

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE AREA FORUM

SWADLINCOTE

15th July 2010

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillors Mrs. Gillespie, Rhind and Tilley.

J. Jones (Director of Corporate Services), G. Coates (Recycling Officer), A. Leese (Customer Contact Manager), D. Townsend (Democratic Services) and C. Lukaszewicz (Helpdesk).

Derbyshire County Council Representatives

Councillor Mrs. Farrington.

P. Jameson (Forum Liaison Officer).

Derbyshire Constabulary

Sergeant N. Pitt.

Members of the Public

B. Aldridge, M.E. Barsby, R. Causer, E. C. Horridge, S. Horridge, K. Hough, W. Jackson, E. Key, E.M. Key, M. Lager, M. Lunn, J. Pallett, O. Pallett, D. Redfern, C. Rose, A.C. Sheriff and J. Williamson.

SA/1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

It was noted that Councillor Taylor had been appointed Chairman of the Swadlincote Area Forum at the Annual Council Meeting

SA/2. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

It was agreed that Councillor Tilley be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Swadlincote Area Forum. In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Tilley assumed the Chair.

SA/3. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Taylor (Chairman), Mrs. Lane, Lane and Southerd, T. Harvey, Mrs. Rose and C. Wright.

SA/4. **POLICE ISSUES**

Sergeant Pitt reported that there was a new Inspector, Paul Cannon now in post at Swadlincote.

He gave further information on crime statistics, and reported that crime in the area was rated as average and had decreased by 4.6% overall compared to the same period last year. He added that the next “Have your say” event was to be held on 14th August 2010, between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. at Sainsbury’s Supermarket at Swadlincote. Sergeant Pitt reported that there had been a spate of armed robberies in the area, however police believed they now knew the offenders. A man had been arrested and charged with 6 armed robberies, 5 in Derbyshire and one in Staffordshire. They were also looking for an additional suspect in connection with this crime.

In relation to issues raised at the last Meeting, a resident expressed concern that, following potential financial cutbacks in the public sector, no action would be taken on instances of noise nuisance in the future.

A resident reported that there were problems with speeding vehicles on Gresleywood Road.

Sergeant Pitt agreed to look into this issue and respond back to the next Meeting.

It was also requested for the same area, that the County Council provide a vehicle-activated “slow down” sign.

The Forum Liaison Officer responded that an area would need to meet certain criteria for a vehicle-activated sign to be installed, as they were very expensive. However he would look into this and report back to the next Meeting.

A resident reported that he had read in the press that the Mercian Regiment had accepted the Freedom of the District, which would enable them to march through Swadlincote on two occasions in any calendar year. He also understood that there had been a subsequent article in the newspaper, which indicated that there could be a protest at the march. He asked what the police would do in this instance. Sergeant Pitt responded that the Police was aware of the threat of protest, and when the march took place it would be policed accordingly. It was also reported that the Chief Executive was in discussion with the Chief Constable about this matter.

It was asked if the police was aware that people were still cycling in the Town Centre. Sergeant Pitt responded that when officers witnessed this they dealt with it accordingly. The Director of Corporate Services added that Neighbourhood Wardens could also combat this, and asked residents to report incidents, especially if they noticed that this happened at a particular time. The Chairman hoped that signage within the Town Centre would be reviewed when the current refurbishment work had been completed.

SA/5. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Swadlincote Area Forum held on 16th March 2010, were noted.

SA/6. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Chairman reviewed the items raised at the last Meeting and reported the progress made in each case.

With regard to parking on Coppice Side, the Forum Liaison Officer reported that an investigation had been completed and a report was being finalised. A site Meeting had also taken place in May 2010. The County Councillor added that she had met with residents, who were happy with Derbyshire County Council's response so far, and this area would continue to be monitored. The Forum Liaison Officer confirmed that the Highways Officer dealing with this intended to attend this Area Forum, but was on annual leave at the time of the Meeting. However, he would attend a future Forum if required, subject to approval from his Cabinet Member. The Chairman registered his disappointment that no senior officer from Derbyshire County Council was in attendance at the Area Forum, and also that local Members had not been kept up to date with details of any actions having been completed.

The Forum Liaison Officer gave an update on the problem with standing water outside No. 21 Coppice Side and added that it had now been referred to a Traffic Officer. This would be monitored and appropriate action taken.

