

## **South Mid Sussex County Local Committee**

08 July 2009 – **At a meeting of the Committee at 7pm at St Paul's Catholic College, Burgess Hill**

Present:

Peter Griffiths (Chairman)	-	Member for Hurstpierpoint and Bolney
Sue Knight	-	Member for Burgess Hill East
Heather Ross	-	Member for Burgess Hill Town

Apologies:

Colin Wilsdon	-	Member for Hassocks and Victoria
---------------	---	----------------------------------

In attendance:

Spencer Bryan	-	Locality Manager
Lisa Creaye Griffin	-	Rural Operations Group Manager
Laura Johnston	-	Assistant Locality Officer
Paul Mace	-	Local Traffic Engineer
Emma Shuttleworth	-	Housing Enabling Manager, Housing Services, at Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC)
Duncan Taylor	-	Project Manager (Housing and Support)
Suzanne Thompson	-	Locality Officer

### **Chairman's Welcome**

1. The Chairman Peter Griffiths welcomed all to the meeting of the newly elected Committee noting apologies from Colin Wilsdon, member for Hassocks and Victoria. A special welcome was extended to Heather Ross the new member for Burgess Hill Town.

2. The Committee was introduced to the West Sussex County Council officers supporting items on the agenda, and partners from South Mid Sussex organisations in attendance to participate in the informal section of the evening. These were Action in Rural Sussex; In Touch, floating support service; Anchor Staying Put, Home Improvement Agency; the Southdowns Housing Association and the Mid Sussex Community Partnership Team.

### **Declaration of Interests**

3. There were no declarations of interest.

### **Minutes**

4. Resolved that the minutes of the South Mid Sussex (SMS) County Local Committee (CLC) meeting held on 29 April 2009 are

confirmed as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### **Urgent Matters**

5. There were no urgent matters.

### **Matters Arising/Progress Statement**

6. The Chairman referred members to this document updating all on progress since the last meeting, giving a verbal update on one item. Members noted that the implementation of the new speed limit in Albourne had not yet been completed due to delays in determining a power source with the lighting contractor EDF. It was anticipated that this problem would soon be resolved.

### **Supported Housing Services in South Mid Sussex**

7. The Chairman introduced Duncan Taylor, WSCC Project Manager (Housing and Support) to give a presentation on Housing with Support, detailing WSCCs work in partnership with local communities (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Chairman then introduced Emma Shuttleworth, Housing Enabling Manager at Mid Sussex District Council to give a presentation on the local affordable housing and housing related support available in South Mid Sussex (copy appended to the signed minutes).

8. The Chairman invited comments and questions from members, responses were as follows:

- A question was posed to both presenters requesting information on the process of forecasting need. *It was noted that the County team compiled data from a range of sources, from colleagues' existing case loads, from National Health Service (NHS) databases and databases of colleagues at District and Borough Councils. The MSDC process included compiling information from the County Wide Strategic Housing market Assessment which included a specific analysis of the needs for Mid Sussex Assessment that had been undertaken in 2009. The assessment used information from the Common Housing Register, and looked at the demographics of income, employment and travel to work patterns and a range of other sources.*
- A member noted that the MSDC presentation detailed affordable housing in South Mid Sussex and commented that most residents seem to be unaware of this. The process for joining the list was questioned. *It was noted that this information was publicised through a range of leaflets and was available on the MSDC website. The forthcoming launch of Choice Based Lettings in April 2010 was highlighted, where residents could 'bid' for an affordable housing property. It was noted while this may increase the numbers on the register and would make the allocation of affordable housing more accessible and transparent for those in housing need, it did not result in more housing.*
- Concerns was emphasised on the time it takes to find suitable housing for residents with mental health problems, highlighting that often a person experiences a mental breakdown and hospitalisation before they are offered

suitable accommodation. *The need for a strong relationship with colleagues in the Primary Care Trusts was highlighted.*

