

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE AREA FORUM

MELBOURNE

18th February 2014 at Aston on Trent Memorial Hall

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Harrison (Chairman) and Councillors Hewlett, Watson and Atkin

K. Stackhouse (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) and C Smith (Communities Manager)

Derbyshire County Council Representatives

Councillors Davison and Mrs Chilton.

P. Jameson (Forum Liaison Officer).

Parish Council/Meeting Representatives

R Parker (Melbourne Parish Council); P Bickerton (Elvaston Parish Council); K Atkin, C Blackmore (Barrow on Trent Parish Council); T Scott (Shardlow and Great Wilne Parish Council); C Scott, K Cross (Weston Parish Council)

Members of the Public

C Allen; K Whewell; S Madley; T Mills; G Beadle

MA/17 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Watson

MA/18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

MA/19 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

MA/20 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Melbourne Area Forum held on 13th November 2013 were noted.

Items of accuracy:

Amendment to Cllr Linda Chilton's name.

Item 2 of the report back should be deleted as it is covered at item 4.

MA/21 **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Chairman handed over to the Forum Liaison Officer to report back on those items raised at the last meeting.

MA/22 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON ISSUES RAISED BY RESIDENTS**

County Councillor Davison and representatives from Barrow on Trent Parish Council raised a query in regard to the required width for public footpaths.

Reference was made to a public footpath, leading off Chapel Lane, where a DCC officer had recently demanded that the landowner widen the access to just less than 1m, even though sections of the footpath itself are much narrower. It was also stated that other footpaths in the area do not have access as wide as this.

The Parish Council had concerns that the wider access makes it vulnerable to illegal use by motorcyclists and reported that a motorcyclist had in fact been seen using the footpath following the works.

A suggestion was made that an 'A' frame barrier could be installed to prevent motorcyclists while maintaining access for wheelchair users. A resident stated that such barriers are not livestock proof and also cause problems for high-backed wheelchairs.

It was queried on what grounds DCC insisted that the access to the footpath be widened and the apparent inconsistencies in regard to other footpaths (i.e. that have narrower accesses).

The Chairman advised Barrow Parish to write to the DCC Rights of Way Officer raising their concerns about widening the footpath.

Cllr Davison referred to a query raised at the previous night's meeting (Repton Area Forum) in which concerns were raised in regard to the use of bridges at the Stenson Bubble by heavy goods vehicles. Reference was also made to the bridges at Barrow-on-Trent (Sinfin Lane). It was queried whether clarification had been received on the load capacity of the structures.

Forum Liaison Officer didn't think the structural limits on the bridges were being exceeded but was awaiting confirmation

Cllr Davison requested an update on enforcement of the weight restriction on the Causeway; he believed that there was a scheme to introduce cameras for enforcement purposes.

Forum Liaison Officer reported that DCC's Trading Standards officers continue to carry out enforcement checks of the Causeway, often in partnership with the Police. Capital funds have been made available to install a camera monitoring system which will allow for remote enforcement of the weight restriction. Currently advice is being sought from the Legal department and the Department for Transport in regard to the back office element of the system. They cannot progress with the introduction of the system until these issues are resolved.

A Weston resident reported that the carriageway under the railway bridge between Swarkestone and the Cottages regularly suffers from flooding. It was believed that the cause of this was debris being washed into the carriageway from the banking and blocking the drainage. The resident also claimed that, when the drainage has been cleared previously, debris is left on the roadside only for it to be washed back into the system.

A resident queried whether an application had come into the council for buying land around Elvaston Castle (Borrowash Road, Harrington Villas to right of Home farm) as it would limit the options available to Elvaston Castle.

The resident queried whether SDDC would apply for Parks for People grant on behalf of Elvaston Castle as they had been successful in obtaining funding for Swadlincote Park. The Chairman said the council wouldn't be able to do this, but there is currently a consultation on going with regards to the vision and plan for the Castle and to set up a trust for Elvaston Castle which will enable all funding opportunities to be looked at. An Elvaston Castle working party group meeting is to be held on 28th February.

The Chairman updated on current flooding issues – The District has 15 tonnes of sand in stock, 3000 unfilled sandbags and 100 filled ready in store. If any are required they can be obtained by contacting Chris Payne at SDDC. Of the 115 distributed already; 6 bags have been delivered to Trent Lane Weston, 40 to Riverside Walton on Trent and 30 to Cobster Cottage Swarkestone.

Councillor Watson stated the Local Plan is in final stages before submission. Comments from the previous consultation are being reviewed. The Pre-Submission Plan is to be consulted on in March through into April. The pre-submission consultation will go to a venue in each of the Area Forum areas for an afternoon/evening drop in session.

This area's local consultation event will be on 19th March at Aston Heritage Centre 2.30 – 7.30 pm and will be attended by Planning Policy Officers. There are no plans to change the amounts of housing in Aston, Weston, Melbourne, Barrow or any other village in this area.

The consultation is to be completed by 22nd April, It will be submitted to Full Council by 3rd July and submissions are to be with the Inspector by 10th July. A report should be received back from the Inspector by end of the year.

