

MINUTES of the MEETING of the
SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
held at Civic Offices, Civic Way,
Swadlincote on 21st March 2002
at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Rose (Chair) and Councillors Bambrick, Bell, Brooks, Carroll, Dunn, Evens, Ford, Harrington, Lauro, Pabla, Richards, Mrs. Rose, Routledge, Shepherd, Sherratt, Southerd, Southern, Stone, Taylor, Whyman and Wilkins.

Conservative Group

Councillors Bale, Bladen, Harrison, Hood, Lemmon, Mrs. Robbins, Mrs. Walton and Mrs. Wheeler.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Mrs. Mead (Vice-Chair) and Councillor Knight (Labour Group) and Councillors Douglas and Shaw (Conservative Group).

CL/114. **MR. F.W. ALDRIDGE**

The Chair referred to the recent death of Fred Aldridge, a former Chair of the Council in 1991/92 and Member for the Linton Ward who served as a District Councillor from 1983 to 1995. Members stood in silence as a mark of respect and several Members paid tribute to the work of Mr. Aldridge. Any Member wishing to make a donation could do so by contacting the Chair's Secretary. A letter had already been sent to Mrs. Aldridge expressing the Council's condolences.

CL/115. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held on 28th February 2002 (Minutes Nos. CL/106 - CL/111) were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

CL/116. **CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chair reported that his Civic Dinner had been well supported and the raffle had raised the sum of £327 towards his Charity Appeal. The Chair's Charity Golf Competition would be held on 10th May 2002 and further details could be obtained from the Chair's Secretary.

The Chair referred to several individuals from South Derbyshire who had recently received awards, including Glenys Williams for work in connection with the Old Post Regeneration Association. It was agreed to send letters of congratulations to the individuals concerned. The Chair advised that a continental market was to be held in Swadlincote town centre on 18th April 2002 and it was anticipated that the market would attract traders from a variety of countries including France, Germany and Holland. It was hoped

that this would provide an excellent opportunity to promote Swadlincote Town Centre.

The Chair welcomed Clive Mitchell of District Audit to the Meeting, who was currently conducting an audit on the implementation of the Council's new political structure.

CL/117. **PRESENTATION BY THE PROBATION SERVICE**

John Browne, Project Manager of the Derby Prolific Burglar Project attended the Meeting and addressed Members on this issue. The project involved a partnership with the Police, the Probation Service and the Youth Offending Service and the overall aims were to assist individual offenders to break the cycle of persistent offending and to achieve reductions in crime. The project was co-ordinated by the Probation Service and was effective in two ways, involving the provision of enhanced supervision and re-integration by the Probation or Youth Offending Service to enable the offender to change his/her behaviour. If this was not evidenced, they would be reprimanded quickly and brought to justice. The project was based on enhanced targeting, information sharing and focused supervision of the most prolific dwellinghouse burglars identified from joint information.

To date, there were thirty-six participants on the Derby Prolific Burglar Project under some order of the Courts. Offenders identified as prolific domestic burglars not currently in contact with the Probation Service were placed on a pending list and tracked immediately following arrest. A Probation Assistant had been appointed to work on enhancing contact and information gathering together with the Probation Officer who managed the case. She also provided the majority of the linking work with other agencies and re-integration work.

There had been encouraging results and a decrease in the rate of dwellinghouse burglaries in the target area. The original area now indicated a decrease of 38.1% from the inception of the Offender Project. The project was very cost effective, compulsory and enabled immediate contact with the identified target group, established high quality work to promote a joined-up approach to provision to maximise positive input for the offender to change his/her behaviour and had proved to be an element in crime reduction together with other initiatives under the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership work.

Members took the opportunity to raise any questions and Mr. Browne was thanked for his informative presentation. Inspector Hargreaves, who had recently been appointed as the Inspector for the Section, then took the opportunity to address Members on his role.

CL/118. **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED:-

That the Open reports of the following Committees be received and noted and any recommendations contained therein be approved and adopted, subject to any matters annotated:-

Overview Committee (Special), 30th/31st January 2002 (Minutes Nos. OV/22 – OV/24)

Joint Consultative Committee, 31st January 2002 (Minutes Nos. JC/16 – JC/19)

Development Control Committee, 12th February 2002 (Minutes Nos. DC/102 – DC/114)

Environmental Services Committee, 14th February 2002 (Minutes Nos. ES/10 – ES/19)

Community Services Committee, 21st February 2002 (Minutes Nos. CS/86 – CS/92)

(Minute No. CS/91, Housing Revenue Account Business Plan – In response to a query, it was reported that Tenant Participation Meetings were based on the County Council Electoral Divisions and a meeting would be held in the Melbourne Division in due course.

