

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE AREA FORUM

AREA 3 – MELBOURNE AREA

Monday, February 5th, 2018 at Melbourne Assembly Rooms

PRESENT:-

District Council representatives

Councillor John Harrison (Chair), Councillor Neil Atkin, Councillor Mrs Hilary Coyle, Councillor Jim Hewlett, Councillor Michael Stanton, Councillor Peter Watson.

Frank McArdle (Chief Executive), Tom Sloan (Clerk).

Derbyshire County Council representative

Councillor Neil Atkin, Councillor Mrs Linda Chilton.

Neill Bennett (Senior Project Officer Transportation Data & Analysis Team), Richard Handbury (Traffic and Safety Service Amber Valley (Part), Erewash Borough & South Derbyshire).

Parish Council / Meeting representatives

Steve Graham (Aston Parish Council), Nancy Hawksworth (Shardlow & Great Wilne Parish Council), Alison Hicklin (Barrow Parish Council), Ed Hicklin (Aston Parish Council), Alicia Mitchell (Shardlow & Great Wilne Parish Council), Margaret Sharp (Melbourne Parish Council), Dave Smith (Melbourne Parish Council), Terry Summerlin (Melbourne Parish Council).

Members of the public

Frank Hughes (Village Voice), Jennifer Peckham, Rachael Peckham, Jules Redfern, Nia Scott-Moylan.

MA/19 **Apologies for absence**

Barbara James.

MA/20 **Declarations of interest**

None.

MA/21 **Chairman's announcements**

Councillor John Harrison congratulated Councillor Mrs Hilary Coyle on her election to the office of Leader of South Derbyshire District Council.

MA/22 **The minutes of the meeting held on October 24, 2017**

On the proposition of Councillor Peter Watson, the minutes were AGREED as a true and correct record.

MA/23 **Swarkestone Causeway update – Neill Bennett and Richard Handbury**

Neil Bennett introduced himself as representing the Highways Asset Management Team which had installed the vehicle-activated signage (VAS) for overweight vehicles.

Richard Handbury introduced himself as manager of the Traffic Team in the south of the county.

Mr Bennett reported that three signs were installed on approaches to Swarkestone Causeway in April, 2017. A permanent monitoring station south of the causeway allowed DCC officers to monitor the weight and types of vehicles and see if the VAS had been effective. It showed a 19% decrease in vehicles over the 7.5 tonne weight limit between April and December 2017, compared with the same period the previous year – despite a 3% increase in total traffic.

Mr Handbury reported that some of the signage around the location was not informative or well located. A total of 21 locations had been identified covering approaches from Ticknall, Melbourne, Shardlow and the A50 roundabout where it could be improved. Improving signage from the A50 itself was difficult as it meant dealing with Highways England and a high cost to DCC. For example, changing a sign on the M1 would cost £90,000. Once new signs were in place, he hoped for a further decline in HGVs using the causeway.

Farmers around the area and bus companies had special dispensation to break the weight limit. However, the order governing this was from 2004 and it wasn't clear who had permission and who didn't. The plan was to introduce a new order and give 12-month permits to those who merited them, bringing the road back under full DCC control.

Councillor Harrison said it would be a good idea to ask Arriva to ensure that two buses going in different directions didn't meet on the causeway.

Councillor Michael Stanton said that very few farmers at harvest time dealt with logistics themselves. Contractors did most of the heavy haulage so any new permit system would have to take this into account. Mr Handbury

replied that a system could be electronic and Mr Bennett said it would need to be painless to use.

A resident said they felt the system would cause a lot of work. It was obvious if a farmer was crossing the causeway from what their vehicle was. Mr Handbury replied that the current system was open to abuse.

A member of the public asked if the monitoring devices could distinguish between tractors and trucks. Mr Bennett confirmed that it could.

A resident said they'd noticed a great reduction in HGVs using the causeway. However, the problem wasn't the odd lorry using it, it was the sheer volume of traffic.

Mr Bennett gave an enforcement summary showing five prosecutions for overweight vehicles in the past year. That was down from 11 in 2015-16 and nine in 2016-17. He added that it might be down to resource issues at Trading Standards. Councillor Neil Atkin asked if a zero tolerance approach was taken. Mr Bennett said a warning letter was the first step.

A member of the public asked if the VAS gathered any number plate data and, if not, why not? Mr Bennett replied that DCC didn't have the legal powers to install such a piece of equipment. He had wanted to put automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras in, but the police, having looked at the numbers involved, didn't have the resources in their back office to carry out prosecutions. Authorities in London and Wales had the powers, but not counties in England.

Councillor Stanton reported that traffic in Ingleby Lane was increasing significantly. Councillor Mrs Linda Chilton added that Breach Lane was also badly affected.

Councillor Atkin asked if there was a counter to measure traffic coming from Isley Walton. Mr Bennett confirmed that there wasn't.

Councillor Peter Watson asked if the monitoring station south of the causeway measured traffic in both directions. Mr Bennett confirmed that it did. Councillor Watson asked for an electronic copy of the presentations given on the night. It was confirmed he would receive one.

