

MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2009
2.30 PM



GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Peter Martin-Mayhew
Councillor John Nicholson (Chairman)

Councillor Peter Stephens
Councillor Jeff Thompson (Vice-
Chairman)
Councillor Raymond Wootten

PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Councillor John Smith (Healthy
Environment)

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Bob Adams
Councillor Linda Neal

OFFICERS

Corporate Head, Sustainable
Communities (T.T)
Corporate head, Resources and
Organisational Development (P.S)
Service Manager, Assets and Facilities
(L.B)
Principal Democracy Officer (P.M)
Committee Support Officer (J.G)
Divisional Highways Manager (B.T)

24. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Ken Otter, a Member of the Police Panel in Stamford, spoke with regard to parking problems in Red Lion Square, Stamford.

- Mr Otter was looking forward to the introduction of civil parking enforcement, but felt that the Police required help in the interim until the scheme was implemented.

- Red Lion Square was a constant battlefield for trying to enforce parking regulations, as the highway signs were too high, some facing the wrong way and were too muddled for drivers to see / understand.
- Police were reluctant to enforce the parking regulations in Red Lion Square, as many people had not seen the signs and did not realise they were committing an offence. Police didn't want to punish visitors to Stamford, and discourage them from returning.

Brian Thompson, Divisional Highways Manager for Lincolnshire County Council was present for an item later on the agenda, and the Chairman allowed him to address Mr Otter's concerns.

- The signs used in Red Lion Square were used specifically to minimise clutter and reflect the historic setting.
- It was an unusual scheme, but not unique.
- Mr Thompson would look at the signs which were reportedly facing the wrong way, with the view to getting these corrected as soon as possible.

Members also noted the vast improvement to the London Road – Wharf Road crossroads, and commended Mr Thompson and his team for the work done.

25. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Channell.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interest was declared during the course of the meeting:-

Councillor Wootten – personal interest in Item 1 comments from the public – due to him being the Chairman of Grantham Neighbourhood Policing Panel, and also as a member of the National Association of Retired Police Officers.

27. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 17TH SEPTEMBER 2009

The action notes of the meeting held 17th September 2009 were noted.

28. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Carbon Management Plan

- The energy figures for the Meres Leisure Centre did include the energy used by the stadium. Members noted that as such, it detracted from the figures that the Meres could achieve.

OS maps

- Tracey Blackwell, Interim Strategic Director, had contacted Councillor Channell directly to talk with her about the recommendation for OS maps.
- The new SKDC website was up and running, which had on it maps of the district. The maps had a search function, where you could enter a

postcode or a street name, and it would find the point on the map. It was noted that staff members could use this function as well as the public.

Dog Control Orders

- After some delay, Dog Control Orders was now on the Forward Plan, and was scheduled to come before Cabinet in March 2010.
- The draft report was scheduled therefore, to come to the Communities PDG in January.

Stamford Recreation Ground

- SKDC had agreed to transfer the land, and the issue was now subject to public consultation.
- The issue had been advertised in the Stamford Mercury the previous week as part of the consultation, and as yet officers had received no objections, and only one query.
- Following the public consultation, the issue would then go to Cabinet for approval, subject to Stamford Town Council accepting the conditions of the transfer.

(2.52pm – Councillor Bisnauthsing entered the meeting).

29. LINCOLNSHIRE HIGHWAYS

Brian Thompson, Divisional Manager of Highways for LCC was present to talk about roadworks in South Kesteven, and how the county council advertises them.

The county council currently advertised road works in the following ways:-

- 2 x 6-monthly newsletters informing of all planned works, to all parish councils, county councillors and to the district council;
- Quarterly newsletters with a 3 month view on upcoming roadworks to all parish councils, county councillors and to the district council;
- Significant projects had press releases, but there was no guarantee that the press would print it, or that people buy that particular newspaper;
- Road signs i.e. “work starts here on 14th December for 3 weeks”;
- For significant projects, the county council might pay Royal Mail to deliver a notice through residents doors with their mail;
- Sometimes contractors will knock on residents’ doors to inform them of work about to commence.

