

MELBOURNE AREA MEETING

21st January 2003

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Carroll (Chair), Councillor Brooks (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Harrison, Pabla, Mrs. Robbins and Shepherd. T. Neaves (Chief Finance Officer), P. Spencer (Democratic Services) and B. Jones (Helpdesk).

Derbyshire County Council Representative

Councillor Harrison.

Parish Council Representatives

C. Barker (Barrow-on-Trent Parish Council), F. Mitchell (Elvaston Parish Council), M. Sharp (Melbourne Parish Council), N. Hawksworth and A. Mitchell (Shardlow Parish Council), J. Barnes (Smisby Parish Council), P. Burden (Ticknall Parish Council) and F. Briggs (Weston-on-Trent Parish Council).

Derbyshire Constabulary

Inspector D. Hargreaves.

Greater Derby and Derby and South Derbyshire Primary Care Trusts

P. Higgins, J. Ball and S. Elliott.

Members of the Public

J. Burden, J. Clamp, R. Dennis, C. Ford, A. Hardy, E. Hardy, S. Madeley, E. Newbold, D. Pick, G. Pollard, S. Robbins, R. Saxby, C. Tunstall, J. Tunstall, P. Waters, K. Whewell and R. Young.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from representatives of Aston-on-Trent and Ticknall Parish Councils.

MA/16. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Area Meeting held on 15th October 2002 were noted.

MA/17. **REPORT BACK ON PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Chair reminded those present that due to a power failure at the last Meeting, no report back had been provided. A progress report was given on those issues raised at the July and October Meetings.

Councillor Harrison gave a verbal report to update on a number of highway-related problems that had been pursued. He spoke about the introduction of speed restrictions for a section of road in Elvaston and intended to pursue this matter further. Site meetings had taken place regarding the reported problems with gullies in Ingleby and to seek the realignment of safety barriers on the A514 at Cuttle Bridge. The County Council had identified

funding and intended to renovate the Swarkestone causeway during the next financial year. A replacement footpath fingerpost would also be provided at the junction of the Swarkestone Bridge with Ingleby Road. Councillor Harrison explained the maintenance arrangements for a section of highway verge at Yates Avenue, Aston-on-Trent. Unfortunately, the equipment employed by the District Council was not suitable for the section of verge in question. He then clarified the location of highway improvement works at Trent Lane, Weston-on-Trent.

Following the request at the July Meeting, correspondence had been exchanged with Derbyshire County Council about the treatment of Ragwort and Japanese Knotweed. The Chair read extracts of the County Council's policy on the treatment of these notifiable weeds.

At the last Meeting, there had been a discussion about the policing arrangements for the Parish of Stenson Fields. This matter had been pursued with the Derbyshire Constabulary and a response had been received setting out its proposals. Inspector Hargreaves explained that he had posted PC Nicola Coulson as Beat officer for the Stenson Fields area. She was a full-time officer with additional Police Federation responsibilities and he was confident that she could combine both roles effectively and give an appropriate level of support to residents of Stenson Fields. The delivery of "Quick Time" services would be from the Peartree Police Station as its patrol base was significantly closer than the Swadlincote Police Station.

Inspector Hargreaves gave an update on the replacement of the Melbourne Beat officer. He recognised that the removal of PC Sutherland had caused some concern and explained that the officer was seeking promotion. On a temporary basis, PC Chris Staley had been appointed as the Melbourne Beat officer. Other Beat officers for the Melbourne Division remained unchanged.

Councillor Pabla voiced his thanks to Inspector Hargreaves for the action taken to appoint a replacement Beat officer. He spoke of the problems experienced in recent months, particularly harassment, poor response time to incidents and the need for a deterrent for youth related problems and burglary in the Parish. Councillor Shepherd endorsed these sentiments and was pleased that a replacement Beat officer had been provided. Details of the Officer's mobile telephone number would be publicised shortly.

Mr. Mitchell spoke of the improved policing arrangements in Elvaston which had resulted from cross-border working with Officers based in the adjacent Erewash area.

The Chair invited questions to Inspector Hargreaves on other policing matters. A comparison was sought between the traditional roles performed by the Constabulary and the approach now adopted, regarding unlicensed vehicles, the provision of traffic wardens, response to major incidents and crime prevention. Inspector Hargreaves spoke of the current efforts to provide traffic wardens for the South Derbyshire area. A specialist unit had been established to respond to major incidents and this should prevent depletion of local resources when serious incidents occurred. Inspector Hargreaves spoke of the role performed by Eileen Banton, the Crime Prevention Officer, who was based at the Swadlincote Police Station. The detection of crime was also discussed with particular reference made to a specialist unit based in Derby, which had the highest crime detection rates in

the County. The Government had imposed revised crime recording requirements. Whilst these would ensure more accurate crime statistics, due to the nature of some incidents which had to be recorded, it would have an adverse effect on crime detection rates. Inspector Hargreaves wished to reassure residents that South Derbyshire had one of the lowest crime rates in Derbyshire. Councillor Carroll thanked Inspector Hargreaves for his attendance.

