

REPTON AREA MEETING

31st July 2003

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Taylor (Chair) and Councillors Bladen, Ford and Mrs. Wheeler.

F. B. McArdle (Chief Executive), Sergeant S. Wilson (Police Liaison Officer), D. Cook (Democratic Services Officer) and B. Jones (Helpdesk).

County Council Representative

Councillor Jones.

Member of Parliament

Mr. M. Todd.

Parish Council Representatives

D. Adams (Hartshorne Parish Council), H. Bowcott (Willington Parish Council), D. Brookfield (Newton Solney Parish Council), J. Burley (Hartshorne Parish Council), S. Evans (Repton Parish Council), C. Jerram (Repton Parish Council), D. Oatley and R. Statham (Woodville Parish Council).

Members of the Public

A. Atkin, A. Baker, T. Baker, C. Bould, B. Bowman, S. Brookfield, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Cownie, R. Cownie, D. J. Deboo, R. Dennis, S. Ellis (Newton Solney Parish Council), K. Gibbs (Willington Parish Council), A. Gillespie, A. Hardman, H. D. Harrison, S. Harrop (Burton Mail), K. Henning, D. Hicklin, A. Kimber, C. Manifold, R. Morrow, J. Newman, R. Paulson, R. Russian, A. Skipper, P. Smith, G. Varty, K. Vincent, M. S. Vorley, R. H. Young.

RA/1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

The Meeting noted the appointment of Councillor Taylor as Chair at the Annual Council Meeting.

RA/2. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Bell, Mrs. Hood and Isham (South Derbyshire District Council), S. Smith (Woodville Parish Council), D. Roberts (Repton Parish Council) and A. Gifford.

RA/3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor J. Bladen was appointed Vice-Chair of the Meeting for the ensuing year.

RA/4. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th January 2003 were noted.

RA/5. REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING

The Chair invited the Democratic Services Officer to provide an update on matters raised at the previous Meeting. She advised that responses had been received from Derbyshire County Council on various highways issues.

With regard to the speed limit on the Repton to Willington Road the County Council had advised that the speed limit schedules were being prepared and would be with the County Council shortly. It would then take approximately two weeks to organise a newspaper advert and the posting of Notices on the street, prior to the limits being implemented.

With regard to the signage on the A50 inter-change, Officers of the County Council had advised that this inter-change was on the boundary of three managing agents and was not maintained by the County Council. Officers at the County Council had spoken to A. M. Scott (south bound A38 slip-off) and Connect (roundabout itself) and they had agreed to review the signage on the slip road and the destination markings on the roundabout. If any action was required then there would need to be liaison between these two parties. B. Morrow of Willington advised that action taken had involved merely painting over the wrong road markings and this had worsened the situation.

With regard to increased traffic at the Toll Gate road traffic island, Officers at the County Council had advised that a count was being arranged for September following the return of the schools.

With regard to various traffic problems in Woodville, Officers of the County Council had advised that these were related to congestion at the Toll Gate Island. To improve this would be extremely difficult and expensive and would involve the purchase of substantial areas of land and the demolition of several properties and businesses. A sum of £80,000 had been included in the County Council's budget for works in Woodville. These consisted of a crossing at Hartshorne Road and the County Council were currently investigating a crossing point at Lincoln Way. D. Oatley advised that at the previous Meeting, concerns had been expressed regarding the speed of traffic from Boundary and parking on the High Street, Woodville (since the new block of shops on High Street had been opened) she expressed concern that Officers of the County Council had not responded to these matters. General concern was expressed that the matters raised had not been addressed fully by Derbyshire County Council and accordingly it was agreed to write to the County Council again to ask for more detailed responses on specific highway issues.

RA/6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Paulson of Repton Parish Council had given notice of a question regarding the transportation of vehicles from Toyota at Burnaston. In a recent press article it had been announced that approximately 160 cars per day were to be moved by road to Southampton. He questioned whether local authorities or Central Government could seek the provision of a rail link into Toyota to reduce lorry movements on the local road network. The comments were noted by the Meeting and the Member of Parliament, Mark Todd, MP advised that there were practical problems associated with this proposal

nevertheless, it was an issue worth pursuing but felt that people should not be too aspirational about it happening in the near future.

Prior to the Meeting, Mr. M. S. Vorley had submitted questions about the Council's financial plans including costs per unit for services delivered, capital spend in the financial year and exposure to financial risks, efficiency monitoring, cost reduction initiatives, environmental issues, Council publications, Government targets and their impact on Council taxes and the use of E-technology. The Chief Executive responded to Mr. Vorley in detail referring to costs per unit for services delivered being outlined in the Council's Best Value Performance Plan. He provided Mr. Vorley with the said document. He advised that capital spending amounted to £3,587,678 which was an underspend of £513,488 on the programme of £4,101,166. This was mainly as a result of work on housing repairs schemes carrying over to 2003/04.

