

Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee

Tuesday 6 March 2012, – At a meeting of the Committee held at 7 pm at The John de Bohun Room, Rustington.

Present:

West Sussex County Council Mr Evans, Mr Britton, Dr Walsh, Mr Tyler, Mrs Urquhart and Mr Peters.

Arun District Council Councillor Mrs Hazlehurst (Chairman), Councillor Mr R Bower, Councillor Mr R Elkins, Councillor Mrs Emberson, Councillor Mr Bicknell

Town / Parish Council representatives Councillor Mr Mountain (Angmering), Councillor Mrs Robertson (Ferring), Councillor Mr A Cooper (Rustington), Councillor Mrs Walker (Kingston) (Vice Chairman), Councillor Mrs Akhurst (East Preston) and Councillor Mrs Neno (Littlehampton)

In attendance:

West Sussex County Council: Emily King (Better Communities Manager), Monique Smart (Democratic Services Officer), Matthew Bartle (Senior Planner), Alex Jack (County Highways Manager)

Arun District Council: Wendy Ashenden-Bax (Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer) and Karl Roberts (Assistant Director of Planning services & Housing Strategy)

Asda: David Bell (Agent)

Chairman's Welcome

96. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

97. The Chairman stated that she was aware that a number of local residents were in attendance to ask questions in relation to the highways issues around the Asda development on the A259. The Chairman explained that this would be dealt with at agenda item 6 'Talk With Us' and that she had extended the time of that agenda item to allow everyone to have a chance to speak. The Chairman did however explain that the Committee had no power to make a decision on any aspect of this issue but could only make recommendations for County Council officers to consider, prior to sealing the Section 278 agreement with Asda.

98. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mr R Steward, Mrs J Bowyer and Mrs S Lines.

Declarations of interest

99. In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, the following personal interests were declared:

- Dr Walsh as a Member of Littlehampton Town Council and Arun District Council

- Mr Britton as a Member of Littlehampton Town Council and Arun District Council
- Mr Evans as a Member of Ferring Parish Council
- Councillor Mrs Emberson as a Member of Littlehampton Town Council
- Councillor Mr Elkins as a Member of Ferring Parish Council
- Councillor Mr Bicknell as a Member of Angmering Parish Council.

Minutes

100. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee, held on 6 December 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Progress Statement

101. The Committee had before it a progress statement on matters arising from the previous meeting (copy appended to the signed minutes). Comment/queries were as follows:

- Roadside Vehicle Sales. It was hoped that the contract would commence in April. Members welcomed the delivery of this contract as soon as possible.
- LAA Reward Grant. Awaiting a further meeting to progress.
- Members noted the outcome of the New Homes Bonus funding by Town and Parish Councils.
- Councillor Mr Elkins asked what the status of the Littlehampton Infrastructure Plan was in relation to the Pier Road and East Bank development. Dr Walsh confirmed that the Highways and Transport Sub Group were awaiting the final report to comment on the four options.

'Talk with Us' – Public Questions

102. The Chairman opened the meeting to questions from members of the public. In the discussion that followed, a number of points were raised, which included those set out below (responses in *italics*):

- A representative from Ferring Conservation Group commented that this meeting was the first opportunity that local residents had to comment on the proposed traffic lights for Asda. He expressed concern not only about the impact of the extra traffic in relation to Asda but also the redeveloped Haskins garden centre and also rumours of further developments along the same stretch of the A259. He felt that the proposed traffic lights for Asda would cause further congestion. *Matthew Bartle stated that the County Council had a legal obligation under the Highways Act 1980, to enable developers to gain access from the highway in a safe manner.*
- Dr Walsh confirmed that the County Councillors first became aware of the Asda development back in December 2011 and a meeting was arranged in early February for the JEAAC Highways and Transport (H&T) sub group to discuss the issue (minutes of which are attached to the agenda). Dr Walsh confirmed that the H&T sub group were not happy with the proposals and as Chairman of the H&T sub group, Dr Walsh wrote to the relevant Cabinet Members at West Sussex County Council with the concerns. It was acknowledged that the County Council had not followed best practise by informing the local County Councillor or the JEAAC H&T sub group of the plans at an earlier stage.