With regard to the traffic island at Coppice Side, the Forum Liaison Officer confirmed that this was the responsibility of Morrison's. However, due to the safety aspect the Derbyshire County Council Clerk of Works was following it up and would attempt to get this area cut back.

With regard to the dust on Appleby Glade from the golf course development, an update was given from the Environmental Protection Manager. It was reported that he had met with the Environment Agency and the operator/developer for the site and new measures to control dust levels had been implemented. Details of these measures were provided. It was also confirmed that longer-term proposals were being delivered. Both the Environment Agency and the Council would be monitoring the situation and the developer had made assurances that it would improve. Residents added that this dust was not just in Appleby Glade. It was spread throughout the local area, and the dust was actually fly ash. Reassurances were requested that this was safe, and it was asked how long the situation was expected to continue.

The Director of Corporate Services agreed to seek further information on timescales and also on the safety of the fly ash.

With regard to the mud and dirt on Nadin's Way outside the site entrance to the new golf course, it was reported that the situation hadn't improved.

The Director of Corporate Services agreed to check the frequency of the road sweeping in this area and ensure that it was adequate.

Following the query at the last Meeting on the transfer of telephone calls, the Customer Contact Manager from South Derbyshire District Council responded. If a call for Derbyshire County Council came into the District Council it was transferred to 'Call Derbyshire'. This enabled the customer to be charged at a local rate. The District Council had a target to answer all calls within 20

seconds, and 80% of the time this was achieved. In addition, customer service levels of satisfaction were 80-90%. She added that for customers who found it difficult to access the Council, there was a Customer Services Visiting Officer, who could give advice on a whole range of services in the resident's own home. She gave further details on how customer satisfaction was assessed.

The Forum Liaison Officer agreed to bring a copy of the County Council's telephone protocol to the next Meeting.

SA/7. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON ISSUES RAISED BY RESIDENTS**

It was reported that the former Kwik Save supermarket site, which was privately owned, had been left in an unacceptable state since travellers' had left it. A Councillor responded that this site was the subject of a planning appeal, therefore the District Council, at this time, could take no action. However, it was being monitored.

A resident reported from a recent press article that he had seen figures quoted from the District Council for cleaning up after travellers' illegal encampments over the last 12 months. He added that a figure of £3,132 had been given for collecting and disposing of waste. He did not believe that this was a true figure and asked if any further information could be provided. The Director of Corporate Services responded that it was very difficult to value this work, as officers were already in place to deal with such incidents, as part of their normal duties. This meant there was no additional salary paid for this work. Officers had provided an estimate of how much time had been spent dealing with this issue.

It was reported that the gates to a roadway off Penkridge Road on the Thorpe Downs Estate had been welded shut. A resident stated that the District Council was alerted to this as a possible site for illegal encampment two years ago and asked why the gate had now been welded.

It was agreed to provide a response at the next Meeting.

It was asked why Sainsbury's had been allowed to cut down trees and shrubs adjacent to the development at their site on Civic Way. It was also requested that these should be replaced.

The Director of Corporate Services agreed to provide a response back to the next Meeting.

A resident asked how the Government cutbacks would affect the District Council's services. The Corporate Services Director said that she shared the concerns of residents. The Government had announced potential figures, but at present cutbacks were unknown. They might be known by the end of October following the Comprehensive Spending Review. She added that the District Council aimed to maintain all services, but accepted that it would need to look at alternative ways of delivering certain services.

It was questioned if the Green Bank Leisure Centre refurbishment had been suspended. The Corporate Services Director responded that this project had been put on hold, as funding had been affected by regional cuts.

A County Councillor advised that the Derbyshire Police Authority's budget had been capped twice in the last year, and it was contemplating a proposed cut of another £6m. He added that the Police had already decreased the number of divisions from 4 to 3. However, the Constabulary aimed to not remove any frontline staff.

It was reported that, at the junction of Blackshed Island and Commonsidge, the grass had not been cut which had caused problems with visibility.

The Forum Liaison Officer agreed to look into this and report back to the next Meeting.

A resident reminded that the newly resurfaced carriageway on Wilmot Road, Church Gresley had begun to fall in one area. He understood that the works were to be redone, however Derbyshire County Council had continued to carry out minor repairs.

The Forum Liaison Officer agreed to look into this and report back to the Meeting.

SA/8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Details of the dates and venues for future Area Forum Meetings would be circulated in due course.

N. TILLEY

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting terminated at 8.10 p.m.