

## **Notes of Preston Community Conversation**

### **Pearey House**

**2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013**

**People present:** Cllr Cath Davies (Chair), Cllr Kate Osborne, Cllr David Sarin, Felicity Shoesmith (NTC), Jeanette Hedley (NTC), Sam Dand (NTC), Ian Lillie (NTC), Kevin Ridpath (Capita), Mark Newlands (NTC), Neil Cole (Capita), David Hall (Capita), Linzie Pentleton (Northumbria Water), Rob Clothier (Northumbria Police), Iain Grant (Northumbria Police) plus 16 residents.

**This note summarise the questions and responses at the meeting.**

#### **Preston Cemetery improvements**

Sam Dand, Senior Manager, Environmental Services and Ian Lillie, Asset Manager outlined the proposals for the upgrade and refurbishment of Preston crematorium. This will both extend the building and carry out internal refurbishment. A report will be submitted to a meeting of the Cabinet on December 9 to seek approval to progress the scheme.

Following a presentation the public raised a number of questions.

**Q: Will the building be heated through the crematorium process?**

**A:** A heat recovery model has been included in the plan and will be explored in more detail once the scheme has the appropriate approval.

**Q: Will there be any changing provision for the priests visiting the crematorium as they currently use the toilets?**

**A:** Yes

**Q: Is this consecrated ground, so it won't be able to be built on?**

**A:** Yes, the council will not build on any consecrated ground.

**Q: How long will the build work take?**

**A:** Approximately nine months, with work due to begin in April next year. All cremations will take place at Whitley Bay during this time. There may be a need to review the operating times of Whitley Bay, depending upon the demand for the service.

**Q: Will Kier do the building work?**

**A:** Yes, but the cremator replacement works will be carried out by a specialist company.

**Q: Will there be any other works on the rest of the site?**

**A:** There will be refurbishment of the toilets as well as some general improvements of footpaths and the surrounding environment.

**Q: Any improvements to the burial chapel?**

**A:** No

**Q: What will happen to Whitley Bay?**

**A:** Currently 53 percent of cremations are carried out at Preston Crematorium, therefore this crematorium must take priority in respect of any upgrade works. We may find that the demand for services at Preston increases following the refurbishment. However, following completion of Preston Crematorium upgrade, improvement plans for Whitley Bay Crematorium will be considered.

### **Local Plan**

An overview of the Draft Local Plan proposals, currently the subject of public consultation was provided by Neil Cole. In Preston ward the only area of development proposed is the Victoria Jubilee Infirmary site, allocated for 54 properties.

**Q: Is there any planning intentions for the area outside Peary House in Preston Park?**

**A:** No planning applications have been received for Preston Park which is a Conservation area.

**Q: What are the access arrangements for the proposed housing site?**

**A:** No decisions have been made. This is one of the things that the engineering team will work with planners to consider.

**Q: Is there going to be 12,000 homes?**

**A:** We use population projections to help us understand how population will change in the future in terms of birth and death rates. People are also living longer, so they need housing for longer, household sizes are getting smaller and there are more single people wanting their own home. So there is a need for housing both short and long term. The Local Plan proposes to deliver between 10,500 to 12,000 new homes between now and 2030. There are already planning permissions for some 2,500 dwellings which comes off the overall total. This means the Council would need to find land to accommodate around 9,500 new homes. There are more sites in the draft summary than we would need so we are using this consultation as a means to help us determine which are the best sites to take forward.

**Q: Do we need social and affordable housing?**

**A:** Yes, current evidence suggests we do need affordable housing and we are currently updating our strategic housing market assessment to understand demands for all types of housing needed in the borough both private and affordable, the size the locations. Welfare reform will also be a big issue to be considered.

**Q: Is there any plans for Preston Towers, Preston Road which has stood empty for a few years now?**

**A:** No formal planning applications have been received.

## **Police update**

The Police gave an overview of recent crimes in Preston ward.

## **Flooding**

An update was provided by Kevin Ridpath, of Capita, the council's business partners and Linzie Pentleton from Northumbria Water.

Residents raised concerns about the lack of feedback from the Council on the work that was being undertaken and asked for improved communications around flooding works.

There were also queries re the size of the drains and whether these need to be increased in capacity. Northumbria water confirmed that Ofwat as funders set the standards to be implemented.

### **Q: What is the affect of leaves on flooding?**

**A:** Yes, it can be an issue but the council and Capita have increased the number of gully vehicles and implemented an improved routine of gully clearing.

### **Q: There are some works at Beach Road, south of Tynemouth Swimming Pool will this not provide a track for water in flooding?**

**A:** The works have been designed specifically to prevent flooding.

### **Q: Where are the media at this media?**

**A;** All meetings are open to the public and this includes the media. The council has published information about all the events, including press releases.

Cllr Davies thanked everyone for attending the meeting.