

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND ROAD SAFETY FORUM

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To review the mechanism for considering transport and road safety issues raised by Local Councils.

2. Summary

- 2.1 At the last meeting of the Consultative Assembly concerns were raised that the Sustainable Transport and Road Safety (STARS) Forum meetings were being largely dominated by special interest groups. The Local Council representatives felt that the Forum was not one they would wish to share with pressure groups.
- 2.2 The Consultative Assembly requested that a report be submitted to this meeting recommending measures to resolve the concerns of Local Councils.
- 2.3 The options for consideration are: restructuring the STARS Forum to enable more detailed consideration of Local Council issues; referring transport and road safety issues to this Consultative Assembly; or arranging a separate meeting for Local Councils on these issues. Each of these options has advantages and disadvantages. However, it is felt that the restructuring of the STARS Forum is the best option.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the STARS Forum be requested to consider adopting a two part agenda with parochial road safety issues raised by Local Councils being the second part.

4. **Background**

- 4.1 At the last meeting of the Consultative Assembly concerns were raised that the Sustainable Transport and Road Safety (STARS) Forum meetings were being largely dominated by special interest groups. The Local Council representatives felt that the Forum was not one they would wish to share with pressure groups.
- 4.2 The Consultative Assembly requested that a report be submitted to this meeting recommending measures to resolve the concerns of Local Councils.
- 4.3 The STARS Forum was established by the Public Transport and Highways Committee on 24 June 1997 to provide a forum for input from Parish Councils and community groups on the development and monitoring of the implementation of the Council's Sustainable Integrated Transport Strategy. The Forum is chaired by the Chairman of the Public Transport and Highways Committee and meets three times per year. The membership of the Forum includes as wide a representation of the community as possible and includes representative groups such as: Local Councils, Police, Cycling Associations, Passenger Transport User Group, Bus Operators, Residents Associations etc.
- 4.4 At its first meeting on 6 November 1997 the Forum agreed the following Terms of Reference:
- (a) To assist Milton Keynes Council in the development, monitoring and updating of the Sustainable Integrated Transport Strategy
 - (b) To be consulted and involved in the developing of new policies and strategies within the traffic and transport remit
 - (c) To bring to the attention of Milton Keynes Council any matters pertaining to transportation and road safety.
- 4.5 Parochial road safety issues are not discussed at these meetings, which was agreed by the Forum at its first meeting: 'Prior to consideration of the items raised by representatives on the agenda, the Forum agreed that these issues should initially be addressed through consultation with officers outside of the Forum, and only raised at the Forum when problems with that consultation occurred'.

5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 There are three options which the Consultative Assembly may wish to consider. However, each of these options has advantages and disadvantages which are as follows:
- (a) Restructuring the STARS Forum to enable more detailed consideration of Local Council issues;

The STARS Forum could be requested to consider adopting a two part agenda with parochial road safety issues raised by Local Councils being the second part. This would allow Local Councils to raise issues of concern to them and for

special interest groups to leave the meeting. This would still be subject to the agreed present practice of raising issues with officers in the first instance.

The advantages of pursuing this option is that there will still be one meeting which discusses transport and road safety issues, rather than debates being held at different meetings but on similar issues. Officers would only be required to attend one meeting every four months. Local Councils would still have a Forum for discussing issues with user groups, whilst having an opportunity for considering their specific issues separately.

The disadvantages are that there may be parts of the meeting that may not be of interest to Local Councils. However, that is probably true of any meeting that not all participants will have an interest in every item.

(b) Referring transport and road safety issues to this Consultative Assembly; or

Items on transport issues could be raised as part of the Consultative Assembly agenda along with any other matters raised by Local Councils.

The advantage of this would be that all matters relating to Local Councils may be dealt with on one night.

The disadvantage is that, with the Section 136 Consultative Committee also being held on that night, there is very little time available to include additional items on the Consultative Assembly agenda. This could mean that due consideration might not be given to any transport issues raised.

(c) Arranging a separate meeting for Local Councils on these issues.

Alternatively, a separate meeting could be held on the same night as the Consultative Assembly or on a different night.

The advantage of this option would be that due weight could be given to transport issues raised by Local Councils.

The disadvantage would be that, for the reasons stated above, the time available on the night of the Consultative Assembly would preclude any detailed debate. Holding a meeting on a separate night would also cause problems, both members and officers have busy schedules and finding suitable dates to hold such meetings would be difficult.

5.2 Some of the advantages and disadvantages referred to above may apply to more than one option or, conversely and advantage for one option may be a disadvantage for another.

5.3 Having considered all of the above options it is recommended that the option to restructure the STARS Forum be adopted. It will concentrate the debate on transport issues in one meeting with an input from all interested parties and at which transport officers will be in attendance. It will also provide an opportunity for Local Councils to raise and discuss issues of particular concern to them.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Environmental

The STARS Forum enables a debate to be had on sustainable transport and road safety matters with an input from all groups within the Milton Keynes community.

6.2 Staff and Accommodation

The STARS Forum enables officers to concentrate their input into one meeting when consulting with the local community on transport and road safety issues.

7. **Conclusions**

7.1 For the reasons stated in 5.3 it is recommended that the STARS Forum be restructured to allow Local Councils to debate issues of particular concern to them.

Background Papers: Minute PT16/98 of Public Transport and Highways Committee dated 24 June 1997