Mr Thompson advised the group that feedback had shown that the one element complained about the most with regard to roadworks, was the lack of notice given. He referred to the means of informing outlined above, and asked members for any ideas on how to improve.

- The Chairman suggested having artists impressions on road signs,

depicting how the area will look after the works were completed. Mr Thompson informed the group that this was already done, but only for large scale projects, due to the costs involved. He stated that sometimes schools were even asked to be involved with this.

- The Vice-Chairman suggested that Mr Thompson's department could set up a stall in the Isaac Newton Centre in Grantham on a Saturday morning, and in similar places in Bourne, Stamford and the Deepings, to inform people of upcoming roadworks. Mr Thompson said that this was a possibility.

The group then asked questions of Mr Thompson in other respects and had further discussions:-

- A member asked about A-boards, and the council's stance on these on the pavements. Mr Thompson advised that the effort and cost of enforcing this issue was not justifiable compared to the small fine imposed on businesses by the courts. It was not value for money for the tax payer. Businesses putting A-boards on the pavements were asked to be respectful of pedestrians. It was suggested that powers for the enforcement of this issue could be delegated to the parish and town councils. Mr Thompson said he would certainly look into the feasibility of this suggestion.
- A member asked on the progress of the relief road. The first phase had had private funding confirmed. The county council were looking to impose a lorry ban on the centre of Grantham from day one of phase one of the relief road being open. A member expressed concerned about the number of large vehicles turning right at Gainsborough Corner onto Bridge End Road once phase one was complete, but was reassured that this would not be a big problem. Mr Thompson confirmed that there were still plans to create an extra lane at the bottom of Springfield Road near Pizza Hut for vehicles turning left onto London Road.
- The group discussed the feasibility of a park and ride in Grantham. Members were advised that places such as Lincoln and Peterborough, with larger shopping centres, were struggling to achieve the number of people needed to make the scheme viable, so Grantham was extremely unlikely to cope. The group were reminded that the bus system in Grantham was having a £1.2 million overhaul, plus funding for the next 4 years. It would be much easier for the public to get into town that way.
- A member asked about the provision of cycle lanes. Mr Thompson spoke about Community Travel Zones and the budget for cycle paths. The number of requests for cycle paths far outweighed the budget to provide them. He noted that one way to get around this problem was to legalise the use of bicycles on pavements in a certain area.

30. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

Liz Banner and Paul Stokes gave a brief update on the progress of Civil Parking Enforcement.

- The councils in Lincolnshire were working together to aim for implementation in September 2010.
- The City of Lincoln Council had agreed to take on the administration of the project.
- Due to different financial models being used by each authority, there were details that were changing on a daily basis, and everything needed to be confirmed before a decision was made.
- A decision was due from SKDC by January 2010.
- SKDC may outsource the enforcement work, but it would depend on the contract drawn up. Either way, there would need to be safeguards for the council and safeguards for the public.

31. "WHAT HAS SCRUTINY EVER DONE FOR US?"

Members watched a DVD “ What had Scrutiny Ever Done for Us?” which gave examples of where policy development and scrutiny has been used well in other authorities.

Following the DVD members had a discussion concerning where policy development fit into scrutiny. The Committee Support Officer advised that policy development was pre-decision scrutiny, whereas the Scrutiny Committee looked at decisions that had already been made.

32. EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Recommendation:-

That the Communities PDG meet for an extraordinary meeting on the 17th November – time and venue to be confirmed by the Committee Support Officer.

The Chairman advised members that he had agreed to an extraordinary meeting in December to look at the Housing Strategy along with the Waste Management Strategy and another update on the Civil Parking Enforcement.

Various dates were suggested, but it was agreed that the group meet on the 17th December. The Committee Support Officer advised that she would confirm the date, time and venue with members in writing.

33. LOCAL FORUMS

A member noted that local forums were poorly attended, and asked if more money could be made available for advertising. The group were advised that all local forums in January had an item on their agenda concerning the future of local forums. Forum members would be asked if they want the forums to continue, and if so, in what form. Teena Twelves noted that the planning forums had become very successful, and with these and the annual parish and town council conference, it was worthwhile looking at the value of the current local forums.

34. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting concluded at 4.25pm.