- Councillor Mr Bower stated that the road network and Section 278 agreement were not part of the original planning application.
- Residents stated that the original planning application was granted to Country Fayre with no mention of traffic lights. *The Chairman confirmed that planning consent is for the land and Asda took over the planning permission for the land.* However residents raised concern that the volume of traffic from Asda would be much higher than that for Country Fayre. *David Bell, agent for Asda, confirmed that data used to calculate traffic flow was based on Tesco at Chichester and TRICS data.*
- A local resident asked if the traffic lights that allow buses to turn right into Langbury Lane would remain as they would be very close to the proposed Asda traffic lights. *Dr Walsh stated that the H&T Sub group had also raised concern about the proximity of these two sets of traffic lights. If the proposals go ahead the H&T sub group have asked that the Langbury Lane traffic lights remain and that synchronised traffic lights be installed to ease congestion.*
- Residents also expressed concern that there was not sufficient space for three lanes on either side of the carriage way to allow for the proposed traffic lights. *Matthew Bartle stated that the proposals include two lanes eastbound, two lanes westbound and a short lane in the centre to accommodate queuing traffic to the traffic lights.* Residents and Members raised concern that this short lane would accommodate the equivalent of 12 cars and it was felt that this would not be sufficient and would result in cars queuing on the A259.
- Councillor Mr Mountain asked if a roundabout had been considered as a alternative to traffic lights. *David Bell, agent for Asda, stated that on a dual carriageway such as the A259, National Standards recommend traffic lights. A roundabout would be more likely to bring all traffic to a halt.*
- Councillor Mrs Roberts referred to an email between a County Council Officer and the Wiggins Family (Country Fayre) that suggested that the County Council had advised against the first non material amendment to the planning application. *Matthew Bartle confirmed that the first non material amendment had been withdrawn and resubmitted as it is now. However it was pointed out that the County Council officer referred to in the emails no longer worked for the authority so he could not clarify what was stated in the emails.*
- Residents asked if cyclists, pedestrians, school children and horses had been taken into account when assessing the safety of the proposed traffic lights. *Dr Walsh stated that the H&T sub group had considered arrangements for pedestrians and cyclists and had asked for further clarification on how lights could be phased. Matthew Bartle confirmed that plans included improved pedestrian and cycle paths in front of the site and for the traffic lights to be phased.*
- Councillor Mr Bower called into question the data (TRICS) used by the County Council to assess traffic flows. The comparisons used included areas of Belfast and Wrexham in 2003. Councillor Mr Bower stated that because of this, Arun District Council had commissioned an independent study and the results of that had been forwarded to the County Council for a response on Friday.
- Councillor Mr Elkins referred to the wording in the Highways Act that Section 278 agreements should be a benefit to the public and it was felt the proposed agreement was of benefit to Asda only. Residents agreed that the Section 278 agreement should reflect the interests of the whole community. Residents stated that they did not have confidence in West Sussex Highways officers to ensure that this would happen. They stated that elected representatives must make a case to officers and officers must take a lead from the elected members.

- Mr Evans expressed disappointment with Asda and Haskins as both are large developments that would usually have Section 106 funding attached to them but in both cases nothing has been forthcoming for the local communities.
- Mr Evans asked for a show of hands for those in favour of the proposed traffic lights. Nobody voted in favour and 100% of the 60(+) public present voted against the proposed traffic lights.
- David Bell, agent for Asda, suggested the Committee should write to Asda with all the points raised this evening and that he was happy to work as a conduit to Asda. He also stated that he would feed back to Asda from tonight's meeting. He understood that the Mayer Brown report was fatally flawed as it relied upon out of date plans and data.

Highways and Transport Sub Group

103. The Chairman referred the Committee to the notes of the last meeting of the Highways and Transport Sub Group (copy appended to the signed minutes), and asked Dr Walsh, Chairman of the Highways and Transport (H&T) Sub Group, to run through any issues. The Committee discussed a number of issues, which included those set out below:

- Dr Walsh stated that the last meeting of the H&T sub group had focused solely on the Asda development and the A259. Dr Walsh confirmed that as a result of the H&T sub group he had written to the relevant Cabinet Members at West Sussex County Council to make them aware of the sub groups concerns regarding the proposals.
- Councillor Mr Mountain raised concern about not having traffic lights and reminded members of the number of accidents that occurred outside Sainsburys just along the A259 before traffic lights were installed.
- Dr Walsh reminded Members that one of the local Infrastructure Plan Priorities for the Committee was to have a holistic look at the A259 from Littlehampton to Worthing.
- Councillor Mr Bower confirmed that transport is a major issue when looking at the Local Development Framework (LDF) and that the LDF study at Arun District Council will be updated to reflect the traffic impact of the A259. Mr Bower also stressed that the traffic study commissioned by Arun District Council must be addressed and responded to before the County Council sign the Section 278 agreement.
- Dr Walsh asked JEAAC to confirm their agreement for the recommendations of the H&T sub group as detailed on page 22 of the agenda papers and in his letter to the relevant Cabinet Members at West Sussex County Council. These were accepted with the addition that the County Council should respond to the District Council commissioned report prior to signing the Section 278 agreement. It was also suggested that an urgent meeting of the H&T sub group be arranged so that they could consider the County Council response prior to the Section 278 agreement being signed.
- Matthew Bartle stated that the signing of the Section 278 could not be delayed further and would likely be signed in the next few days. Matthew Bartle referred to advice he had received from the Head of Legal Services at West Sussex County Council. It was agreed that that advice would be circulated by email to all members of JEAAC tomorrow.
- Dr Walsh agreed to arrange a meeting of the JEAAC H&T Sub Group as a matter of urgency and also requested that the Head of Legal Services be present at that meeting.

