

REPTON AREA MEETING

29th January 2002

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

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

Mr. T. Neaves (Chief Finance Officer), Mrs. D. Cook (Members' Services Officer) and Mr. B. Jones (Helpdesk).
(Councillor J. Harrison in attendance.)

County Council Representatives

Councillor Jones (Vice-Chair).

Parish Council Representatives

A. Atkin (Newton Solney Parish Council), R. Shadrack (Hartshorne Parish Council), D. Adams (Hartshorne Parish Council), D. F. Roberts (Repton Parish Council), S. M. Evans (Repton Parish Council), C. Warner (Willington Parish Council), R. Morrow (Willington Parish Council) and S. M. Smith (Woodville Parish Council).

Members of the Public

R. Booth, S. Brookfield, Mr and Mrs Cownie, N. T. Cumming, Mrs. A. Dale, Mr. D. J. Deboo, A. Gifford, Mrs. A. Gillespie, M. J. Groom, Mrs. J. Harrison, A. B. Kimber, S. Mann, G. H. Mitchell, K. Muir, J. Orme, J. Parker, R. Paulson, A. Skipper, Mrs. J. Stamford, L. Taylor, P. Watkins, C. Watson (Burton Mail) and M. Wimbush.

East Midlands Airport

N. Robinson, J. Hill.

Police Representatives

M. Fearn, G. Grace.

Member of Parliament

Mr. M. Todd.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Bell (District Council Representative), Councillor Carroll (who had been hoping to attend regarding the presentation from East Midlands Airport) and Mrs. Sue Ellis.

RA/20. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 31st October 2001 were noted.

RA/21. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair reported that The Clean Team initiative had been established on 1st December 2001 to tackle fly tipping, dog fouling and litter within the District. He advised that a 24 hour freephone number (0800 587 2349) was available for people to call and report matters needing attention.

PC Michelle Fearn and PC Ged Grace were in attendance and gave a brief introduction of the mobile police station which was parked outside. They outlined that the police were working with local beat officers as part of this mobile station initiative to be launched on 12th February 2002. The rota for the mobile station to visit villages within the District would be circulated to parish councils and advertised in the local press. In response to a query it was outlined that the rural beat officers would still cover busy villages and the mobile station would visit villages suffering a lower volume of crime incidents.

RA/22. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Chair reviewed those items raised at the last meeting and explained the progress made in each case.

With regard to the request for a speed reduction on the Repton to Willington Road a general discussion took place regarding this issue. It was agreed to ask the Environmental Services Committee of the Council to resolve to request that Derbyshire County Council reduce the speed limit on this particular road. Councillor Bladen advised that Repton Parish Council had looked at a traffic calming scheme for the village and sent it to Derbyshire County Council for suggested implementation. Concern was also expressed that the footpath crossing the bridge had no kerbstone in parts which created an additional problem. Repton Parish Council wanted the County Council to look at the whole of the school area as a focal point for a traffic calming scheme as when the pupils were changing classes this potential danger was causing a great deal of concern within the village. Mr. Mark Todd, MP was in attendance at the Meeting and advised that he had written to officers at Derbyshire County Council on this issue asking for their perceptions as to what the difficulties of a traffic calming scheme for the village were.

With regard to the issue of highways being 'dug-up' by public utility bodies immediately following the resurfacing of roads Mr. Todd, was in attendance at the Meeting to discuss this particular issue. He was advised that concern was raised largely due to a recent problem experienced regarding the resurfacing of Woodville High Street. Mr. Todd outlined that the law provided a framework for co-ordinating streetworks and this legal framework provided a code of practice for utilities operating and also additional powers for the Highways Authority. Mr. Todd advised that there was an obligation to provide times of when a road was to be dug-up and any works to this road should be co-ordinated so that the road was only dug-up once. A Good Practice Guide existed and suggested preventing the digging up of newly resurfaced roads. The Highways Authority had the power to insist that works were undertaken at certain times but these times could be varied in the case of urgently required works. Mr. Todd advised that he was interested in why Severn Trent had taken action to dig-up the newly resurfaced

Woodville High Street in this instance and he would be speaking to Severn Trent in this regard. He advised, for information, that a national body existed to co-ordinate such works. Mrs. Smith of Woodville Parish Council explained her understanding of why this particular problem had arisen for his information.