Mr Bennett confirmed that the weight limit had been introduced to protect the retaining walls and some of the parapets which were retained by timber baulks. The structural limit of the causeway was estimated at 40 tonnes, much in excess of 7.5 tonnes.

Councillor Harrison asked how often the undercroft was inspected. Mr Bennett confirmed that inspections followed national guidelines.

Mr Handbury reported an issue with foreign HGV drivers using outdated satellite navigation systems going over the causeway. If caught, it was often not worth pursuing an international investigation to net a £75 or £100 fine.

A resident said there were two distinct issues. HGVs weren't causing the heavy traffic in Melbourne and surrounding villages – that was caused by the amount of traffic on a bridge with pinch points. However, Historic England wouldn't allow them to be removed to update the bridge for the 21st century. If this happened, a lot of the issues around flow of traffic over the bridge and causeway would be solved. A new bridge would be the ideal solution. Mr Bennett replied that there were more than 15,000 vehicles a day travelling over the causeway. However, there was no funding stream for a new crossing. Councillor Mrs Chilton added that the cost to Derbyshire if the causeway ever went down would be huge.

Councillor Jim Hewlett said that in light of the lack of funding, efforts should be made to persuade Historic England to allow the works. Was this possible? Mr Handbury said he was unsure if the bridge could be widened and there could be ramifications for structural integrity. Councillor Mrs Chilton said that in her experience Historic England wouldn't entertain the idea. Councillor Hewlett asked if pressure could be put on the organisation seeing as there was no alternative. Councillor Stanton added that it often took him 20 minutes to join the bridge at the bottom of Ingleby Lane due to the traffic.

A resident asked whether the people of Melbourne and South Derbyshire were just supposed to put up with a 3% year on year rise in traffic without any solution. Mr Bennett replied that it was unfortunately the case.

One-way system proposal for Melbourne

Mr Handbury presented his proposal for a one-way system for Melbourne. There wasn't enough on-street parking, businesses weren't getting the turnover they desired due to congestion and there were delivery issues. DCC could go down the civil enforcement route but wardens only came on a rota with every other location in South Derbyshire. He had tried to come up with a scheme which was self-policing. Derby Road, Chapel Street and Potter Street could be made one-way and traffic kept away from Packhorse Road because of the schools. The scheme would allow better control of traffic movements and there would be better utilisation of street space. There were always positives and negatives to any scheme, but there would be discussions about what form it took and people's views would be taken into account. Currently, the scheme was only a proposal – and the alternative was to leave the status quo.

Councillor Watson and several residents made suggestions as to how the scheme could be improved and what would potentially not work.

Councillor Mrs Chilton added that the proposals had come about after complaints to DCC and what was presented was the 'least worst case scenario' of what could be done. Any plans would be consulted upon in future. Mr Handbury said there would never be total agreement on such a scheme but he was looking to engage and once a concrete idea was created it would go to a public consultation.

Councillor Harrison concluded that consultation should also take place with Melbourne Parish Council.

MA/24 **Report back on issues raised at the last meeting**

Nothing added to the report back in the agenda pack.

MA/25 **Public questions on issues raised by residents**

None

MA/26 **County Council issues**

Councillor Mrs Chilton reported that DCC's budget would go through Full Council in two days' time. She also congratulated Councillor Harrison on becoming an Alderman.

MA/27 **District Council issues**

Mr McArdle gave a budget presentation for SDDC. Reserves were healthy and the budget was balanced for 2017-18 and 2018-19. Income was being generated from growth and would be invested in extra services, including an extra refuse round. A deficit was predicted for 2019-20, so SDDC was still looking for savings and efficiencies. However, compared to other authorities in the country, SDDC was in a reasonable position.

A pilot scheme where authorities in Derbyshire would retain 100% of their Business Rates would be undertaken. Local authorities were no longer able to rely on the Government grant which was being phased out in order to stay afloat. They would have to rely on the Rates they generated from Council Tax, Business Rates and the New Homes Bonus.

A provisional increase of 1.95% in the Council Tax for 2018-19 was proposed, 1% below the Government limit. The proposal would go to Full Council on February 26. It was important to note that SDDC took just 11% of the total bill on an average Band D property.

It has been proposed that grants to voluntary bodies would go up by 2% and a proposal that £250,000 to be allocated for a Community Partnership Scheme would be put before a meeting of the Council on February 26.

Mr McArdle reported that one of his directors, Stuart Batchelor, finished his employment with SDDC on February 27. He was well-known in Melbourne for his work with the sports partnership. Mr McArdle placed on the record his appreciation to Mr Batchelor for his service to the Melbourne area. Councillor Harrison echoed the sentiment.

Councillor Atkin thanked the two officers from DCC for their presentations.

MA/28 **Date of next meeting**

To be advised in due course.

Councillor John Harrison
CHAIRMAN

The meeting terminated at 8.55pm.