In response to a query, the financial implications of bed and breakfast accommodation in connection with the Homeless Act were outlined.

The Chair advised that earlier in the day, the first Anti-Social Behaviour Order had been served by the Council).

Standards Committee, 21st February 2002 (Minutes Nos. SC/17 – SC/21)

Community Scrutiny Committee, 4th March 2002 (Minutes Nos. CYS/24 – CYS/29)

Joint Consultative Committee, 5th March 2002 (Minutes Nos. JC/23 – JC/25)

Development Control Committee, 5th March 2002 (Minutes Nos. DC/117 – DC/122)

Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 11th March 2002 (Minutes Nos. COS/35 – COS/40)

Licensing and Appeals Committee, 13th March 2002 (Minutes Nos. LA/20 – LA/21)

Overview Committee, 18th March 2002 (Minutes Nos. OV/25 – OV/29)

Area Meetings

Melbourne, 23rd January 2002 (Minutes Nos. MA/17 – MA/20)

(It was noted that Mr. F. Mitchell was a representative of Elvaston Parish Council).

Linton, 24th January 2002 (Minutes Nos. LA/18 – LA/23)

Repton, 29th January 2002 (Minutes Nos. RA/20 – RA/26)

Etwall, 30th January 2002 (Minutes Nos. EA/19 – EA/24)

Swadlincote, 5th February 2002 (Minutes Nos. SA/23 – SA/28)

Newhall, 7th February 2002 (Minutes Nos. NA/21 – NA/28)

CL/119. NOTICE OF MOTION

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 12, it was reported that Councillor Whyman had given notice of the following Motion:-

“It has been reported that Consignia have announced plans to close half the Country’s Post Offices. The proposals recommend immediate closure of 1,000 offices, followed by a further 7,000 over the next five years. This is on top of the 1,750 offices that have closed in the past year.

Post Offices are under enormous threat. It has been estimated that Post Offices could lose up to 16 million customers when benefits and pensions are paid directly into bank accounts from next year. Every footfall that is lost

means potential loss of other ‘non-counter’ sales, which further questions the viability of many outlets.

Consignia’s £281 million loss in the first six months of the financial year means that they must take remedial action to address their problems. But, there are wider community interests at stake. It is vital that the Post Office network is maintained in rural and semi-rural areas, otherwise the sustainability or even survival of hundreds of communities are at risk.

As the Royal Mail operation becomes increasingly scrutinised, so the need to improve profitability of rural outlets becomes a critical consideration. The danger is that Royal Mail will find itself facing growing competition. Lucrative postal services will be cherry picked and the far-flung provision in rural areas will become increasingly under threat.

The proposed closures of Post Offices must not be allowed to happen. Help must be provided for sub-postmasters to assist them to find other ways of staying in business.

This Council calls upon the Government to examine this problem, and to seek ways of helping beleaguered sub-postmasters to remain in business.

And, further calls upon our Members of Parliament to lobby the relevant individuals and departments to ensure that this problem is properly addressed.”

Councillor Whyman proposed the Motion, which was duly seconded. It was debated and, on a vote, it was,

RESOLVED:-

That the Motion be carried.

CL/120. **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

RESOLVED:-

That the Sealed Documents listed at Annexe SMB1 to the Signed Minute Book, which have no specific authority, be duly authorised.

CL/121. **MEMBERS’ CODE OF CONDUCT**

Members were reminded that under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, Local Authorities were required to adopt a Members’ Code of Conduct by 5th May 2002. This was the final Council Meeting before this deadline and the following the adoption, all necessary declarations were required within twenty-eight days and each Member was required to undertake to observe the Code within two months of the adoption. Members considered a copy of the Model Code and at its Meeting held on 21st February 2002, the Council’s Standards Committee had recommended that the Model Code be adopted without amendment.

It was suggested that the Code should refer to both the male and female genders. A Member referred to the current problems in connection with the

adoption of the Code by Parish Councils and it was agreed to continue to assist Parish Councils as far as possible.

RESOLVED:-

That the Model Code of Conduct as submitted be adopted by the Council.

CL/122. **MEMBERSHIP OF OUTSIDE BODIES**

(a) Southern Derbyshire Community Health Council

It was reported that following his appointment as non-executive Director of the Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire Primary Care Trust, Councillor Lemmon had tendered his resignation as Chair and Member of the Southern Derbyshire Community Health Council. Accordingly, the Council had been requested to nominate a replacement to serve until 31st August 2004.

