

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE AREA FORUM

MELBOURNE

4th February 2015 at Barrow upon Trent Village Hall

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Watson (Chairman); Councillor Atkin.

K Stackhouse (Director of Finance and Corporate Services); Mandy McKeon (Clerk).

Derbyshire County Council Representatives

Councillor Davison (arrived at 7.50pm after a County Council budget meeting in Matlock).

Parish Council/Meeting Representatives

M Sharp (Melbourne Parish Council); Robert Parker (Melbourne Parish Council); W Earp (Melbourne Parish Council); T Scott (Shardlow & Great Wilne Parish Council); C Blackmore (Barrow-on-Trent Parish Council); K Atkin (Barrow-on-Trent Parish Council).

Members of the Public

L Brewster; S Dixon; C Pidgeon.

MA/22 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from P Jameson (Forum Liaison Officer); Councillor Mrs L Chilton; Councillor Harrison; Councillor Hewlett; Councillor Mrs A Watson.

MA/23 **Declarations of Interest**

None.

MA/24 **Chairman's Announcements**

The **Local Plan** – The Chair gave an overview at to the current position of the Local Plan saying it has been through its Examination in Public which started in November 2014. It lasted for 6 days covering all aspects of the Local Plan. Following the examination, the appointed Inspector has asked the Council to undertake some further

work around housing, viability and infrastructure on strategic sites. This work when complete will be submitted to the Inspector who will then decide on the next steps.

The **Community Partnership Grant Scheme** – The Chair said this has now been re-launched with a total pot of £300,000. The monies are available for:-

- Capital funding only available;
- Non-profit groups and Parish Council's in South Derbyshire can apply;
- Will require a minimum of 50% matched funding;
- Minimum Grant £1,000 - maximum £25,000.

Full details can be found at www.south-derbys.gov.uk or by contacting Ian Hay, Community Partnership Officer at South Derbyshire District Council ian.hey@south-derbys.gov.uk / Tel: 01283 228741.

MA/25 **To note the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th September 2014**

The minutes of the Melbourne Area Forum held on 18th September 2014 were noted as a true and accurate record.

MA/26 **Report back on issues raised at the last Meeting**

The Chair reported on those items raised at the last meeting, in the Forum Liaison Officer's absence.

1. Swarkestone Causeway – Camera Enforcement System

No further information has been reported back to date.

2. Advanced Weight Restriction Signage

Noted.

3. Overgrown Weight Restriction Sign

Noted.

4. Enforcement Policy of the Causeway

Noted.

The Chair invited questions/comments on the report back. None were received.

MA/27 **County Council issues**

Councillor Davison introduced himself to the forum and gave an update on County Council issues, having returned from a budget meeting in Matlock:-

- Council tax will increase by 1.9%;

- Highways programme - cabinet member asked all members of County Council to put in bids/suggestions of areas of concern. Councillor Davison has so far suggested:-
 - (1) there were some pathways on his patch in need of resurfacing (some pathways have not been surfaced for 50 years or more);
 - (2) Road around Barrow at Swarkstone (where you can turn right to go over the Causeway to Melbourne or straight on/left towards Derby on the A50) is a bottle neck in the morning with tailbacks of traffic wanting to go one of two ways. There is room for about three cars to form a double lane. Councillor Davison has made a request for this to be moved back 20 meters or so to the West making room for another 3 cars to help alleviate traffic congestion; and
 - (3) The road between Aston-on-Trent and Weston-on-Trent is quite short. On the straight part of the road, the condition of the carriageway surface is appalling with pot-holes and Councillor Davison suggested works to be carried out on this road.

Councillor Davison said that South Derbyshire District Council holds a regular meeting about flood issues. Shardlow PC has said it wants to get more people as Flood Wardens and Councillor Davison said it would be sensible for all those Parishes who have interested members attend a training session after a formal meeting. Councillor Watson to check when the next flood meeting is being held.

Action: Councillor Watson to confirm details of the next Flood meeting.

Councillor Davison said the County Council has new responsibilities from April 1st this year for the Care Act, which significantly alters responsibilities. For those who live within Councillor Davison's division will see he has made this a feature in his next newsletter.

Councillor Davison discussed a move for a combined authority which includes eight districts, County Council and Derby City to get together and discuss high level decisions on things such as infrastructure transport etc. It is all about working effectively and minimizing cuts that have to be dealt with. This has been agreed today.

The Chair was asked by Councillor Davison whether Causeway issues were discussed earlier in the meeting, during his absence. The Chair proposed the issue be put on the June agenda, given the fact that the Forum Liaison Officer is absent from the meeting and Councillor Davison was not in attendance earlier when it was discussed. Councillor Davison said he would give a brief overview.

Councillor Davison gave an overview regarding difficulties faced with replacing the Causeway/changing the structure. The likelihood is that Causeway replacement is not a priority and therefore there is no possibility of this happening in the foreseeable future.

The Chair requested clarification as to who's responsibility the Swarkstone Causesway is between either the Police or the County Council with regards to its enforcement.

Forum Liaison Officer to report back.

MA/28 **District Council issues**

Director of Finance and Corporate Services gave an overview on the budget and longer term financial position.

The financial position has stabilised after going through various cost-saving exercises and streamlining management roles over the last few years.

South Derbyshire District Council is in a good position with a balanced budget and has managed also to keep a good level of reserves. Money has been put aside for specific commitments and some put aside for a rainy day. SDDC is benefitting from the growth of the district i.e. more homes built equals more Council tax; benefitting also from a government scheme 'new homes bonus' – for every house built, the council receives an extra grant.

Downside is the future for the Council. We have a five year financial plan that is constantly being updated. The big uncertainty is what will be the future level of funding from Central Government when the next Parliament is formed after May 2015. The consensus being future reductions in public spending, where a fair share of that will fall to local councils. Although financial position is stabilised, this could all change on next Parliament/spending review. But for now it is not looking too bad.

Within budgets, the Council has had to find extra money to meet increased costs i.e. maintenance for buildings, equipment, vehicles etc. SDDC also propose to protect the money it pays to Parish Councils and organization grants for CVS and CAB. For the past four years the district council has frozen the level of council tax to be paid and that proposal has been put forward again for the district council to freeze its part for its own services.

Changes have been made regarding business rates and with effect from April 2015, South Derbyshire have joined up with all the other authorities within Derbyshire to take advantage of an incentive where monies will be shared amongst all authorities within the County.

MA/29 **Public questions on issues raised by residents**

C Pidgeon asked whether the fines on the Causeway were graduated and/or how they would be determined. The Chair was unclear whether this was a Police issue or County Council Weights and Measures department due to conflicting information received recently. The Chair asked for clarification on this matter.

MA/30 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next Meeting is to be arranged in due course.

P WATSON

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting terminated at 8.12pm