were none.

56. Salisbury Vision final document: Recommendations to Cabinet:

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Salisbury Vision Project Director. In their discussion of the Salisbury Vision document, Members expressed the following views:



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



- More emphasis should be placed on Salisbury's unique historical heritage, which should also be promoted in relation to tourism.
- The 40 foot building rule has served Salisbury well and should be retained.
- The majority of respondents to the household survey were opposed to many of the projects, including the redevelopment of the central car park, Salt Lane and Brown Street.
- The mention of immediate short-term improvements to Churchfields was likely to raise expectations that may not be met, and should therefore be removed from the document.
- The section on climate change should make reference to the recently completed climate change scrutiny review.
- Given Salisbury's five rivers, attention should be paid at the earliest opportunity to the potential to develop micro-hydroelectric power plants as part of any redevelopment.
- Buses should be rerouted away from Blue Boar Row, and possible alternatives explored such as the extension of Endless Street to join Castle Street. Locating key buildings at the end of Endless Street, as proposed in section 19 of the final document, would limit this possibility.
- The October Fair should remain in the Market Place.
- Every effort should be made to facilitate and promote Salisbury's Charter and other markets.
- Salt Lane car park should not be developed, unless it was made into a public space
- Given the redevelopment of Churchfields it may not be necessary to provide a connection from Wilton Road to Churchfields Road.

Resolved: that

- (1) to note the results of the Our Place in the Future consultation;
- (2) to recommend to Cabinet that it note the above points, and in particular the following proposed amendments to the Salisbury Vision final document:
 - (a) p12, bullet point 1 to read: "retains its special character, both preserving and showcasing its unique heritage; it is a city with high quality streets and public spaces that complement its fine historic buildings and beautiful natural environment."
 - (b) the 40 foot rule be retained as is, and any reference to the number of storeys permitted for developments be struck from the document
 - (c) p22, j) to read: "consideration will be given to the need to incorporate the requirements of the October Fair in a rejuvenated Market Place."
 - (d) p22, b) to read: "consideration should be given to the requirements of the Charter and other markets and their role in the Market Place. Every effort should be made to facilitate and promote Salisbury's Charter and other markets."
 - (e) Salt Lane car park should not be developed, unless it was made into a public space

57. Lower Bemerton Trust:

The Committee, acting on behalf of the Council as trustee, considered the previously circulated report of the Parks Manager. Anne Trevett addressed the Committee on behalf of residents of Lower Bemerton Village, explaining that the funds sought would only be used if local residents were successful in raising the total sum required to buy the land in question and an effective and sustainable management plan were drawn up.

Resolved: that

- (1) to approve the use of £75,000 in principle from the Lower Bemerton trust fund toward the purchase costs; and
- (2) a further report be brought to the Committee once more details are known later in 2008, especially as soon as any response or guidance from the Charity Commission is known

58. Parishing Salisbury – Stage One Consultation Results:

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Head of Legal and Property Services.

Resolved: to proceed to stage 2 of the consultation exercise.

59. Post Office Closures:

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Democratic Services Officer.

Resolved – that the Democratic Services Officer, in consultation with local ward Members, write a letter on behalf of the Committee to the Post Office, setting out the Committee's concerns over the

closure of the Victoria Park Post Office (see appendix A).

60. City Area Budget and Capital Programme 2008/09

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Head of Financial Services and the Technical Accountant and Appendix F of the Parks Manager. Members stated that the fees for junior sports facilities could be reduced to £10 at little cost to the Council, and that there should be no interment fees for people under the age of 21. Members also noted that the fee for allotments was relatively low and could be increased in future years, and queried the figure quoted for spending on bus shelters in 2007/08.

Recommended to the Council:

- (1) to approve the Committee's revised budget for 2007/08 and original budget for 2008/09;
- (2) to approve the Committee's capital programme for 2007/08 to 2012/13.
- (3) that the District Council's City Area Committee special expenses levy be set at £40.60 (a 4.5% increase) for 2008/09 for determination as the amount of the special expenses incurred within the City, in accordance with Section 35 (2) (d) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Resolved:

- (1) to approve an increase in fees and charges by an average of 5% for 2008/09, subject to reducing the fees for junior sports facilities to £10 and amending the cemetery fees so that there are no fees for people under 21.
- (2) to request a report from the Joint Transportation Committee on how this year's allocation of funds on bus shelters was spent, and also to inform the Committee at the next meeting which bus shelters in the city they would like to enhance on 2008/09.

61. Matters, if any, which by reason of special circumstances the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

There were none.

*The meeting closed at 9:00 pm
Members of the public present: 7*

Appendix A

**Democratic Services
Salisbury P0 Box 2117
District Council
Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 2DS**

direct line: 01722 434250
email: ptrenell@salisbury.gov.uk
web: www.salisbury.gov.uk

**Mr Tim Nickolls
Network Development Manager
C/o National Consultation Team
FREEPOST CONSULTATION TEAM**

Date: 29th January 2008
Regarding: Area Plan Proposals – Victoria Park

Dear Mr Nickolls,

I am writing on behalf of Salisbury District Council's City Area Community Committee in response to the proposals outlined in the Post Office Ltd's Area Plan for West Berkshire and Wiltshire to close Victoria Park Post Office. I have consulted local residents and councillors in compiling this consultation response and consider it to be an accurate reflection of views in the local area. The process has revealed a range of reasons why Victoria Park Post Office does not represent an appropriate case for closure.

