

REPTON AREA MEETING

25th January 2005

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Taylor (Chair), Councillor Bladen (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Bell, Ford, Mrs. Hood, Isham, Jones and Mrs. Wheeler.

Mr. F. McArdle (Chief Executive), K. Stackhouse (Head of Finance and Property Services), Mrs. J. Bellm (Democratic Services Assistant) and Mr. B. Jones (Helpdesk).

Derbyshire County Council

County Councillor A. Jones.

Derbyshire Constabulary

PC P. Martin.

Parish Council Representatives

D. Adams and J. Burley (Hartshorne Parish Council), A. Gifford (Willington Parish Council) and D. Oatley and R. Statham (Woodville Parish Council).

Members of the Public

Mr. and Mrs. Cowley, A. Gillespie, D. Kerry, J. Newman, J. Orme, N. Parry, P. Rainey, D. Roberts, S. Smith and D. Tagg.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Mark Todd M.P., Inspector Fairbrother (Derbyshire Constabulary), Mr. Atkin, H. Bowcott, S. Ellis, D. Jenkinson, A. Mayger and M. Thornton.

RA/16. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th November 2004 were received.

RA/17. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Chair reported that the problem of continuous flooding outside the Newton Park Hotel had been referred to C. Payne (Engineering Technician at South Derbyshire District Council). C. Payne had provided a written report which gave details of actions undertaken with regard to this issue. This report was read out to the Meeting and explained that the current situation was that a culvert, privately owned by the landowners, was in need of repair. There was no danger of flooding to properties but the highway was at risk as highway drainage was connected into the blocked culvert. Early in December residents had agreed to pay for a CCTV camera survey of the culvert, but had subsequently cancelled this survey pending a residents meeting. C. Payne reported that he had agreed to advise the residents as to what repairs were required once this survey had taken place.

RA/18. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A. Gifford queried whether a County Council publication entitled “Green Watch” had been updated and, if so, were there copies available to the general public. The Chair agreed to report back on this matter.

A. Gifford also reported that during the Christmas period there had been problems in Willington with the collection of blue bags. It appeared that not all residents had been notified of the suspension of the blue bag collection during this period. Some residents complained that a publication had been issued but had not been distributed securely resulting in many residents failing to receive these details. The Chair agreed to liaise with P. Evans (Direct Services Manager) to ensure that this situation did not recur.

A resident from Willington reported that a public inquiry into a footpath running from Bridleway (11) to the boundary of the Power Station in Willington, had resulted in the Parish Council establishing rights of way to this footpath. It was pointed out that this footpath had been closed for four years and the Chair was asked whether the District Council would assist the Parish Council with any clearance works required. The Chair congratulated the Parish Council for its success in this matter, and it was agreed that G. Fewkes (Footpaths Officer) would contact the Parish Council in order to offer his assistance.

In response to a question from a resident of Repton with regard to the location of a cardboard collection site, Councillor Bladen confirmed that there was a collection point in the Village Hall car park.

J. Orme informed the Meeting that he had written to the Highways Authority with regard to vehicular access at the “Blue Mumbai”, on the A38. He considered that the Highways Authority had a duty of responsibility for this issue, contrary to their statement which placed the onus of responsibility on the owners of the restaurant. J. Orme agreed to report back to the Meeting upon receipt of a response. County Councillor Jones confirmed that the County Council had been made aware of this issue, as had Mark Todd M.P.

Several residents felt that there was a need for traffic mirror at Hall Lane – Repton Road. County Councillor Jones reported that the Highways Authority had stated that the accident record in this area was not sufficient to warrant a mirror. He further reported that traffic safety engineers were of the opinion that these mirrors were distracting and were themselves a potential safety hazard. It was reported that national approval was required to install such a mirror. It was noted that speed humps had been installed on Hall Lane in an effort to slow down traffic movement and to try to enforce a 30 mph speed limit in this area. Country Councillor Jones reported that the speed humps had been installed at the request of the residents of Hall Lane in an effort to make this route unattractive to through traffic.

Councillor Ford requested that the District Council write to the operator of bus services travelling from Repton’s outlying villages into Burton and Derby. He stated that improvement was required as the current services were infrequent and did not meet residents requirements.

