

ETWALL AREA MEETING

18th May 2006

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Whyman M.B.E. (Chair), Councillor Bale (Vice Chair) and Councillor Ford.

J. Jones (Director of Corporate Services), P. Spencer (Democratic Services), and B. Jones (Helpdesk).

Derbyshire County Council Representatives

Councillor Ford.

A. Bond (Democratic Services).

Parish Council/Meeting Representatives

B. Payton and N. Ireland (Etwall Parish Council) and L. Nash (Findern Parish Council).

Derbyshire Constabulary

Sergeant S. Thandi.

Members of the Public

J. Clarke, M. Cramp, M. Dowie-Bowes, G. Green, S. Jolly, J. Parkinson and I. Smith.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from District Councillors Mrs. Hood, Lemmon, Mrs. Littlejohn and Mrs. Walton, District and County Councillor Hood, Mr. D. Tysoe (Derbyshire County Council), S. Avery, Mr. Banton, T. Beresford, Mrs. Cowley, Mr. Etchells, L. Kolkman, Mrs. Smedley, D. Strain and J. Walton.

EA/15. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Etwall Area Meeting held on 24th January 2006 were noted.

EA/16. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair understood that an announcement had been expected regarding the merger of constabularies in the East Midlands. It had been rumoured that the merger was not now taking place. Sergeant Thandi had received no further information on this matter.

The Chair invited Jayne Jones, Director of Corporate Services at the District Council to give feedback, following the consultation at the last Meeting on

priorities from the Corporate Plan. The Officer reminded of the exercise undertaken, how the data was collated and the scoring process used. The Council had received additional Government funding of £650,000 for the current financial year. She gave a brief outline of how the Council had listened to the public in allocating this funding for both revenue and capital schemes. A medium term financial plan had been prepared, to show where the Council was spending these resources and a copy was available from the help desk or via the Council's website, if residents wished to receive it. She added that the Corporate Plan was being submitted to the Annual Council Meeting, the following week and copies of this document would also be made available.

The Chair considered that the scoring process was very helpful. It resulted in three clear priorities, for healthier and safer environments, a cleaner and greener South Derbyshire and increased, focused, better quality services. These were not necessarily the Council's priorities at the start of the consultation process, which showed that the Authority could not assume it knew what residents wanted. There was a wish to make this process even better for next year and the consultation would start earlier with parish councils and others, so they could submit bids for projects. He felt this showed how the Council was listening to its residents.

EA/17. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

The Chair invited questions on policing matters to Sergeant Thandi. **Mr. Green complained about speeding traffic along Station Road in Hatton. Sergeant Thandi acknowledged this point and would seek a traffic police presence.** However, pedestrians often perceived that vehicles were travelling faster than actually was the case.

The police officer's views were sought about the long notice period given by Severn Trent Water before works were undertaken. The resident felt this gave the opportunity for "bogus callers" to attempt to access properties and she quoted a particular example. It was noted that the Company's representatives would always have identification, which residents should ask to see. **The District Council would pursue this matter with Severn Trent Water and a copy of the Company's correspondence was passed to the Clerk. A report back on this matter would be provided to the next Meeting.**

Councillor Ford thanked Sergeant Thandi for the police presence and work undertaken in Findern over the last few weekends. The Constabulary was aware of particular problems in villages on weekend evenings and it was trying to target patrols accordingly. Councillor Bale reported problems with young people misusing the bus shelter in Sutton-on-the-Hill. He sought a police presence when the school bus service dropped children off. It was noted that the "no ball games" sign had been removed from the bus shelter. However, there had been no recent complaints. **Councillor Bale also reported recent incidents of barn roof tiles being stolen.** He quoted a specific example where the landowner had followed those responsible to a property in Hilton, but on providing details to the police, he was disappointed at the lack of action taken. **Sergeant Thandi agreed to investigate this matter.**

A Hilton resident complained that emergency vehicles were using Main Street as an access route. It was thought they should now use the Mease to bypass the Village. The Chair sought the views of others present and there was a consensus that it was reasonable for emergency vehicles to take the fastest route. Sergeant Thandi offered to report this view to the Constabulary.

Mr. Smith reported a problem in Etwall where a footpath had been created over a private garden. Sergeant Thandi was aware of this issue and would be pursuing it. **Mr. Ireland reminded those present of endeavours to undertake a “speed watch” initiative in Etwall.** This scheme involved local residents undertaking traffic speed monitoring. Sergeant Thandi gave an update on the discussions within the Constabulary about undertaking such a project. It was noted that the scheme had worked well in neighbouring Staffordshire and it was hoped to operate a pilot scheme in South Derbyshire. **Mr. Ireland questioned whether a letter of support from the Area Meeting could be of some assistance. It was agreed to write to the Constabulary accordingly.**

Mrs. Dowie-Bowes referred to a recent announcement of funding for the provision of traveller sites and she questioned whether local taxpayers were meeting this cost. The Chair replied that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was pursuing a strategy for additional site provision and it was assumed that the money had come from that source. Across the Country there were approximately 4,000 special facility sites for the travelling community and he reminded that South Derbyshire had two such sites, which made it an exemplar. He felt no-one was endeavouring to solve the problems caused by illegal encampments. He explained the process required before travellers could be moved on, which usually took a few weeks. This effectively passed the problem onto another community or local authority area. He had been in discussions with emda and the Derbyshire Chief Constable and genuinely recognised the rights of travellers, but also those of residents. He felt neighbouring local authorities needed to work together to provide large sites away from existing communities. If such site provision was made and illegal encampments still took place, he felt it was reasonable for the police to move the travellers on immediately. It was noted that travellers were currently occupying land at the Hilton gravel pit. The Chair explained that on private land, the landowner had to pursue the eviction.