Mr. L. Taylor asked Mr. Todd if he would be prepared to attend a future Area Meeting to answer questions of which he had been given prior notice, to which Mr. Todd advised that he would be prepared to do.

RA/23. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Mr. Orme of Willington referred to two main areas of Willington namely, the railway station and the picnic area both of which were the responsibility of Derbyshire County Council and both of which did not benefit from public toilets. He understood that the District Council had the intention of closing the only public toilets in Willington if the Parish Council did not contribute towards their maintenance. He emphasised that there was a need to encourage tourism into the area and queried why as he perceived the residents of Willington were being charged twice to maintain this facility. The Chair advised that validity of the toilets in the village had been discussed at the Council at length and Mr. Orme suggested that the Council should reconsider the matter again. Mr. A. Gifford of Willington also asked for this matter to be reconsidered and representatives of Repton Parish Council advised that there was also concern regarding public toilets in the village of Repton. Repton residents had read in the press that plans existed to demolish the toilets in Repton although the Parish Council had no prior knowledge of this. The Chair advised that some parish councils within the District had taken up an offer of partnership working with the Council in order to keep public toilets open but that he envisaged that the Council would need to look at the matter again. For information he advised that the Council's Overview Committee had considered this issue in detail.

Mr. Morrow of Willington Parish Council asked what the District Council's stance was to be regarding development of land at risk from flooding. The Chair advised that the Council was currently undertaking a consultation exercise on its Local Plan and this document gave everyone the opportunity to comment on this particular issue. Mr. Morrow asked for an assurance that any decision to develop the former power station site at Willington would be stopped until the Local Plan document had been subject to consultation. He asked for an assurance that no discussions were being held with developers "behind the scenes". The Chair advised that he was not aware of any such discussions and Councillor Evens indicated that he wished to be advised of what discussions had been held with the site owners together with any feasibility studies or draft master plans which might be available for the site. It was agreed to ask the Planning Services Manager to report to Willington Parish Council on these issues.

Mr. M. Todd, MP suggested that the Environment Agency be invited to a future Meeting to give a presentation on how they operate in flood areas. Mr. Todd also gave his explanation of what he believed the consultation on the Local Plan involved and the weight carried by the Local Plan in regard to planning applications. He advised that new planning guidance strengthened

the role of the Environment Agency against the development of flood plains. Arising from the above discussion it was agreed to provide a definition of a 'brown field site' to Mr. Orme of Willington.

RA/24. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was reported that the next Repton Area Meeting was to be held on Thursday, 25th April 2002 at the Repton Village Hall.

RA/25. **EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT (AIRCRAFT NOISE)**

Mr. Neil Robinson, Environmental Officer and Jose Hill, Communications and Community Relations Manager at East Midlands Airport were in attendance at the Meeting and gave a presentation on the operation of Airport. Mr. Robinson gave a brief history of the site since the Airport was established in 1965. He advised of the annual total of aircraft movements during the period 1997 to 2001 which had largely remained unchanged. This was because as the number of passengers/parcels increased operators tended to user larger aeroplanes rather than increasing aircraft movements. The number of employees at the site had risen substantially and currently there were approximately 6,200 people working at the site. Mr. Robinson outlined the noise preferential flight paths which had been specifically designed to take aircraft away from built-up areas. Officers at the Airport monitored how operators were behaving in relation to these noise preferential flight paths (this monitoring only applied to departing aircraft). The system for monitoring aircraft landing had been in existence since the Airport was established and was typical of use at all Airports. It was reported that the percentage of aircraft on track on the preferential flight paths were well in excess of 90% in January 2002. Since the introduction of these flight paths the Airport had seen a substantial reduction in complaints.