J. Orme asked if there had been any development on the Strategic Study which had taken place on the A50/A500 corridor. The Chief Executive informed the Meeting that the consultation period had come to an end and that the final report was awaited. He considered that this report would be available for public response by spring. Residents commented on the current lack of public transport on the A38/A50, stating that it was difficult, for example, for people who worked at Toyota to get to their workplace unless they had private means of transport. It was also considered that improvements needed to be made for cyclists on these roads. It was hoped that the final report would include comments with regard to these issues.

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

The Chair advised that the date and venue of the next Repton Area Meeting would be confirmed in due course. He commented that as the County Ward boundaries would be changing in May, this may have been the last Repton Area Meeting which he would attend as Chair. Councillor Mrs. Wheeler thanked the Chair for his service to this Meeting over the previous years.

RA/20. **CONSULTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Kevin Stackhouse, the Council's Finance and Property Services Manager. The aims of the presentation were to raise awareness of the Council's finances and to seek views on the Council's budget proposals. An outline was given of the topics to be covered and initially slides showed the total cost of revenue services. This comprised Environmental Services, Community Services and Corporate/Management Services. Capital spending was also explained. The slides showed the services provided by the County Council, the Police Authority and the Fire Authority.

In terms of managing the Council's finances, there was a focus on the longer term, with revenue estimates based over a three year period and capital estimates over a five year period. Government grant funding met around 55% of Council spending and another 10% of funding came in the form of specific grants. The general Government grant for 2005/06 for South Derbyshire had increased by 8%, when compared to the previous year. This recognised the growing population of the area and new spending pressures to be faced. Reference was made to the Government's grant funding formula and the Council received just under £400,000 less than that identified in the formula. However, this position had improved from the previous year.

A chart showed the breakdown of the Council Tax bill in terms of the funding required by the County Council, the Police Authority, the Fire Authority and the District Council. Future Council Tax projections allowed for an increase of 4.5% each year for District Council services. The level of Council Tax increase for 2005/06 was still to be determined, but the Government guideline was for increases of less than 5%. The Government had warned councils about excessive increases and it had powers to "cap" increases if necessary.

The Council's projected financial position was explained. It had a good financial base, with improving levels of reserves. An outline was given of financial issues, comprising new spending pressures and the Council's plans to meet these pressures. The financial position was summarised and a

further slide explained the Council's budget process. Money was available for service improvements, for both revenue and capital schemes. The presentations concluded with an outline of proposed areas for new spending and feedback was sought from the Area Meeting.

The Chair thanked the Officer for an excellent presentation and invited any questions.

D. Oatley asked whether any funding would be provided to the District Council for the provision of licensing, a service currently provided by the Courts. The Officer advised that licensing costs were included in the General Government Grant for 2005/06 and that the Government had commented that income received from licence applications should cover any administrative costs.

A resident queried what revenue was received by the District Council for waste and recycling. The Finance Officer reported that credits were received for these services and confirmed that some recycling credits did supplement income. He reported that there were targets in place to increase the amount of recycling but advised that the Council does incur costs with some collections.

A. Statham questioned whether the £700,000 allocated to capital schemes was divided amongst proposed schemes. The Finance Officer advised that bids were made for each scheme with a scoring system applied. It was possible therefore that two bids could take up all allocated funds, the remaining schemes would then be carried forward to next year's budget.

One of the proposed areas of new spending for the revenue budget was the provision of street wardens. In response to a question from a resident, the Chief Executive explained that it was proposed to provide three street wardens, with the use of a van, in the South Derbyshire District. He confirmed that he was still in consultation with the Police, trying to determine where these street wardens would be best placed. It was envisaged that the street warden would be a presence, making streets safer and reducing crime and disorder. The use of the van would mean that the street warden was mobile and could quickly respond to any incidents anywhere within the District. A. Gifford commented that three street wardens was a small number for the whole of South Derbyshire. The Chair responded by stating that three street wardens was a starting point and that hopefully, if successful, the scheme would be expanded. He also commented that large setup costs were a consideration. The Chair commented that South Derbyshire was a low crime area but a survey had shown that the fear of crime was very high. The Chair felt that the street warden scheme would help to alleviate this fear.

S. TAYLOR

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 8.05 p.m.