



Minutes of the meeting of the SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND ROAD SAFETY FORUM held on TUESDAY 28 JUNE 2005.

Present: Councillor Mabbutt (Chair)

Forum Representatives

Councillor White	-	Emberton Parish Council
Councillor Stimpson	-	Haversham cum Little Linford Parish Council
Councillor Fagan	-	Haversham cum Little Linford Parish Council
Councillor D Stabler	-	Great Linford Parish Council
Councillor Dnes	-	Stony Stratford Town Council
Councillor A Geary	-	Hanslope Park Council
Councillor McQue	-	Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council
Councillor Francis	-	New Bradwell Parish Council
G Lancaster	-	Hanslope Parish Council
B Moore	-	Hanslope Parish Council
K Baker	-	Hanslope Parish Council
J Brown	-	Central Milton Keynes Women's Institute
M Galloway	-	Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council

Officers: J Harper (Transport Policy Manager), D Poxon (Road Safety Officer), I Gittens (Traffic Management Team Leader), B Matthews (Senior Plan Officer – Transport Research), C Godfrey (Parish Liaison Manager) and L Avey (Committee Manager).

Apologies: Councillor Bristow, Councillor Hoyle, Councillor Gibbard (Woughton Parish Council), Councillor Dodman (Moulsoe Parish Council), Councillor Richards (Newport Pagnell Town Council), D Frost (Road Safety Team Leader), T Dove (Traffic and Transport Manager), G Simpkins (Sustainable Transport Manager), P Davison (Transport Co-ordinator) and J Belcher (Thames Valley Police).

ACTION

2.0 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

That the minutes of the Sustainable Transport and Road Safety Forum held on 16 February 2005 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

3.0 SIDS/VAS POLICY

D Poxon, Road Safety Officer presented the Forum with an updated, final version of the SIDS/VAS Policy. The item had been introduced at a previous S.T.A.R.S. Forum held in February 2005 and had also been presented at the Environment Policy Development Committee (EPDC) on 1 June 2005.

The Forum noted that recommendations from both meetings had been considered and incorporated where deemed appropriate.

The Forum noted that the £5m insurance costs for the SIDS/VAS policy were not covered by Milton Keynes Council's Traffic Department, but suggestions had been relayed to the Parish Liaison Section for future consideration.

A recommendation from the EPDC (that had been incorporated into the policy) was to increase the SID's operational period from 24hrs to 72hrs. The Forum was strongly reminded that any SID was a temporary arrangement and could not be in operation for a period of more than 72 consecutive hours, due to the battery life of the current devices in use.

Councillor Geary advised the Forum that he may call-in Section 5.3 of the report as he would like to see 5 days (120hrs) concession for the use of a SID in Hanslope. The issue of the time allocated for Parishes to view the document before it was finalised was also noted.

Councillor Mabbutt re-iterated that the policy document had received no objections before being signed off on Friday 24 June 2005, and that the report had been widely available on the web. It was stated that the possibility to extend the use of a SID to 5 days could be looked into further, however the technology currently in place, it was probable that no additional sources would be found.

The Forum noted that some Parishes were interested in purchasing their own SID's and questioned the cost implications. The Forum was advised to email D Poxon, Road Safety Officer (david.poxon@milton-keynes.gov.uk) directly, who would answer any questions raised regarding SID's.

The Forum was also requested to note Section 5.7 of the report which stated: *"MKC are actively exploring the opportunity to make the SID data available to Local Councils in the most cost effective and accessible way (either via MK Observatory, or other electronic means). The SID's data collected by Local Council operating their own SID's programme will also need to be transferred to and from MKC in the most cost effective way to ensure it is managed effectively"*.

4.0 UPDATE ON PROVISIONAL LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2006/07 – 2010/11

The Forum received a presentation by J Harper, Transport Policy Manager on the Local Transport Plan Update. A copy of the presentation and the Local Transport Plan 2 Draft Targets and P.I.'s 2006/07 to 2010/11 were circulated at the meeting.

The Forum raised the following questions:

- Was the planning of the *Next Stages* of the Final Local Transport Plan's submission in March 2006 realistic?
The Forum was advised that with good consultation and planning the final report would be submitted to full Council in April 2006.
- Where was the funding being found to co-ordinate the Indicative Allocations and Programme and, could the funding be linked to the outcomes?

The Forum noted that Car Share travel plans and smaller initiatives would assist reducing individual traffic habits. The targets set were achievable, cost beneficial and spending would be closely monitored.

- The Forum expressed concern that the plan was nearly half way through the implementation process and Members were unsure of its present status.

The Forum was advised that the current plan was more data intensive than strategically friendly.

- A question was raised regarding the consideration given to the rural expansion and border issues.

The Forum was advised that a group had been formed including bordering counties (for example the A421 had joint working with Bedfordshire).

The Forum was advised that the Transport Partnership had not met for 4 months, would meet six times a year instead of 12, and the proposed Executive Members included:

- Milton Keynes Council
- Milton Keynes Partnership
- Milton Keynes Economic and Learning Partnership
- Milton Keynes Business Community
- Milton Keynes General Community

5.0 UPDATE ON THE SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN STRATEGY

D Poxon, Road Safety Officer, updated the Forum on the School Travel Plan Strategy.

The Forum was advised that the School Travel Plan Strategy had not received many responses to date. Some of the targets had been amended to become more ambitious to encourage more children to walk to school, wherever possible.