Members took the opportunity to acknowledge the work of Councillor Lemmon during his period of service.

RESOLVED:-

That Councillor Hood be nominated to serve on the Community Health Council until 31st August 2004.

(b) Repton Primary School

It was reported that Repton Primary School had reverted to Local Education Authority status with effect from 1st January 2002 and a vacancy existed for a Minor Authority Governor. Accordingly, the Council had been requested to consider the appointment of a representative to the Governing Body.

RESOLVED:-

That consideration of this matter be deferred to a future Meeting.

(c) CAB Management Committee – 6th March 2002

The Council received a report from Councillor Carroll on this Meeting.

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted and Dr. Von Fragstein be thanked for his service to the CAB.

CL/123. **BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN SUMMARY**

Members received a report outlining the recent changes to the arrangements for producing the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) and the contents of the BVPP Summary. It was reported that the Local Government White Paper on 'Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services' published in December included proposals to streamline the Best Value regime, including the publication of the BVPP. The proposals had now been incorporated in statutory guidance. To summarise, these comprised changing the statutory

deadline for the publication of the BVPP from 31st March to 30th June each year, changing the statutory deadline for the Auditor's report on the BVPP from 30th June to 31st December each year, varying the content of the BVPP to remove the requirement to summarise any assessment of the level at which and the way in which an authority exercised its functions and set out the five year period of reviews, and revoking the requirement for authorities to review all their functions in a five-year cycle.

The guidance advised that the BVPP should focus on information of corporate importance and should include various information outlined to Members. The change to the publication date had been made to allow authorities to include final performance out-turn data for the previous year. The Government believed that local people should have access to clear and relevant information at the beginning of the financial year and ahead of any local elections. Accordingly, the guidance stipulated that summarised information should continue to be made available to local people by 31st March each year. However, the guidance was slightly more relaxed over the content.

With regard to this year's summary plan, the format was the same as in previous years (i.e. tabloid size, eight pages, full colour). The content had also been updated rather than changed radically. Sections in the summary discussed the Council's vision and key aims, progress on key areas such as the new political structure and the Community Strategy, consultation, performance management, the review programme and spending plans. Much of this material had already been the subject of separate reports to Members. Approximately 38,000 copies of the summary were to be printed for circulation to all households in the district, local businesses, voluntary sector organisations and other stakeholders. A copy would also be placed on the website. Donor card information was also to be distributed with the Plan together with an associated letter from the Chair of the Council. When the Summary had been published, work would focus on the production of the full BVPP. The BVPP would have particular significance this year as it would form part of the new corporate assessment process announced in the Local Government White Paper. This would identify each Council as high performing, striving, coasting or poor performing.

Some of the main issues that would need to be addressed in the BVPP included the Council's arrangements for managing performance, performance against nationally set performance indicators and measures to achieve standards and targets. To assist in exploring these issues, Members considered that it would be helpful to attend a workshop/seminar when most of the out-turn data for 2001/02 had been collected.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the new arrangements for the publication of the Best Value Performance Plan be noted, together with the contents of the Plan Summary.***
- (2) That a workshop/seminar be arranged for Members to explore issues relating to performance management.***

CL/124. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as indicated in the reports of Committees.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held on 28th February 2002 were duly received and approved.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Exempt reports of the following Committees were received and noted and any recommendations contained therein approved and adopted:-

Joint Consultative Committee, 31st January 2002

Development Control Committee, 12th February 2002

Community Services Committee, 21st February 2002

Joint Consultative Committee, 5th March 2002

Development Control Committee, 5th March 2002

Licensing and Appeals Committee, 13th March 2002

CORPORATE PROFIT SHARE SCHEME (Paragraph 1)

The Council agreed payments in the current financial year to the employees who had a contractual entitlement to receive a profit share payment.

HOUSING DLO PAY NEGOTIATIONS (Paragraph 1)

The Council agreed to move to new payment arrangements for particular employees with effect from 1st April 2002, to make payments in the current financial year to appropriate employees as a buy-out for the profit share and bonus schemes and to agree a performance management system before any payments are made under the new arrangements.

NEWHALL PARK – PROVISION OF NEW PLAY EQUIPMENT (Paragraph 9)

The Council accepted a tender to create a new play area in Newhall Park.

GRIEVANCE (Paragraph 1)

The Council noted progress made on a grievance issue.

C.H. ROSE

CHAIR