

LOCAL ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL**26 January 2006****Attendance:**

Councillors:

Stallard (Chairman) (P)

Anthony (P)
 Bennetts (P)
 Berry (P)
 Cook (P)
 Godfrey (P)

Goodall (P)
 Love (P)
 Pines (P)
 Spender (P)
 Sutton (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Evans (Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport)
 Councillor Knasel (Portfolio Holder for Economy and Transport)

Councillors Bidgood, Davies and Lipscomb

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Allgood, Beckett, Higgins, Jackson and Tait

745. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ms B Kelly of Church Lane, Colden Common and Councillor Bidgood (a Ward Member) spoke in support of a 30mph speed limit for Church Lane. It was explained that the speed limit along the nearby Main Road, Colden Common had recently been reduced from 40mph to 30mph along with other traffic calming measures and it had been assumed by local residents that these restrictions would be extended to Church Lane. They stated that, as many vehicles exceeded the current 40mph limit, Church Lane was dangerous and that the proposal to reduce the limit to 30mph was widely supported by the local community. Ms Kelly added that a survey of local residents' views had been taken and would be available from February 2006. These comments were noted by officers from the Environment Department of Hampshire County Council, who were present at the meeting.

Mr J Kane spoke in support of an 8-lane athletics track at Bar End. He advised that an 8-lane track, as opposed to a 6-lane track, would be able to host inter-county races. In reply, Councillor Evans stated that a proposal was being worked up as a joint initiative with the University and was widely supported. A feasibility study would be undertaken with a view to attracting funding from Sport England and the Open Spaces Fund.

Councillor Lipscomb spoke in general support of the Local Transport Plan (Report LE18 refers). However, in summary, he raised concerns with regard to the likelihood of the Plan delivering an improvement to accessibility and widening travel choice. These, he suggested, were adversely affected by

declining bus services and because concessionary travel tokens were no longer available to rail passengers.

Councillor Lipscomb also spoke on the proposed highway works associated with the repair of the gas pipes in Southgate Street, Winchester and added that the recent Cabinet decision on Parchment Street, Winchester (Report CAB1166TP refers) should be scrutinised by a future meeting of the Panel.

746. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Panel held on 30 November 2005 be approved and adopted.

747. **HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2006-2011**

(Report LE18 refers)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Reeve and Mr Syddall from Hampshire County Council's Environment Department.

Mr Reeve explained that the Local Transport Plan (LTP) set out the transport objectives and targets for the next five years. Its core objective was to improve quality of life by better connecting people with goods, services and communities. The budget within the LTP had been agreed by Government and included provision of £62.7m on integrated transport and £79m on maintenance. A further £12m could be available if the LTP met Government set targets.

The Panel noted that the only named scheme within the LTP was a new Park and Ride facility at Winchester. It was likely that a Member and Parish Council briefing would be held during March/April 2006 which would be followed by wider public consultation on the proposals. Mr Syddall anticipated that a planning application for the facility could be submitted by late 2006. The application would include an environmental assessment and it was noted that County Council officers were investigating further bus priority initiatives along Romsey Road and Badger Farm Road. Mr Reeve added that if the total cost of the scheme exceeded £5m, there was a possibility of attracting further Government funding through a major scheme bid.

Mr Syddall reported on the proposed Access Plan for the Winchester town area. This would work towards improving accessibility by all modes of transport, improve air quality and aim to reduce traffic flows. The development of the Park and Ride strategy, making the best use of the available road space, improving traffic signalling and improving bus services through the quality bus partnerships were key elements to this. Within the town, the Access Plan would also seek to encourage greater use of low emission vehicles and promote walking and cycling over short distances. Members also noted that variable message signing would be installed during 2006/7 to direct drivers towards available parking spaces in the town.

With regard to the wider District, Mr Syddall confirmed that the County Council continued to lobby the Highways Agency for improvements to Junction 9 of the M3 motorway. He also commented on the importance of

ensuring that services were locally available to rural areas, the promotion of the recently completed A3 Bus Corridor, safety and accessibility improvements in smaller settlements and parking at and access to rural railway stations. More specifically, Mr Syddall reported that the County Council was developing pilot schemes that sought to reduce sign-clutter and the A32 in the Meon Valley was proposed to be one of these.

In reply to a Member's comments, Mr Syddall stated that improvements to the Segensworth Roundabout were currently proposed for 2007/08 and that the County Council also had proposals for improving pedestrian and cycle access to Whiteley via Botley Road.

It was also explained that whilst there were no powers of compulsion, it was a Government target that all schools should have adopted travel plans by 2009. However, Mr Reeve explained that because of possible funding difficulties, it was likely that some Safer Routes to School Schemes might not be implemented until 2011.