Councillor Ford reported that the footbridge crossing the A38 between the NYK Logistics and former Atkins sites had been removed and he explained the reasons for this. It was hoped that a replacement bridge could be provided over the A38 in this vicinity, linking to surrounding footpaths. It was agreed that Derbyshire County Council pursue this matter and submit a report to the next Area Meeting. Mr Cramp explained that construction of the A50 truck road had split a definitive footpath at Miry Lane, Hatton from the former A511 to Church Broughton. A footbridge was requested at this location to rejoin the definitive footpath and the representative of Derbyshire County Council also agreed to pursue this matter.

Mrs Dowie-Bowes referred to recent local elections in the City of Derby and Amber Valley. She questioned what the District Council was doing to counter the insurgence of the British National Party (BNP). The Chair replied that this was a political matter, but he accepted the recent trend for increased support for non-mainstream parties like the BNP. The District

Council strived to be a good authority and it had equality and human rights policies. It had targets for the equal treatment of minority groups, but as District Council, it could not get involved in political issues. Mrs Dowie-Bowes felt this was not a political matter, but affected residents' safety. The Council had listened to residents' priorities and following the budget consultation, it had allocated extra funds towards increasing the uniformed presence within the District. The Chair gave examples of the range of initiatives being undertaken to make communities safer. The resident found publicity from such groups offensive. Councillor Ford felt that there was little the Council could do to prevent the activities of such groups. The Director of Corporate Services urged the resident to submit a copy of the literature she had found offensive, so that this could be assessed legally, to see if there was anything the Council could do.

Mr Cramp referred to the flood defence measures in Hatton and a recent rumour that they were not sufficient for the 1 in 100 year flooding risk. The Chair referred to the Upper Trent Fluvial Strategy and the flooding models that showed the impact of the 1 in 100 year flooding event. This was a very accurate survey, based on the 2000 flood data. He confirmed that the rumour was correct and was due to be published shortly. It was understood that the defences met the 1 in 40 year flooding risk and because of the additional works undertaken it was considered that defences were sufficient. Some residents were not convinced, particularly if the floodwater came from Scropton towards Hatton. The Chair advised that further funding bids had been made for additional works in the Barrow on Trent, Hilton, Willington and Egginton areas.

A complaint was made about the condition of the highway and footpaths on the main road through Hilton. It was questioned whether resurfacing works were programmed and the Officer from Derbyshire County Council agreed to investigate this matter and to submit a report to the next Meeting.

Mr Ireland suggested a review of the dates of operation of the composting scheme. He felt that the current scheme started and finished too early in the calendar year. This issue had been raised at one of the Council's Policy Committees and such a review might be appropriate. Reference was also made to the new "in vessel" composting scheme, which would enable a greater range of materials to be composted. Ultimately this could lead to the composting scheme operating throughout the year.

Following a question from Mr. Ireland, there was a discussion about the provision of increased capacity wheeled bins to some larger families and the process for reviewing the need for them. A comparison was made between the capacity of wheeled bins and the former refuse bins. There were different views on whether providing a larger wheeled bin led to increased refuse. A further issue raised was the responsibility of retailers to control the amount of packaging on products.

Mrs Dowie-Bowes was disappointed that plastic bags placed in a receptacle at a recycling centre were not being recycled. The Chair had become aware that nationally, not all recyclable materials were being recycled, but they were sent to landfill instead. If there was any evidence of this practice occurring in South Derbyshire, it would be addressed. There was a discussion about the recycling of batteries and a resident reported that they

could be taken to the local civic amenity site. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the Council was constantly improving on recycling. The Chair urged any resident who was dissatisfied to write to him as Leader of the Council.

Mr. Smith referred to the recycling of plastics and he felt that a second box should be provided specifically for plastic bottles. There was recognition of the difficulty in recycling plastic materials, due to the different types of plastics and the volumes involved. The Chair referred to the proportion of waste that was recycled by a number of adjacent authorities. Lichfield District Council was an exemplar and currently recycling 45% of all refuse. South Derbyshire was currently recycling 26% of materials, but this was ahead of many neighbouring districts. Future recycling initiatives discussed were co-mingled waste collection and high temperature incineration and separation.

It was agreed to invite relevant Officers from the District Council to the next Meeting, to discuss recycling issues in greater depth.

A vote of thanks was recorded for the grant assistance provided towards the “Swadfest” event. Some problems had been experienced in co-ordinating with different departments of the Council, to secure approval for the planned events in the Town Centre. The resident was requested to provide details to the Democratic Services Officer, in order that this could be forwarded to relevant Officers for any future events.

Arising from this, there was a discussion about the conservation areas within South Derbyshire and sites of special scientific interest. In particular, reference was made to the mining and clay working heritage of the urban core. There was a perception that the majority of funding and facilities gravitated to Swadlincote. The Chair made a comparison to the perception that South Derbyshire did not receive its share of County Council funding. As a Member in a rural ward he made strong representations on the needs for all areas, but also respected the needs of the urban core. He explained the proportion of the District’s population that was located within the urban core. As another example, Councillor Ford commented that the only Derbyshire County Council operated museum was in Buxton.

EA/18. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Chair provided an update on the issues raised at the last Meeting. These comprised HGV traffic and the consultation on weight limits in Station Road, Hatton, together with Hilton parking problems and school access issues and a complaint about noise from the Hilton depot. Arising from this, a complaint was made that **the weight limit through Hilton was being ignored and it was agreed to advise Sergeant Thandi of the Derbyshire Constabulary.**

EA/19. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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

B. WHYMAN M.B.E.

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 8.25 p.m.