

## **North Chichester County Local Committee**

**27<sup>th</sup> September 2011** – At a meeting of the Committee held at 7pm at Loxwood Primary School.

Present: Mr Michael Brown (Chairman), Mr Chris Duncton and Mr Mark Dunn.

Apologies were received from: Ms Nola Hendon.

### **Chairman's Welcome**

31. The Chairman welcomed the public and representatives from the District and Parish Councils.

### **Declaration of Interest**

32. None.

### **Minutes**

33. Resolved - that the minutes of the meeting of the County Local Committee (CLC) held on 7th April 2011 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### **Urgent Matters**

34. None.

### **Progress Statement**

35. The Committee noted a progress statement which provided updates on matters arising from previous meetings of the CLC (copy appended to signed minutes).

### **Infrastructure Planning**

36. The Committee received a verbal update from Fiona Baker, Community Highway Officer, on the infrastructure planning process. She advised that this was a new way of working to ensure that priorities were established considering the range of community proposals in the area and not through the consideration of proposals in isolation. She confirmed that letters had been sent to the Parish Councils within the CLC area asking them to submit their priorities as part of the process. She encouraged members of the local community to email her directly (copying in their local County Councillors) with the priorities that they would like to see included on the list ([fiona.baker@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.baker@westsussex.gov.uk)).

37. Fiona asked that a full report would be provided to the next meeting of the CLC in January and the Committee would be asked to consider a range of priorities to be reviewed for progression within available resources. She confirmed that there was no guarantee that all priorities would be implemented.

38. Resolved – that the verbal update be noted.

## **Loxwood Speed Limit – Experimental TRO (B2133 Guildford Road) 6-month Review**

39. The Committee considered a report by Director of Communities and Infrastructure (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report provided the results of the six-month Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for the introduction of a 40mph speed limit on the B2133 Guildford Road, Loxwood and asked the Committee to agree one of five recommendations contained in the report (as set out below): -

- (1) That the local community and the County Local Committee identify appropriate funding to enable an acceptable scheme to be developed and introduced to ensure that average speeds of below 42mph can be achieved; or
- (2) That the extent of the experimental 40mph limit is reduced to only cover the rural settlement of Alford Bars; or;
- (3) That the experimental order be removed entirely and the road return to a derestricted speed limit; or
- (4) That a speed limit of 50mph be implemented; or
- (5) That dispensation be sought from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to depart from County Council policy and so enable the implementation of the permanent 40mph limit.

40. The report advised that the speed surveys indicated that average speeds across all four sites surveyed did not fall below 42mph and therefore did not meet the criteria for a permanent 40mph limit to be introduced.

41. The Committee discussed the report. Local residents asked questions and made comments including those that follow: -

- Asked for clarification regarding the full extent of measures proposed in recommendation one and the funding avenues. The Chairman advised that the recommendation was that the local community and CLC further explore opportunities for funding and that a scheme would only be designed once funding had been secured.
- Supported the 40mph limit being made permanent as they considered the experimental order had been successful in reducing speeds and had therefore improved safety, particularly for local children using the road to travel to and from school.
- Considered that calming measures were needed immediately to reduce speeds.
- Expressed disappointment that speed data was not obtained for Loxwood Village as the data could therefore not provide a true indication of speeds through the village itself.
- Thanked the CLC for seeking approval from the Cabinet Member for the experimental order to be implemented.
- Asked the CLC to consider the provision of speedwatch devices within the Infrastructure Planning process to assist the local Speedwatch group to get up and running at Alford Bars.
- Expressed dissatisfaction with the response from Sussex Police that static enforcement tactics were not an option at this location and the recommendation that the County Council consider introducing measures within Alford Bars or shorten the speed limit.

- Considered that in their opinion the trial had brought down the number of accidents / incidents.
- Did not support the recommendation for a 50mph speed limit.
- One local resident considered that the reduced speed limit was unnecessary as the issues relating to the need for a reduced limit only applied to children crossing the road during short periods at the beginning and end of the day.
- Suggested demarcation signs for Alford Bars highlighting that motorists were entering a village/hamlet would make a significant difference to speeds and asked for indication of the cost of such a sign. Fiona Baker advised that the sign would cost in the region of £700.
- Suggested that quality of life was a major factor and that noise had been reduced as a result of the experimental 40mph limit.
- Asked whether funding would also be available for other options e.g. Gateway signs if the recommendation to seek dispensation from the Cabinet Member for the 40mph to be made permanent was approved. Fiona Baker advised that members would have to identify funding and that the Highways Engineers could not design a scheme until the funds were approved.
- Asked whether the experimental 40mph limit would remain if recommendation one was approved. Fiona Baker advised that recommendation one was not a permanent 40mph speed limit.

42. Mr Duncton commented that he had supported the experimental 40mph limit from the beginning and was pleased with the overwhelming support from local residents for the reduced speed limit to be made permanent.