The major items of capital expenditure in 2002/03 were renovation of Council dwellings (£2,119,682), Private Sector Housing Grants (£694,344). Other significant items included parks and recreational facilities (£121,684) and payments on three deferred purchase schemes (£197,040). The Major Repairs Allowance (£2.12 million) was the major source of funding for the programme. The remainder was funded from Government grants and Borrowing Approvals (£955,000), Capital Receipts (£414,000) and Planning Agreements (£98,000). The Council's available capital resources at 31st March 2003 stood at £2.687 million of which £1.2 million related to Section 106 Planning Agreements.

Mr. Vorley was advised that the areas the Council had identified which were exposed to financial risk included commutation adjustment, insurance costs, legal costs, capital financing costs, income shortfalls, pension costs and a delay in opening a new tipping facility near Moira.

With regard to efficiency monitoring, the Chief Executive referred Mr. Vorley to the Council's Best Value Performance Plan.

In answer to Mr. Vorley's question on cost reduction initiatives, the Chief Executive advised that the Council had planned carefully and had not needed to make significant cost reductions since the financial crisis. It did however have a detailed scoring system to assess all bids for new spending to prioritise these bids in line with Council aims and objectives.

The main challenges and opportunities with regard to environmental issues were outlined. With regard to Government targets and their impact on Council taxes the Chief Executive advised that the Council was planning on the basis of keeping Council Tax increases in line with the increases for previous years. These increases were some of the lowest increases within Derbyshire and indeed the whole Country. The Council's ability to maintain relatively low increases in its share of the Council Tax would depend on the grant that the Government provided and how that continued to recognise the extra cost the Council incurred in implementing new Government initiatives to a fast growing population. The Council had no control over the increases imposed by either the County Council or Police Authority.

Finally, the Chief Executive outlined the key issues for the use of E-technology. The Chief Executive thanked Mr. Vorley for his questions and

agreed to meet with him to discuss the items in further detail should that be his wish. Mr. Vorley advised that he wished to discuss the issue of brown bins and that in his opinion the Council did not empty refuse bins every week and were therefore breaching an 'agreement'. The Chief Executive talked about the Council's trial of composting schemes and the positive feedback it had received on such schemes. He talked about the recycling targets for the disposal of waste which the Authority must meet. The Chief Executive offered to provide Mr. Vorley with the documents referred to whilst answering his questions.

D. Oatley commended the Council's brown bin scheme and asked about the provision of cardboard recycling facilities for Woodville. The Chair advised that the Council intended to make this facility available as soon as possible and agreed to ask the Council's Recycling Officer to provide full details to Woodville Parish Council.

The Chair advised that a letter had been received from Mr. Deboo, who was present at the Meeting, regarding the County Council's "Pavements are for People" campaign and his concern that motorists continued to park on pavements. Sergeant S. Wilson advised that if a vehicle was parked on a pavement but no obstruction was caused then no offence had been committed. If a vehicle weighing over 7.5 tonnes parked on a pavement an offence was committed. He referred to the area of Repton which was of particular concern to Mr. Deboo and stated that as the pavements were large pedestrians could still pass. If the pavements were narrower, cars would park on the roads and pedestrians would still have the same width of path as a result. He advised that the police had difficulty prosecuting for parking on pavements because the Crown Prosecution Service required proof of unlawful obstruction at an unreasonable time etc. The Police would prosecute when it was right to do so on occasions when people parked on the pavement inappropriately. Sergeant Wilson also advised the Meeting that it was an offence to drive on a pavement for some time.

Mr. Deboo stated that he was not in agreement with the comments made by Sergeant Wilson regarding parking on pavements as he believed that the statement in the Police Training Manual, "A pavement was to be classed as part of a carriageway", was misleading. The Chair advised that it was difficult to know how to progress this matter further and accordingly the debate on parking on pavements was closed.

Mrs. Cownie expressed concern regarding parking outside Newton Solney Village Hall which she felt was hazardous. Sergeant Wilson agreed to pass this information on to the relevant Beat Officer. Mr. Cownie expressed concern regarding parking outside St. Wystans School at Repton but Councillor Bladen advised that it was the illegal parking outside The Cross at Repton which culminated in creating a problem at St. Wystans. Councillor Bladen felt that the parking outside of St. Wystans School providing a form of traffic calming measures.

A resident advised that the footway between Repton and Newton Solney required "making up". It was agreed to write to Derbyshire County Council regarding this matter. County Councillor A. Jones advised that this was 200 metres of path and the bid for making it up had fallen in the County Council's reserve list. Accordingly the work was unlikely to be carried out

this year. He advised the Meeting that he would seek to obtain finance for this work from the County Council's budget next year.

A resident expressed concern that the Willington Railway Station was not accessible to disabled people. Accordingly, it was agreed to write to the appropriate body in this regard.

A resident advised that the parking restriction sign in Castle Lane, Willington had been removed and the double yellow lines on the road needed repainting. It was agreed to write to Derbyshire County Council on this matter. Councillor Ford asked officers to monitor parking outside the Co-op in Willington and Sergeant Wilson agreed to pursue this matter.

Mr. R. Young suggested that the Clock Island at Woodville should be replaced (referring to the £80,000 in the County Council's budget). The Chair agreed to seek clarification on the use of the said £80,000.