- A member questioned what work was being undertaken to bring empty houses into use in the area. *It was noted that this work was ongoing with one member of MSDC staff having a part-time role dedicated to working with home owners to put their properties up for let or to sell them. Where persuasion did not work and an Empty Dwelling Management Order could be served. These orders can be problematic to use if the properties are in a very poor state of repair and need major works.*
- A member noted the possibility of an increase in domestic violence as a result of the current economic downturn and questioned what facilities were available in South Mid Sussex to help residents cope with this. *It was noted that there was not data on this available yet but anecdotally it did seem to be increasing currently. Members noted that the charity R.I.S.E. (Refuge, Information, Support and Education) did provide an excellent service locally providing a refuge and a drop in service. Locally there was also the Safe at Home service, funded by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership that worked in conjunction with Downland Housing to assist victims of violence to stay in their own homes by providing additional security features for their properties.*

9. The Chairman invited questions and comments from residents. Responses were as follows:

- A resident requested information on services available for those leaving prison, noting the proximity of Lewes prison to the area. *All were informed that should an ex-offender apply for assistance with accommodation the housing team would certainly offer advice and assistance but that they only had a duty to house vulnerable applicants under the Homelessness legislation, whilst noting that a homeless ex offender might be vulnerable if they had additional needs such as mental illness. It was highlighted, however, that MSDC does work with the police and probation services on both dangerous and prolific offenders to try to avoid any homelessness as this can be a contributory factor to criminal offences*
- A resident questioned whether Downland was a 'shell' company for Affinity Housing and raised concerns that profits from buildings in South Mid Sussex were being used to build houses in London and elsewhere. *Emma Shuttleworth of MSDC undertook to respond to this point and send an answer for the next meeting.*

10. The Chairman thanked officers and residents for their input. The Chairman also thanked the Housing teams for their efforts in assisting the victims of a recent house fire in the area. It was noted that credit should go to the Downland Housing Association for their efforts in this regard. (Post meeting note: This comment has been forwarded to Downland Housing).

11. Resolved that the response to the query raised on profits from local Downland tenancies were being reinvested away from the area would be reported back to the Committee's Progress Statement for the next meeting.

12. The meeting was adjourned for half an hour for refreshments and a tour of the display stands provided by WSCC and partner organisations working in the area of Housing in South Mid Sussex.

### **Priorities for Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)**

13. The Chairman reconvened the meeting and invited Paul Mace, Local Traffic Engineer to present a report (copy appended to the signed minutes) requesting the Committees approval of the priority order for Traffic Regulation Orders for 2009/10.

14. The Chairman invited a resident to comment having noted that there was a misunderstanding on the process for TROs generally and specifically on the progress of the TRO in the current list for Hurstpierpoint High Street. Mr Mace undertook to meet with the resident at a later date to explain the process and to ensure that local views on this TRO were taken into account.

15. Comments and questions from members were requested. Responses were as follows:

- A member requested that the TRO team ensure that no consultations were undertaken in the summer recess period when most people took their annual holiday. *This was noted.*
- A member requested that the TRO listed as the number three priority be removed as this would not be needed once the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) had been implemented. *The Chairman highlighted recent information received informing members that this scheme had been halted as a result of the recently held County Elections and that a date for its reprogramming had not been received. The Committee voiced its considerable disquiet at this news and it was suggested that a letter be written to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport requesting his urgent assistance in reinstating this scheme to allow implementation before the end of the year. This proposal was seconded and the Chairman noted the Committees' agreement to this proposal.*
- It was suggested that Ferndale be removed from the list and that a TRO to address the problems with traffic flow in Leylands Road near St John's Avenue be put at the top of the list. This proposal was seconded and noted by the Chairman.

16. Resolved that the Committees' top three priorities for TROs for 2009/10 are:

- i) TROBH093 Leylands Road
- ii) TROBHO19 Mill Road
- iii) TROBHO61 Junction Rise to Junction Close

### **talk with us (Community Forum)**

17. The Chairman invited questions and comments on anything not already on the agenda, there were no responses. The Chairman invited Spencer Bryan, Locality Manager to address the meeting. Residents were informed of the importance of CLC meetings in highlighting local issues and that the Committee

were keen to gauge what the residents felt was of importance to them. Residents were referred to the feedback leaflet placed on their chairs and encouraged to respond to the questionnaire.

