

NEWHALL AREA MEETING

10th February 2005

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Richards (Chair), Councillor Mrs. Mead (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Bambrick, Dunn and Wilkins.

F. McArdle (Chief Executive), K. Stackhouse (Head of Finance and Property Services), J. Bellm (Democratic Services Assistant) and B. Jones (Helpdesk).

County Council Representative

Councillor W. C. Routledge.

Derbyshire Constabulary

PC M. Fearn.

Members of the Public

P. Bambrick, I. Fearn, P. Foy, C. Gillespie, P. Harvey, R. Hughes, R. Holden, J. A. Lester, J. S. A. Lester, C. Maddock, B. Marsden, P. Mulgrew, G. Myatt, E. Orpwood, C. Paling, M. Perry, M. Richards, D. Tagg, B. Woods.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from District Councillor Mulgrew, R. House (CVS), Mrs. Dunn and B. Parker.

NA/18. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Area Meeting held on 1st December 2004 were noted.

NA/19. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair reported that the presentation of the Youth Facilities Plan would take place at the next Meeting.

The Chair invited County Councillor Routledge to provide an update on the proposed golf driving range at the Nadins Way site. The County Councillor informed the Meeting that he had received an e-mail from Philip Stubbs (Environmental Services at Derbyshire County Council) which gave details of the current position of the site. The main points were that UK Coal Mining needed to complete the bund around the driving range and it was hoped that this would be completed in the near future. It was stated that UK Coal and the Planning Department at South Derbyshire District Council were still pursuing the provision of a golf course. The Chief Executive confirmed that the District Council were actively pursuing companies which may be interested in providing a golf course, one of which was a company which owned a 'pay and play' golf club at Milton Keynes. He reported that two Officers from the District Council had visited this golf course and he was of

the opinion that a golf club which was made available to the public 100%, would be a good option for this site.

The Chair reported that the Dove Valley Site had attracted investment from FIUK, which would provide 300 jobs for the District. Councillor Dunn thanked the Chief Executive for his endeavours to secure this investment.

With regard to the site of the former Horse and Jockey Public House, which had been a topic of discussion at previous Area Meetings, the Chair reported that the defendant had entered a plea of guilty through her solicitor and had been ordered to pay the sum of £560 within 28 days from the date of the Hearing. Councillor Dunn further updated the Meeting by advising that the applicant had appealed against the decision of the Development Control Committee, not to give planning permission for an application to build on this site.

County Councillor Routledge advised the Meeting that he would be retiring in May. He commented that he had enjoyed his time as County Council Representative for the Newhall Area and thanked everyone for the help and assistance that had been provided during this time. The Chair expressed his thanks on behalf of the Meeting to the Councillor for all the work he had successfully achieved in the Newhall and Midway Area.

NA/20. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES PROGRESSED SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

With regard to the untidy site on Queens Drive, behind the former Leaveley's Garage, it was noted that the District Council's Planning Department had confirmed that an application to develop on this site was currently being considered.

NA/21. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

In response to a question from Mrs. Tagg, PC Fearn confirmed that items of lost property handed in at a Police Station would be kept for a period of 28 days.

Councillor Dunn asked the Constabulary what action was currently being undertaken in order to resolve the problem of illegal parking in Swadlincote High Street. PC Fearn agreed to pass on these concerns to PC Hanson, the Local Constable for the Swadlincote area. Councillor Wilkins reported that he had witnessed PC Fearn issuing a parking ticket to a vehicle parked illegally outside a school in the Newhall area, and was confident that steps were being taken to try to eradicate the problem of illegal parking.

Councillor Bambrick reported that the problem of motorcycles being ridden on the former Nadins Site had recurred. PC Fearn commented that the Constabulary were aware of the recurrence of this issue, particularly at weekends. The Chair commented that the use of the helicopter unit on previous occasions had helped diminish the problem. The Chief Executive agreed to take up this issue with the Constabulary.

N. Perry queried who was responsible for the prosecution of the owners of untaxed vehicles which were parked on the road. PC Fearn confirmed that it was the responsibility of the DVLA, who would make contact with the owner

of the vehicle and issue any fines. She advised that such incidents could be reported to the Constabulary, who would then pass on the details to the DVLA.