- Councillor Mr Bower stated that he was aware that Peter Bottomley MP had raised a parliamentary question more than a week ago to ask the Secretary of State for Transport how Section 278 agreements are supposed to be considered and consulted upon. The answer is expected imminently.
- Councillor Mr Bower also said that if West Sussex County Council signed the Section 278 agreement as it stood, he would seek advice about judicial review of the decision.

Community Police Issues

104. The Chairman welcomed Inspector Nick Bowman, who provided an update on crime statistics and current issues and in the JEAAC area. A number of issues were discussed including those set out below:

- Inspector Bowman confirmed that recorded crime in the Littlehampton area had increased by 452 crimes (14%) from that recorded last year (April to April). He assured the Committee that this was being addressed locally and a campaign for extra resources had resulted in an additional 3 sergeants and 18 officers being deployed to the area for the next 6 weeks.
- Inspector Bowman confirmed that local police officers would be used to assist the Metropolitan police with the Olympics.
- Members asked if local policing would be maintained over the Diamond Jubilee bank holiday. Inspector Bowman confirmed that PCSO's would not work on bank holidays but local policing and response would be maintained. He did raise some concern about the extra hours that all licence premises would be able to open over this time.
- Councillor Mr Elkins asked who could provide him with road accident information. Emily King stated that Sussex Safer Roads Partnership would hold this information and she would be able to assist Councillor Elkins in getting the information.

Community Initiative Funding

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

106. Resolved that the County Council Members of the Committee approved the following applications and amount of Community Initiative Funding:

1742/JEAAC - 'Tots in Tow' Angmering. £800 requested towards replacement and provision of new sensory activity toys. **£500 granted**

1775/JEAAC – 4Sight. £167 requested towards design and print costs for Learn4sight packs. **£167 granted**

1783/JEAAC – East Preston Festival Committee. £1,200 for the purchase and installation of a community notice board. **£250 granted**

1793/JEAAC – Girlguiding East Preston and Angmering District. £2,300 requested towards upgrading current headquarters, to be used by Guides and other community groups. **£1550 granted**

1796/JEAAC – Friends of Peter Smith Scout Hall. £2,300 requested for an upgrade to toilets, to include installation of a disabled toilet. **£1,550 granted**

107. Also Resolved that the County Council Members of the Committee decline the following application for funding:

1780/JEAAC – Littlehampton Bonfire Society. £2430 requested towards crowd safety costs for 60th Anniversary event on 27 Oct 2012. **Declined** as the application was for the same purpose as an award for last year's event and therefore this was seen as an ongoing running cost.

Appointment of School Governors

108. The Committee considered a report by Director of Operations Learning (copy appended to the signed minutes), which set out proposed nominations to school governing bodies and the criteria for their appointment and sought decisions from the County Council Members of the Committee on the applications received.

109. Resolved that the following be as School Governor:

Appointment:

- i. Reverend Chris Clark to Summerlea Primary School for a 4 year Term

Re-appointments:

- i. Mr E Holmes to the Angmering School for a 4 year Term
- ii. Mr L Walker to the Angmering School for a 4 year Term
- iii. Mrs A Prior to the Angmering School for a 4 year Term

Items for future meetings.

110. The following items were agreed:

- Localism Bill update – June 2012
- Arun Priorities – June 2012
- WSCC Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) priorities 2013/14 – Autumn 2012
- WSCC Infrastructure Planning Priorities – June 2012
- Empty Homes – June 2012

Date of next meeting

111. The Chairman reminded members that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 12 June 2012 at The New Millenium Chamber, Littlehampton. Members wishing to place an item on the agenda should notify Monique Smart via e-mail: Monique.smart@westsussex.gov.uk or on (01243) 752730.

112. Agreed dates for 2012/13 are as follows:

18th September 2012
18th December 2012
12th March 2013

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.
Chairman