### **Hassocks – Keymer Road Mobile Street Trading**

18. The Chairman invited Paul Mace, Local Traffic Engineer to outline a report on formalising the operation of mobile street traders in Hassocks village centre (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Committee was requested to approve the authorisation of the Mid Sussex Parking Services Team to issue Dispensation Notices to local traders as listed in the report and provide guidance on the most appropriate location for the street trading or a way forward in determining the most appropriate location.

19. The Chairman invited comments and questions from residents, responses were as follows:

- It was noted that there were strong feelings on this question in Hassocks but that no formal view had as yet been taken by the Parish Council. The wish to support both the public and local businesses was highlighted as was the necessity to ensure that the amount of vans trading was regulated to two as it was considered they had a large commercial advantage over high street businesses in Hassocks. The final request made was that any measure determined upon be trialled for a year before being made permanent.

20. The Chairman noted that the local member, Colin Wilsdon was not present at the meeting but had previously voiced his support for an informal consultation exercise to be carried out to enquire of the traders, shoppers and local businesses their wishes on the preferred location for street trading in Hassocks. The Committee considered and gave their agreement that a consultation be undertaken and that any measures implemented be trialled for one year.

21. Resolved:

- i) that the Locality Working Team would carry out a short informal consultation to determine local wishes on the preferred location for street trading in Hassocks; and that
- ii) trading in the preferred location would be trialled for one year ahead of a permanent arrangement

### **The South Downs National Park**

22. The Chairman introduced Lisa Creaye-Griffin, Rural Operations Group Manager, to outline a report by Director of Operations – Community Services (copy appended to the signed minutes) asking the Committee to give the Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy its views on the response to Defra's consultation on the membership of the National Park Authority (NPA).

23. The Chairman invited comments and responses from the Parish Chairmen present. Responses were as follows:

- Concern was raised in regard to possible duplication of planning committees.

- Fears were voiced that local views would not be taken into consideration and Parish Councils become consultees rather than decision makers.
- The possibility of local decisions being taken distantly in East Hampshire was raised.
- Concerns were voiced over conflicting issues around housing needs.
- It was noted that the consultation element would remain but that an authority of 37 would be a very large body to deal with. An authority of 29 members was preferred.

The Chairman invited comments and questions from Members. Responses were as follows:

- Preference was given for a smaller number of members on the Authority
- It was noted that a larger number would be unwieldy and that with a smaller authority local people would still have their say. A request was made that planning authority be delegated locally. Members noted that strictly speaking this would not be possible but that there was potential for an agency-type system which would be able to respond to local concerns. *A resident responded that with the system at present should MSDC make a decision to reject an application and it go on to appeal that appeal would be decided by one person, which was not democratic and therefore 29 people deciding was better than one.*

24. Resolved:

- i) that the Committee consider that a smaller NPA would be preferable at 29 rather than 37; and that
- ii) the comments made on the formation of the NPA will be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy

### **Community Initiative Funding**

25. The Chairman introduced a Report by the Head of Democratic Services detailing bids for Community Initiative Funding and requested Members consideration of the applications.

26. Resolved that:

- i) The following applications were approved: 1014 Windmills Opportunity Play Group for £1,000, 1027 Little Fishes Baby and Toddler Group for £500, 1053 Age Concern Burgess Hill for £1,460, 1025 'Trees for Hassocks' for £1,000
- ii) The Committee declined to fund 1036 Cobnor Activities Centre as this is a Countywide facility and as such is outside the Committee's funding criteria

### **Local Authority (LA) School Governors**

27. The Chairman referred the Committee to the application for reappointment to school governorship of Mrs C Jeanne to Albourne Primary and requested its consideration of a further reappointment not on the agenda, that of Mr Andrew Barratt-Miles to be reappointed to Southway Junior School subject to final approval and acceptance by the local member and the nominee, which it had not been possible to confirm before the meeting.

28. Resolved:

- i) that Mrs C Jeanne be reappointed to Albourne Primary for a further four year term; and that
- (ii) Mr Andrew Barrett Miles be reappointed to Southway Junior School for a further four year term; subject to final approval and acceptance by the local member and the nominee

### **Date of Next Meeting**

29. The Chairman informed all of the date of the next meeting on 05 October at a venue yet to be decided.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

**Chairman**