MA/18. **PRESENTATION BY THE PRIMARY CARE TRUST**

The Chair introduced Steve Elliott of the Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire Primary Care Trust (PCT), together with Peter Higgins and Julie Ball of the Greater Derby PCT. Mr. Elliott gave an overview of the role of PCTs. These statutory health bodies had been established some three years ago and were effectively a confederation of general practices which delivered services in their respective areas. The PCTs roles included partnership working, health improvement and commissioning services that it could not provide itself. For some parts of South Derbyshire, there was confusion over the boundaries of the PCT. Geographically, the Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire PCT covered the entire District. In practice, the boundaries were determined by the location of general practices and their respective catchment areas. For Melbourne and its surrounding area, some patients used surgeries that were part of the Greater Derby PCT, whilst other nearby surgeries were included within the Charnwood and North-West Leicestershire PCT. Mr. Elliott explained some of the issues currently faced by the PCT including health developments, national service frameworks, which shaped how services were delivered, improving access to services through reduced waiting times and the establishment of Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) projects. An example of a LIFT project was the proposal to redevelop the former Swadlincote Clinic and Ambulance Station site.

Julie Ball then explained in more detail, the local services provided. She explained her own role as a Community Nurse Manager, her background and local knowledge of the area. Community Nursing was undergoing immense changes and the opportunity had been provided for those with frontline experience to have an input into these changes. She explained that the Service focused on public health, working to identify needs and anticipating changes in need. Melbourne and its surrounding area had slightly different needs to the City of Derby. One key issue was providing services more locally. She then spoke of the roles performed by Health Visitors and the changing role of School Nurses. There was now a partnership approach and an overlap in service provision with social workers and school teachers.

Peter Higgins, the Director of Planning and Commissioning spoke to residents on some of the projects being pursued by the Greater Derby PCT. The opportunity to listen to local people through forums such as the Area Meeting was welcomed. He recognised the confusion caused through the overlap of the PCTs' boundaries, but assured residents of their close working relationship. The PCT intended to provide new facilities through the LIFT initiative in the Allenton, Bolton and Chellaston areas. Mr. Higgins then spoke of the proposed transfer of some hospital services from the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary to the City Hospital.

To develop the primary care role, the PCT was pursuing the concept of a Primary Care Centre, possibly on a site in Allenton. A wide range of local

services would be available and in future, hospitals could then concentrate on more complex or specialist areas. The PCT was also developing the idea of general practitioners with special interests. The G.P.'s could seek consultancy advice where required, but deliver a wider range of local services. Residents' feedback was sought on the services to be delivered at the new facilities provided under the LIFT initiative.

The Chair invited questions and Councillor Brooks sought an update on the closure of Aston Hall Hospital. The Hospital was programmed to close over a two-year period and the PCT believed it could improve the quality of life for its residents by providing bespoke accommodation. It was working with the patients on an individual basis, their families and the City and County Councils, to assess the patients' needs and find suitable alternative accommodation. Several residents of Aston-on-Trent commented that the hospital residents had been welcomed into their community and treated with respect. There was some scepticism that the patients would benefit from being relocated and indeed that they did not wish to move. There were also concerns that some patients could lose the freedom they enjoyed at present. Mr. Higgins agreed to refer these views back to the PCT.

The planned closure of the Grove Hospital at Shardlow was discussed. Local residents felt that the hospital provided excellent rehabilitation facilities for patients and they were disappointed at its closure. Mr. Higgins discussed intermediate care and the desire to provide intensive support on a more localised basis. A question was submitted on the provision of new facilities through the LIFT initiative. For Southern Derbyshire, some £50million would be available over a seven year period for the development of primary care facilities. Three new centres were planned for the Greater Derby area and a further two centres would be built by the Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire PCT. Until recently, the PCT had received an annual capital allocation. A three-year financial programme was now provided, which assisted service planning and overall, there had been a significant increase in the level of resources available. Difficulties were being experienced in attracting professional staff and the PCT would look at the way in which services were delivered to make best use of specialist skills.

Councillor Brooks spoke of planned housing developments in the north-east of the District and questioned whether new health facilities could be provided in this area. Mr. Higgins was aware of the planned residential developments and he outlined proposals to improve health facilities in that area.

A resident commented on the number of people failing to keep medical appointments and felt that this lengthened waiting lists. Mr. Higgins commented on the actual percentage of appointments that were not kept and speculated on possible causes. He spoke of a pilot project to simplify referrals from the General Practitioner to specialist health services.