In response to other questions, Mr Syddall explained that if alternative funding for schemes were available (from, for example, Parish Councils) this could help to bring the implementation of schemes forward. However, he stated that the proposed schemes for small settlements were not conditional on obtaining additional funding from other sources. It was also explained that road safety improvements were concentrated on "accident hotspots," and that replacement street lights would use energy saving bulbs.

At the conclusion of debate (in which additional concerns were raised with regard to preserving rights of way, expenditure on works in rural areas relative to the urban areas and the provision of bus services) Members broadly welcomed the LTP. The Panel also supported the proposed development of the Access Plan for Winchester town and pressed for similar Plans to be developed as soon as possible for other parts of the District.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Panel support the approach taken on the Local Transport Plan for Hampshire.

2. That the Panel support the development of an Access Plan for the Winchester town area and press for the development of similar plans elsewhere in the District as soon as possible.

748. **COUNTY COUNCIL TRANSPORT ISSUES – COUNTY COUNCILLOR KNIGHT**

(Report LE19 refers)

The above item had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration to accompany the oral report by County Councillor Knight.

At the invitation of the Chairman, County Councillor Knight (Executive Member for Environment) answered a number of highways questions which had been forwarded to him before the meeting. Both the questions and answers had been set out in full in the above Report, but in summary these

related to: bus provision, park and ride, sign cleaning, the Southgate Street gas pipe repairs, speed limits, road safety, Andover Road/City Road signals, Whiteley issues and rural footpaths.

During debate on these issues, Councillor Knasel asked that public information on the Southgate Street, Winchester works be designed so as not to discourage shoppers to the town.

In response to other issues raised, Mr Syddall agreed to investigate why the pedestrian island had been removed from the Andover/City Road, Winchester junction.

At the conclusion of debate, the Chairman thanked Councillor Knight for his presentation and it was noted that all Councillors and members of the public were welcome to attend the County Council's Strategic Transport meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

749. **ARTS STRATEGY REVIEW**
(Report LE15 refers)

Councillor Godfrey declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of this item as a member of Winchester Operatic Society, the Littleton New Hall Players and the Wonston Players which were mentioned in the Report. Councillor Godfrey spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Stallard declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of this item as Chairman of the Festival Community which was mentioned in the Report. Councillor Stallard spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Pines declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of this item as Chair of the Winnall Rock School which was mentioned in the Report. Councillor Pines spoke and voted thereon.

During debate, the Director of Communities confirmed that the Council was represented by an officer on SHIPS (Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth Local Authorities Arts Groups) and that a methodology of assessing the economic benefits of the arts was set out by the Arts Council. The Director confirmed that these economic benefits would be included in the final draft of the Strategy that would be considered by a future meeting of Cabinet.

In response to a Member's comment and at the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Evans explained that, through the Strategy, the Council sought to co-ordinate and support a wide spectrum of arts interests in the District, of which youth facilities were just one part. The Panel also noted that the Arts Council advised Local Authorities to better develop existing, rather than new, festivals.

In response to questions, the Director confirmed that, through a Section 106 Legal Agreement, it was likely that arts funding would be available from the Silver Hill development and that this could result in the installation of a statue in the development.

Members went on to discuss the maintenance costs of art installations and in addition raised the possibility of requiring that all new public art was low maintenance, the Director confirmed that the management of this work would form part of the proposed part-time Arts Officer's role.

At the conclusion of debate, the Panel welcomed the Strategy and particularly commended officers for the display of arts works in the windows of empty retail units in Winchester town centre.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to minor amendments, the Strategy be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

750. **BIANNUAL REPORT OF WINCHESTER ARCHIVIST**
(Report LE16 refers)

The Chairman congratulated the Archivist for the recent Charter Mark award and accepted the Archivist's offer of a tour of the Archives. Following debate, the Panel requested that future reports should scrutinise in further detail the value for money offered to the Council by the Service against the Service Level Agreement. Without this information, the Panel was unable to ascertain whether the Service helped to deliver the Council's corporate aims or represent value for money.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

751. **CULTURE, HERITAGE AND SPORT PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S REPORT – THIRD QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING**
(Report LE12 refers)

Members noted the delays relating to the On-Line Booking system and the On-Line Museum Service and the Director explained that, following discussions with the Council's consultants, these should soon be remedied.

With regard to the presentation of information in the Report, the Director agreed to divide the number of tourist information centre enquiries received electronically and in person from the start of the next financial year.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

752. **ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S REPORT – THIRD QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING**
(Report LE17 refers)

In addition to clarifying some of the terms within the Report, the Director of Development agreed to report to the Panel why the Brooks Car Park service charges had been paid in advance of their due date.

The Panel also noted an error within the Report as the Winchester 4 Business initiative had not been completed on target.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

753. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**
(Report PS216 refers)

Following debate, the Panel requested that Councillor Knasel verbally update its next meeting on the effects of the gas pipe works along Southgate Street, Winchester.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme, as set out in Report PS216, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 10.00pm

Chairman