With regard to aircraft noise Mr. Robinson talked about the phasing out of the Boeing 727 aircraft which was a particularly old noisy aircraft but was very reliable and used a great deal by cargo fleets. He advised that DHL had recently spent 1.3 billion dollars purchasing Boeing 757's which were much quieter and larger aircraft.

Mr. Robinson outlined further noise measures which had been introduced. One such measure was the Sound Insulation Grant Scheme (SIGS) which basically involved raising charges for those operators wishing to fly at night and regenerating this money into the 1,100 dwellings affected by noise by giving grants of up to £2,000 for secondary/double glazing. This was a five year scheme and it was envisaged that up to £1m would be available. The Airport had also invested £750,000 in a noise and track monitoring system. A night-time levy for noisy aircraft had been introduced together with a noise penalty scheme. A financial incentive for flights to operate during the day had also been introduced.

Jose Hill advised that three years ago the Airport did not have good public relations but that it had worked very hard during that time on becoming "good neighbours". During those three years representatives from the community had been invited to participate on an Independent Consultative Forum open to the public and each District Council within the Airport area was represented. Councillor Whyman, Leader of South Derbyshire District

Council currently chaired this Forum. Jose Hill outlined the major consultation developments which were taking place with the local community and also advised that a Pilot's Liaison Group had been established which met on a six monthly basis and discussed issues such as noise preferred routes and the compliance of adhering to these routes. She talked about the above mentioned Community Fund to be launched in 2002 and the first grants to be awarded in May. The Airport had provided an initial grant of £5,000 to "kick-start" the scheme and the eligibility area for applying to this fund was within 10 miles of the Airport. Councillor Shepherd represented SDDC on the Community Fund Group.

In order to provide links with the community the Airport had erected sixteen notice boards in the immediate area surrounding the Airport where job vacancies at the Airport were advertised together with any information on the operations of the Airport. These notice boards were updated every two weeks. In addition the Airport also undertook fire engine visits, educational tours and were currently working with Erewash Borough Council on a landscape project. (This project was launched in the summer of 2001 and involved the planting of 50,000 trees and shrubs and the creation of picnic areas and wildlife habitat.)

A representative of Repton Parish Council referred to a consultation document circulated by North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) which suggested that the East Midlands Airport was 40% noisier than Heathrow Airport. The European Court of Human Rights had ruled on this matter and determined that there needed to be a balance between economics and the impact on local people living close to the Airport. Accordingly, he asked for a quarter count level for the previous year. Mr. Robinson outlined that NWLDC had proposed a reduction in night-time movement of 50% which the Airport had found unacceptable. He was aware that EMA was one the biggest flyers at night but he emphasised that the UK economy generated a reliance on night-time flights and that it was the noisy aircraft that were causing the problem rather than the number of flights being undertaken.

Mr. Deboo referred to an engine surge/noise which was occasionally heard over the village of Repton and suggested that pilots could avoid this type of approach when landing. Mr. Robinson advised that good practice encouraged a continuous descent profile rather than a "stepped" approach which was the noisy approach referred to by Mr. Deboo. Mr. Robinson outlined that the Airport was looking at publicising statistics on types of descent undertaken by pilots once the equipment to do so was in operation.

A member of the public queried the date by which the Boeing 727's were to be phased out and was advised that a revised programme from DHL was awaited but it was believed that this aircraft was to be phased out at approximately one per month.

Councillor Alan Jones queried complaints regarding aircraft noise and was advised that the Airport received more complaints about departing aircraft in the District of South Derbyshire. The Airport monitored landing noise from a westerly approach but not from an easterly approach because the pilot had much less influence when approaching from this direction.