A resident requested that traffic be diverted around the village of Woodville and advised that in his opinion it would be more beneficial for residents if roads were constructed prior to the granting of planning permission for housing developments.

A resident referred to discussions at previous Meetings regarding rail passenger services. The Member of Parliament responded and stated that the Willington Station needed to be accessible but also better used but it was a "swings and roundabouts" situation. Mr. Morrow of Willington advised that Derbyshire County Council paid Central Trains to keep Willington Station open and in his opinion Central Trains would close Willington Station if allowed to do so.

Mr. Vorley asked what consultation should have taken place with the residents of Ladyfields, Midway before Lady Fields, Newhall was created and it was agreed to respond to Mr. Vorley separately on this matter.

RA/7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Meeting was advised that details of the date and venue for the next Meeting would be confirmed in due course.

RA/8. **TWYFORD ROAD RECYCLING CENTRE**

Willington Parish Council had asked for this item to be placed on the agenda and made a request that glass and cardboard recycling bins be emptied more frequently. The Chief Executive advised that the banks were currently emptied every ten days and that should they require emptying earlier residents could call The Clean Team who would respond as soon as possible. It was agreed to advise the Council's Recycling Officer of the Parish Council's concern regarding the untidiness of the site.

RA/9. **COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CPA)**

A presentation was made by Frank McArdle, Chief Executive. He advised that the Comprehensive Performance Assessment was effectively a successor to Best Value. It was a Government initiative to help councils find out what the public wanted, to focus on the community's priorities and to improve

services. The Council had produced a self assessment and was now asking people what they thought. It had identified some issues that the Council thought should be its priorities, called “key challenges”. An external group had been asked to challenge the self assessment and this was known as a “Peer Challenge”. The key corporate challenges were to agree with the community a shared vision and then deliver that vision through high quality, customer focused services. The Council needed to manage its resources effectively, to listen and respond to its customers and improve service quality. It would be required to produce plans that deliver the improvements. The Peer Challengers felt that the Council was soundly managed and pragmatic. It was improving in many areas with a “can do” culture and making a difference to the people of South Derbyshire. However, the Council needed a more strategic focus and to act with greater confidence. A questionnaire had been circulated prior to the Meeting and residents were asked to complete and return it at the end of the Meeting.

Mr. Vorley queried public involvement in the CPA process and the Chief Executive advised that the Citizens Panel, Focus Groups and discussions with partner organisations had been held.

RA/10. **BUDGET CONSULTATION**

The Chief Executive introduced this item and explained that the Council wished to gather residents’ views to inform the Budget process. He advised that for the last two years the Council had tried to seek the views of local people on spending priorities. Whilst resources were limited, the Council sought to allocate some new monies each year to deliver service improvements. It wanted to ensure that these resources were used to reflect the priorities of local people. Last year, the consultation had identified four main priorities, being economic development, caring the for environment, providing best value services and “managing our business”. These were supported by secondary priorities of providing decent homes, community and leisure development, leading the community and supporting the National Forest. This year, the Council was trying to gather further information and residents were asked to complete a short questionnaire to provide feedback.

RA/11. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Chief Executive advised that as part of the Local Government Review the Scrutiny process had been introduced to District Councils. A leaflet had been circulated to provide further information about the Scrutiny process. In South Derbyshire, it was delivered by an Overview Committee, supported by two Scrutiny Committees for corporate and community services.

RA/12. **CRIME AND DISORDER PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Sergeant Steve Wilson, the Police Liaison Officer seconded to the South Derbyshire Crime and Disorder Partnership. By way of background, Sergeant Wilson outlined the duties introduced by the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, including the establishment of local partnerships and the production of a crime audit and strategy every three years. The Strategy for 2002-05 contained a mixture of priorities from Government, public service agreement and local targets. Specific elements were discussed. Sergeant Wilson spoke of the staffing and financial resources available to the Partnership. He gave examples of the initiatives

undertaken from covert police operations to partnership working, crime reduction projects to sports and arts development. Statistics were provided which showed the success of the Partnership, particularly in relation to the house burglary and auto crime. In Newhall, a 60% reduction had been achieved in house burglary rates. The partnership's future proposals included the establishment of a community police office in Newhall, making use of CCTV and establishing mediation services. Other target areas were reducing domestic abuse, a home security project and establishing local crime reduction groups, through Neighbourhood Watch. The disposal of abandoned vehicles, providing a BMX/ skateboard park and environmental improvements were further objectives.

Mr. Deboo expressed concern regarding horses fouling roads. Concern was also expressed regarding the removal of abandoned vehicles and a resident asked that following the removal of a vehicle the area be swept and all debris cleared away.

D. Oatley queried the role of the Community Drugs Officer and was advised that it was to co-ordinate the work on drugs issues across the District and liaise closely with other organisations. The Partnership also funded other outreach and other rehabilitation work.

A resident expressed concern that the Neighbourhood Watch delegate in Newton Solney was having difficulty in contacting the Police and Sergeant Wilson agreed to action this matter following the Meeting. Councillor Ford asked how to book the mobile youth facility and was advised that this could be booked through the Youth Service/Crime and Disorder Partnership.

S. TAYLOR

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 9.10 p.m.