Mr. Mitchell spoke of the Country's ageing population and felt that elderly people were discriminated against in terms of Health Service provision. This was refuted by Mr. Higgins, who advised that policies were in place within the PCT to prevent such discrimination. These sentiments were echoed by the Chair. Further topics raised were the scrutiny arrangements for the National Health Service and PCTs and the mechanisms in place to prevent abuse of health services. A comparison was made between the role of the

former Community Health Council and the Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS).

The Chair thanked representatives of the PCTs for their attendance. She spoke of her role as a Practice Nurse and, as Deputy Leader of the Council and Chair of the Area Meeting, she voiced her concerns over the level of services provided in rural areas. Inadequate public transport made it difficult for residents to access services in the City of Derby. There seemed a lack of awareness of PALS and it was suggested by residents that literature be provided at post offices, village halls and possibly via the Area Meeting Helpdesk to publicise this and other PCT services.

MA/19. **BUDGET CONSULTATION**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Terry Neaves, Chief Finance Officer at the District Council. He explained the aims of this consultation exercise and gave an overview of the topics covered in the presentation. Feedback from previous consultations had identified residents' key priorities and the other aims that the Council should pursue. The total cost of General Fund Revenue Services was some £9.61million and a series of charts showed the cost of Environmental Services, Community Services and Finance and Management Services. A further chart showed the respective proportions of Council Tax income that funded services provided by the District Council, the Police Authority and the County Council.

Mr. Neaves explained how the Council managed its finances through close monitoring of its expenditure, a more open budget process and by improving efficiency. The Council's current financial position was stable with improving levels of reserves. However, there was a need for caution as the Council was spending slightly more than it received in income at present. Mr. Neaves explained the financial constraints that the Council faced and how this affected the level of Council Tax increase. The Revenue Budget proposals were reported and these sought to maintain existing services and provide additional resources for service improvements. There was the potential for a low Council Tax increase for the second successive year.

Details were then provided of current capital spending, the constraints in place and capital spending proposals. Feedback from the Area Meetings would be submitted to inform the Council when it set its budget and Council Tax on 27th February 2003.

The Chair invited questions. Further information was sought about precepting and the consultation arrangements of the County Council and the Police Authority. Consideration was given to the projected level of Council Tax increase for this and subsequent years. It was noted that the final Council Tax level would vary dependent upon the level of precepts levied by the County Council and the Derbyshire Constabulary. A resident spoke about the Council's improved financial position, following the financial crisis two years ago. He questioned whether the projected low level of Council Tax increase was as a result of the prudent measures taken since that time. Mr. Neaves confirmed that it was a combination of this and reducing expenditure at the District Council. Some service delivery pressures were now showing, but the Council was trying to address these whilst maintaining a reasonable Council Tax increase.

Councillor Harrison was surprised at the size of the budget allocation for private sector housing grants and Mr. Neaves explained the reasons for this scale of expenditure. He also provided further information on how the percentage Government grant increase had been calculated. Councillor Brooks explained the benefits of the Community Partnership Scheme and he encouraged parish councils to submit projects to Malcolm Roseburgh at the District Council. Councillor Mrs. Robbins sought further information on the Council's contribution to the Meals on Wheels Scheme. Mr. Neaves was thanked for the presentation.

MA/20. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A question was submitted about the planning rules with regard to the minimum number of vehicle spaces on new housing developments. Councillor Brooks was Chair of the Council's Development Control Committee and he responded to this question. Following the earlier discussion about the A514 at Cuttle Bridge, Mr. Ford spoke of the difficulty for drivers turning right from the junction onto Cuttle Bridge and he questioned whether traffic lights could be installed at this junction. Councillor Harrison agreed to pursue an enquiry submitted about a cycle path in the Elvaston area, close to the border with Erewash. An update was sought on a proposed land purchase to improve the cycling facilities.

Mr. Saxby asked whether the Council could enter into reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring authorities, to provide access to leisure facilities at reduced rates. He referred particularly to the discount scheme which Derby City Council provided for its residents for two municipal golf courses and explained that he had paid £361 for an annual leisure pass to swim at a pool in Long Eaton. Reference was made to the Etwall Leisure Centre and the Swimming Pool in Melbourne, although it was thought that the latter was only available for use by local schools.

A suggestion had been made by Shardlow Parish Council to invite Siobhan Spencer of the Derbyshire Gypsy Group to give a presentation to the next Meeting. Problems had been experienced with travellers in the Aston and Shardlow areas, together with adjacent parishes in Erewash. It was thought that this might be a useful topic for the Area Meeting and the suggestion was agreed.

MA/21. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair advised that due to District and Parish Council elections, the date of the next Melbourne Area Meeting would be delayed. However, she hoped that it would be held in June or July and details would be confirmed in due course.

J. CARROLL

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 9.40 p.m.