A resident of Willow Drive reported that the Doctor's Surgery, situated to the rear of his property, had security lights which shone directly into his property. The resident had reported this matter to the Planning Department who had sent an Officer to investigate this matter. Apparently there was no legislation for light pollution currently in place. The Chair advised the resident to leave his name and address with Barry Jones on the Helpdesk and confirmed that this matter would be investigated in order to find any possible solution.

A resident requested that traffic routes be investigated around the Coronation Street/Darklands Road area. She reported that since large, residential developments had taken place in this area, traffic routes were heavily congested, particularly in the mornings. County Councillor Routledge agreed to speak with County Councillor Southerd on this matter.

County Councillor Routledge agreed to investigate the issue of an unsuitable road surface at the top of Robinson Road/Parliament Street and also the application of yellow lines opposite The Lamb Public House on Main Street in Newhall. It was considered that these yellow lines were being applied to the wrong side of the road.

Residents complained that there was no parking facility for residents in Field Way, Newhall. There was an area which residents considered would be suitable for parking. The Chair confirmed that the Housing Department was currently investigating such issues, and a report would be provided shortly.

N. Perry reported that there was deterioration to some walls within Newhall Park. It was agreed to report this matter to C. Mason (Facilities and Development Manager).

NA/22. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date and venue of the next Newhall Area Meeting would be confirmed in due course.

NA/23. **CONSULTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Kevin Stackhouse, the Council's Finance and Property Services Manager. The aims of the presentation were to raise awareness of the Council's finances and to seek views on the Council's budget proposals. An outline was given of the topics to be covered and initially slides showed the total cost of revenue services. This comprised Environmental Services, Community Services and Corporate/Management Services. Capital spending was also explained. The slides showed the services provided by the County Council, the Police Authority and the Fire Authority.

In terms of managing the Council's finances, there was a focus on the longer term, with revenue estimates based over a three year period and capital estimates over a five year period. Government grant funding met around 55% of Council spending and another 10% of funding came in the form of specific

grants. The general Government grant for 2005/06 for South Derbyshire had increased by 8%, when compared to the previous year. This recognised the growing population of the area and new spending pressures to be faced. Reference was made to the Government's grant funding formula and the Council received just under £400,000 less than that identified in the formula. However, this position had improved from the previous year.

A chart showed the breakdown of the Council Tax bill in terms of the funding required by the County Council, the Police Authority, the Fire Authority and the District Council. Future Council Tax projections allowed for an increase of 4.5% each year for District Council services. The level of Council Tax increase for 2005/06 was still to be determined, but the Government guideline was for increases of less than 5%. The Government had warned councils about excessive increases and it had powers to "cap" increases if necessary.

The Council's projected financial position was explained. It had a good financial base, with improving levels of reserves. An outline was given of financial issues, comprising new spending pressures and the Council's plans to meet these pressures. The financial position was summarised and a further slide explained the Council's budget process. Money was available for service improvements, for both revenue and capital schemes. The presentations concluded with an outline of proposed areas for new spending and feedback was sought from the Area Meeting.

The Chair thanked the Officer for an excellent presentation and invited any questions.

The Officer was asked whether the disposal of surplus assets meant the selling of Council houses. The Officer confirmed that the surplus assets in question were in fact land and buildings and not the housing stock.

B. Woods asked whether there would ever be a year in which the Council Tax did not rise. The Chief Executive responded by stating that year on year extra services were provided with no reduction to any current services. It was therefore necessary to increase the Council Tax in order to provide for these extra services. He informed the Meeting that the increase proposed for the current year equated to £5.70 per year for the average household. He also confirmed that the increase in South Derbyshire was less than that of the national average. Councillor Wilkins highlighted the extra areas of new spending which were proposed for the current year, such as street wardens, play schemes and crime prevention and felt that the proposed increase for this year's Council Tax was more than reasonable when these extra services were taken into account.

K. J. RICHARDS

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 8.00 p.m.