43. Mr Dunn commented that speed clearly had an impact on the seriousness of accidents and that there was a need to change people's attitudes. He confirmed that if the Committee approved recommendation five it would ultimately be a decision for the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to decide.

44. The Committee agreed that, on the basis that the speed survey results at two of the sites indicated that average speeds had fallen below 42mph (the speed required for a 40mph limit to be made permanent) and that at the other two sites speeds were sufficiently close, to approve recommendation five to seek dispensation from the Cabinet Member for the 40mph limit to be made permanent.

45. Local residents thanked CLC members for their support.

46. Resolved - That dispensation be sought from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to depart from County Council policy and so enable the implementation of the temporary 40mph limit to become permanent.

### **Old Ditcham Road, Harting – Stopping Up**

47. The Committee considered a report by Director Communities and Infrastructure (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report advised that the County Council had received a request that a stretch of highway along Old Ditcham Lane, Harting, be 'Stopped Up' and a new diversion route be built in place of the old highway, providing a more direct route to Ditcham Park School, avoiding conflict with traffic from Old Ditcham Farm. The old highway would be used in a private capacity.

48. Fiona Baker introduced the report. She advised that the request was from Old Ditcham Farm and confirmed that there was no cost to the County Council.
49. The Committee discussed the report. Mr Dunn questioned whether the track in question was actually in West Sussex and said he would be opposing the request.
50. The Committee voted on the recommendation. The vote was carried by a majority of two (One member abstained).
51. Resolved – That the Committee authorises the Head of Democratic and Legal Services to make an application to the Magistrates Court to Stop Up the part of the public highway and adopt the new diversion route shown on the plan contained in the Appendix.

### **West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service – Proposed Merger**

52. 44. The Committee received a presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes) from Sean Ruth, Deputy County Fire Officer, West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). The presentation advised that East Sussex and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services were developing a business case on options to increase operational resilience and preserve frontline services to the public across West Sussex, East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove. A 12-week consultation process started on 14th July 2011 to provide the opportunity for residents, business and public organisations to give their views on a potential merger. It was noted that comments made at the meeting would be fed into the consultation and inform the County Council's decision in December.
53. Mr Ruth advised that the main driver for the merger was a need to save £2.5m from the West Sussex FRS and £3.8m overall across East and West Sussex. He said the overall aim was to protect frontline services. He advised that the Combined Fire Authority would comprise of members of all three councils - 12 from West Sussex County Council, 8 from East Sussex County Council and 4 from Brighton and Hove City Council.
54. A number of comments/questions were raised, including: -
- Asked about the effects of the proposed merger on Gatwick Airport. Mr Ruth advised that Gatwick Airport had its own Fire Service and that there would be no changes to fire cover arrangements as a result of the merger.
  - Asked about the future of Billingshurst Fire Station. Mr Ruth advised that it was very unlikely that there would be any changes to Billingshurst Fire Station as a result of the merger.
  - Asked about the cost of the merger to the County Council and about potential job losses. Mr Ruth advised that a bid had been submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government for funding and if successful there would be no cost to the County Council of moving the location of the control room. He advised that staff models were being looked at along with more efficient use of IT systems and opportunities for a reduced vehicle fleet.
55. Resolved – That the presentation be noted and that the comments made be fed into the consultation process.

## **North Chichester Community Initiative Funding**

56. The Committee considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which sought decisions on applications received under the CIF scheme (copy appended to the signed minutes).

57. Resolved – That the Committee awards the following amounts: -

- **1629/NC Midhurst Museum Association**, £467, to purchase a display unit for the planned museum
- **1663/NC New Lipchis Way**, £450, part-funding for the re-writing and publication of current trail guide.
- **1664/NC Harting Parish Council**, £600, part-funding for the off road cycle track.

## **Appointment of Authority School Governors**

58. The Committee considered a report by Director Operations – Learning, which set out proposed nominations to school governing bodies and the criteria for their appointment (copy appended to the signed minutes).

59. The Chairman congratulated Camelsdale Primary School on its recent 'Outstanding' inspection grades from Ofsted for Overall effectiveness and the school's capacity for sustained improvement and asked that an extract from the minutes be sent to the Chairman of Governors at the school.

60. Resolved that the following four-year term appointment be made:

- Mr R Uffold to Camelsdale Primary School.

## **"Talk with us" (Community Voices)**

61. The Chairman invited questions from members of the public. Questions were asked to which responses were given, including those set out below:

- Asked for guidance on how Lurgashall Parish Council could apply for a 'Please Drive Slowly Through Our Village' sign. Fiona Baker suggested that the Parish Council should initially contact her by email and that she would look at the site.
- Asked who local communities should approach with regard to '20s Plenty' campaigns.
- CLC Members encouraged local people to apply for Community Initiative Funding.

## **Dates of Future Meetings**

62. The next meeting of the Committee would take place on Tuesday 24th January 2012 at a venue to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

CHAIRMAN