The 'Government Response to the Public Consultation on the Post Office Network' published by the Department of Trade and Industry in May 2007 states that when applying the minimum access criteria "*Post Office Ltd will be required to take into account obstacles such as rivers, mountains and valleys...to avoid undue hardship. Post Office Ltd will also consider the availability of public transport and alternative access to key services, local demographics and the impact on local economies when drawing up area plans*" (p.4). None of these factors appear to have been adequately considered in the case of Victoria Park.

"Obstacles such as rivers, mountains and valleys"

Post Office Ltd's own Branch Access Report acknowledges that the terrain between the current Post Office at Victoria Park and the suggested alternatives at Churchill Way West (Waitrose) and West End (Wilton) is "hilly". When this is considered in conjunction with the fact that 21% of the local population are retired – and by extension ageing – it becomes clear that a significant number of people will be unable to access either alternative branch on foot.



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



“The availability of public transport and alternative access to key services”

Post Office Ltd's Branch Access Report states that there is a bus stop within 770 yards of the first proposed alternative branch at Churchill Way West. This is a significant increase in relation to the existing branch at Victoria Park, which has a bus stop within just 80 yards. The additional distance will not be easily covered on foot by elderly or immobile customers. Post Office Ltd also seem to be relying on a free bus service provided by Waitrose to make up for the shortcomings of the public bus service. The Branch Access Report refers to “a free buss service that picks up in and around Salisbury throughout the week”. However, the coverage of this bus service is minimal. Taking the example of St. Francis Road – a main road on the Paul's Dene estate adjacent to Victoria Park Post Office – the free service only picks up twice a week. In addition, anyone using the service would be subject to a two hour wait at the Waitrose store before being able to catch the return service. It is not acceptable to expect customers to undertake a journey of two and a half to three hours in order to access key services at their Post Office. Another consideration is that the free bus service could be withdrawn by Waitrose, a private company, at any moment they see fit. For these reasons it is not appropriate for Post Office Ltd to claim the free bus service operated by Waitrose as a significant consideration in the criteria for closure. There is no direct bus link to the second proposed alternative at West End. It is unacceptable to expect people to embark on four separate bus journeys to make a return trip to their Post Office. In sum, public transport links are insufficient for Post Office Ltd to reasonably claim that customers without private transport can access alternative services.

“Local demographics”

The minimum access criteria laid down by Post Office Ltd require 95% of the total urban population of the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest Post Office branch. Whilst the nearest alternative branch at Churchill Way West is 0.7 miles south west from the existing site of Victoria Park Post Office, it seems likely that the majority of Victoria Park's customers live to the north and to the east of this site on the Paul's Dene estate (to the south lies a large area of parkland without housing). This means that many people will have over one mile to travel to their nearest branch. The second proposed alternative at West End is over 1.6 miles away. As such the proposal to close the Victoria Park branch runs counter to Post Office Ltd's own minimum access criteria. The case for retention is strengthened when one considers that Victoria Park is the nearest branch to Old Sarum, an area which has permission granted for a 670 unit residential development and is likely to see further significant development in the coming years.

“The impact on local economies”

The Co-op shop which hosts the Post Office is very important to the local infrastructure, providing key services as well as a meeting place which helps to sustain the local sense of community. A Co-op spokesman has confirmed to a local councillor that they are “opposed” to the proposal and there is a fear among local residents that removing the Post Office from the shop will endanger the future viability of the shop. Should the shop be lost residents would be forced to travel into Salisbury for even the most basic of food provisions. Even if the shop remains, there can be no doubt that removing the Post Office will force people into making more journeys by private vehicle. This will not only increase carbon emissions and pollution at a time when concerns over climate change are foremost in the public consciousness and government policy, but also contribute greatly to congestion in Salisbury by channelling traffic along the A345, a road which is already very slow-moving at peak times.

In sum, there are a number of good reasons for retaining Victoria Park Post Office which have been given insufficient consideration by Post Office Ltd in its proposals: the obstacle posed by hilly terrain to elderly and immobile customers and those without access to private transport; the inadequate public transport to alternative branches; the fact that many affected customers will be forced to travel over one mile to their nearest alternative branch; the impact on the business and future of the Co-op shop and the impact in terms of congestion and carbon emissions. It is an indication of the level of public feeling, and of the business potential of the Victoria Park branch, that over 1,000 local residents have signed petitions against the proposed closure. Given these facts I hope that Post Office Ltd will reconsider their proposals for Victoria Park.

I look forward to your response,

Yours sincerely,



Paul Trenell
Democratic Services Officer

Copy to: Postwatch
 Robert Key MP