A resident stated that the Local Plan is a strategic plan which is disguising the fact there will be development in these villages.

Cllr Peter Watson replied that plan only considers major developments; ie; developments of more than 100 properties. There are other smaller developments which will be subject to regular planning regulations.

A resident from Elvaston stated he had contact with Chris Payne in 2011 regarding flooding issues in Elvaston and Borrowash and was still awaiting the issue to be resolved. He stated the reinstatement of ditch course on the B5010 is essential in flood management. The Fisherman's car park which has been put in has also affected the flood plain.

Councillor Watson stated that he and Chris Payne had met with him and the Parish Council and referred it to the Environment Agency who have said that although it is a situation it's not a current priority.

Considering flooding issues in other parts of country the situation in Elvaston will not be a priority but Cllr Watson stated he will continue to chase this on behalf of the residents of Elvaston.

The resident stated that the DCC Rangers are responsible for the flooding problems on Elvaston Castle site and that it should have an Estate Manager instead.

MA/23 **COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES**

The Forum Liaison Officer stated that the County Council needs to make £157m of cuts to its budgets by 2018 – something they are calling 'The Derbyshire Challenge'. Their Cabinet has been considering proposals on how they can make these reductions; they are looking to make cuts totalling around £36.7m in the next financial year (2014/15).

Many of the budget reductions being announced will be subject to public consultations. You can visit the 'Derbyshire Challenge' page of their website to find out more and take part in our consultations launching throughout the year – www.derbyshire.gov.uk/challenge.

The Forum liaison officer highlighted two of the consultations currently open. Firstly, are changes to the Mobile Library Service; several options are being considered to make savings to this service which currently costs in the region of £720,000 per year to run. Four options have been put forward. One is to scrap the service completely (which will obviously make a saving of £720,000 per year). A further two options have been put forward which will involve various reductions in the fleet in order to make savings – they currently have a fleet of 10 vehicles; 2 MCV's (maximum capacity vehicles) and 8 standard mobile libraries. A fourth option is to transfer the service over to community based organisations. The consultation started on 13 January and ends 1 March 2014.

Members of the public can visit the 'challenge' webpage to find out more information and complete the online survey. For those without internet access, you can contact Call Derbyshire – 01629 533190 – to find out more.

DCC are also proposing a number of changes to the Adult Care services. The consultation launches today and will run for 12 weeks. Again, more information will be made available via the 'challenge' webpage.

Cllr Chilton requested an update in regard to the potential Swarkestone bypass. The Forum Liaison Officer confirmed that the bypass is still in the Transport Plan, but would require extensive external funding from the Department of Transport. The Forum Liaison officer believed that the next batch of funding for major schemes will be released in June/July of this year, through the Single Local Growth Fund. DCC will need to review priorities once the conditions for applying for this funding are established

The Chairman stated that in his own view the existing plan (in the DCC Transport plan) would not be suitable as it needs to access the A453 for airport and race track.

Councillor Watson stated that he disagreed with Chairman in that that one proposal would alleviate all transport issues. It would not alleviate Melbourne and Kings Newton issues, however accepts that for all areas to be covered by the bypass would cost in excess of £80 million

Councillor Atkin – what would be needed to get funding from external sources (Department of Transport). Forum Liaison Officer stated they won't know until June/July when funding details are released.

County Councillor Chilton added that the HS2 freight terminal may lead to more transport coming to Kings Newton and Melbourne. County Councillor Davison stated he doesn't think the HS2 will cause too many issues in his opinion.

County Councillor Davison stated that the Chief Fire Officer original proposals have been extensively modified and now there are no plans to close newly built stations and any other proposed closures will only be done as a last resort. It was recognised however that this may only be a 2 year stay.

Councillor Chilton informed the meeting that North West Leicestershire have purchased land for a new Fire station in Castle Donington. The Chairman stated that cross boundary liaison with neighbour districts is important but both parties will want to keep their county identity.

MA/24 **DISTRICT COUNCIL ISSUES**

The Director of Finance & Corporate services gave an update on the Councils current financial position:

Nationally, there has been a reduction in government funding for local councils since 2010 and this is currently set to continue until 2018. For SDDC this has been approximately £1.25m to date or 20% from where we were in 2010/11 (*net after New Homes Bonus and Business Rates Retention*)

SDDC has been delivering budget savings since 2010 and has had 3 main phases, culminating this year with savings of £320k. Next financial year 2014/15 is ok but need another round to find further savings of up to £300k before this time next year ahead of 2015/16.

No major reductions in mainstream service provision so far – reductions in management and support services, together with general efficiencies have met the shortfall to-date.

Increase in services is continuing – recycling and capital investment in leisure facilities.

Next year's Council Tax still to be decided – Government offering some support for councils who freeze Council Tax again for a 4th year.

Possible future pressures – growth and demand for services – some will be paid for by increased funding but this is not certain.

The Chairman added recommendations will include Council Tax freeze, 2% rise for community and voluntary sector and no silly charges being introduced.

MA/25 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Meeting would be confirmed in due course.

J. HARRISON

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting terminated at