Councillor John Harrison representing the area of Melbourne was in attendance at the Meeting and thanked the representatives of East Midlands Airport for an interesting, informative and encouraging presentation. He advised that he was encouraged by further improvement on the noise preferential routes. He referred to pilots being able to use 1.5 kilometres either side of the noise preferential route line and asked whether there was any possibility in reducing this particular target. Mr. Robinson advised that the scheme of ten degrees either side of the noise preferential route line was used at most Airports and that currently the Airport achieved a 90% compliance. The Airport hoped to achieve a 95% compliance after which he did not see a problem with asking the Pilot Liaison Group to agree to a decrease in the area either side of the line. Councillor Harrison queried the recent announcement that Go and BMI Baby were to be using the Airport and was advised that both operators would be flying small 737 aircraft and would be mostly flying during the daytime. Councillor Harrison also expressed concern about the impact of the operations of the Airport on the road infrastructure and Mr. Robinson agreed to respond to Councillor Harrison separately on this particular matter. Jose Hill advised that she understood a link road was to be created to assist traffic on the A453 and the Airport was constantly encouraging people to use public transport.

Mr. M. Todd, MP advised that the Independent Consultative Forum was to meet with the Transport Minister early next month to agree noise measure controls for the airport and the Government had asked the Group to produce a solution which would avoid the prospect of having to implement noise controls nationally. He also understood that there was a suggestion to improve rail and bus communication to the Airport and to extend the Nottingham light rail system.

The Chair thanked Neil Robinson and Jose Hill for there excellent presentation.

RA/26. **BUDGET CONSULTATION**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Terry Neaves, Chief Finance Officer at the District Council. This was the first year that the Council had consulted on its budget proposals and it was hoped to develop the process further in future years. Mr. Neaves explained the financial crisis which the Council had faced in 1999. Since that time, measures had been taken to ensure sound financial management, including a Best Value Review of Financial Management and Control. Details were given of the Council's medium term financial strategy, the service and financial planning process and strengthened budgetary monitoring in place.

The Council's financial position had stabilised and there was an adequate level of Reserves. However, caution was still needed and it was proposed to refocus and reprioritise the services provided. Information was submitted on the financial constraints imposed by Government and the implications of expenditure above Government guidelines. The revenue budget proposals for 2002/03 were reported. These sought to maintain existing services, provide additional resources for service improvement which were in part offset by savings in existing services. There was the potential for a lower Council Tax increase than in previous years. Details of the proposed service developments and budget reductions had been circulated.

The capital spending proposals for 2002/03 were also reported. For this year, there was a single capital allocation which would give authorities greater freedom in allocating resources. Overall, Government allocations were falling and authorities were becoming more reliant on generating their own resources. The presentation concluded with a summary of the Council's financial position, an outline of how the feedback from the consultation meetings would be incorporated into the budget process and proposals to undertake further consultation during the summer on spending priorities for 2003/04.

Mrs. R. Booth queried the Council's financial crisis and asked why this had happened. Mr. Neaves indicated that this was due to a combination of factors. The Council had previously relied on its actual spending being less than its budget and had made provision for this. The financial crisis arose when the Council did spend right to its budget and the anticipated underspending did not arise. Mr. Neaves outlined revised internal procedures to ensure that this matter did not recur.

Mr. J. Parker of Willington asked whether the projected annual revenue from the proposed development of the former Willington power station site would outweigh the current revenue. Mr. Neaves outlined that the Council did not get any benefit from the amount paid by businesses as this was forwarded to a Central Government pot. Local authorities had pressed for control of business rates but currently there were no proposals for this to be changed. With regard to increased Council Tax generated by new properties Mr. Neaves outlined that those occupying those new properties expected services provided by the Council and therefore the cost to provide these services usually exceeded any income generated.

Mr. L. Taylor advised that it would be very informative if when discussing the issue of Council Tax, representatives from the County Council, the Police and the Fire Service could advise on their particular elements contained within the Council Tax Budget.

In response to a query on the level of the Council's reserves Mr. Neaves confirmed that the Council was currently operating above the minimum level of reserves recommended by District Audit. The Council was also now monitoring its reserves over a projected three year period to ensure that in three years time the Council would still have in excess of the recommended level of reserves.

S. TAYLOR

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 9.30 p.m.