The criticisms from the report were:

- More funding was needed from the Local Transport Plan regarding the Safer Routes to School programme
- Time and resource restrictions were apparent
- The School Travel Toolkit was not yet completed
- Cost implications of cycle training was a high priority with ongoing discussions

The Forum noted the following points:

- A full-time School Travel Officer was due to start in July 2005
- A walking bus route had been established, which would become a priority project for the School Travel Officer to encourage other schools to participate
- Enforcement of zig-zag lines – Thames Valley Police would not enforce them, instead required Councils to include them under their remit through Traffic Regulation Orders after which they could be enforced by Vinci Parking Attendants
- Health Schools Award – a completed Travel Plan had to be included in order for the schools to achieve the award
- Siting of schools (i.e. on the corners of boundary areas), forcing children to travel further

- Parental choice – choosing to send children to schools further from home. This also related to the fear of crime for children travelling to and from school
- Milton Keynes Council was currently pursuing additional funding from Central Government to encourage more schools to adopt the School Travel Plan Strategy.

6.0 THE BLETCHLEY LINK

The Forum received a presentation on the Bletchley Link by B Matthews, Senior Plan Officer – Transport Policy.

The Forum expressed concern regarding the loss of the bridge element of the original scheme . It was feared there would be increased volume of traffic through Bletchley instead of encouraging it into the centre.

The Forum raised the following questions:

- What traffic implications would be enforced by the new Asda?
The Forum was advised that a separate arrangement had been agreed between Asda and Milton Keynes Council.
- The exit junction from Bletchley Bus Station needed to be addressed safely.
The Forum noted that a signalised junction system would be introduced.
- A safe, walking football route was required during match time and had Thames Valley Police been consulted with?
The Forum was informed that the highway improvements would be concentrated on the Bletcham Way area. Thames Valley Police had been informed and were aware of the scheme. A travel/traffic and fan management plan had to be agreed before any matches could take place.
- Concerns were raised regarding the contribution that the Bletchley Link made to the Local Transport Plan. Suggestions had to be cost effective, beneficial to car users, walkers and cyclists.
The Forum noted that further investigations were required and a feasibility study of opening the further railway bridge was suggested.

7.0 THE A421, JUNCTION 13 KINGSTON ROUNDABOUT DUALLING BID

The Forum received a presentation on the A421, Junction 13 Kingston Roundabout Dualling Bid by B Matthews, Senior Plan Officer – Transport Research.

The Forum questioned what alternatives had been considered regarding the A421, Junction 13 Kingston Roundabout, and what affects this would have on the new bus priority measures planned.

The Forum was advised of the following:

- i) Off- line (option 1)
- ii) On-line (option 2)

The Forum were advised that the recommendation being put forward to the Cabinet was that the on-line (option 2) route be taken forward as the '*preferred route*'. This would be subject to further more detailed appraisal and consultation.

The potential implications for the new bus route would be considered as part of the fuller more detailed appraisal.

8.0 ISSUES RAISED BY PARISH COUNCILS

□ Traffic Calming on Wolverton Road, Haversham

Councillor Geary made reference to a recent petition of 700+ signatures, presented to Councillor Mabbutt at the April Council meeting 2005, highlighting the need to lower the traffic calming initiatives (speed humps) on the Wolverton Road installed in 2004 as they were causing damage to vehicles including exhausts and tracking problems. Photographic evidence was available to support the claims that the speed humps were too high. It was recommended that the width of the speed humps be investigated as maybe being the cause of the damage to vehicles and not the height urging Milton Keynes Council to review them again.

Mrs Baker from Hanslope Parish Council attended the Forum to present her experiences regarding the damage caused to her vehicle.

The Forum was advised that the original specification was fully adhered to, and that a Milton Keynes Council Traffic Manager had visited the site to confirm that the speed humps in question were within the legal requirements. It was noted that Milton Keynes Council would not consider refunding the damage made to vehicles. Haversham Parish Council was advised that funding for alternative traffic calming schemes could be obtained through the Parish Partnership Scheme, however this would require match funding.

This suggestion was dismissed as being too expensive for individual Parish Councils to fund and that people should not be required to pay twice for road maintenance/management issues and road tax.

The Forum discussed the differences in speed humps available for use in rural settings. The following points were raised:

- the need for "*softer*" speed humps
- the overall dimension of the speed humps needed to be reviewed
- initially the speed humps were imposed as a traffic calming incentive in order for people to safely cross the road in the mid-1990's
- the design of modern motor vehicles was considered as a contributing factor
- MK Metro were within their contractual rights to withdraw services if certain speed initiatives were installed on some routes.

The Forum noted the request made by Councillor Stimpson to be present at the next future site visit suggested by I Gittens, Traffic Management Team Leader.

RESOLVED –

That a further site visit be made to Wolverton Road, Hanslope to review the dimensions of the speed humps, and to give an update at the next Forum.

I Gittens

□ **De-priming of the A509**

The Forum was informed that the A509 was considered as a designated primary route. The issue of de-priming the A509 had previously been raised with the relevant government office, who advised that at present it did not have a particularly strong case on its own merit, however recommended a by-pass as a stronger option to pursue.

A recent accident on the A509, incurring a fatality, had raised concerns regarding its road markings. The Forum was advised that Emberton was currently undertaking discussions and being consulted on with regards to road and line markings and signage. An update would be given at the next Forum in September if any additional information was available.

The following recommendations were made for the A509, Emberton:

- a need for a “*No Over-taking Sign*”
- a preference to increase the use of speed cameras in the immediate area
- a “*spec-2 system*” be introduced for a mobile speed camera unit
- a Vehicle Activated Sign (V.A.S.) installation be considered
- a review of the current speed limit of 60mph, needs to be reduced to 40mph – this proposal was currently being investigated

The Forum questioned the possibility of increasing pressure to the Police in order to enhance the use of speed cameras, as the current system appeared to be forcing accidents further up the road towards Sheringham.

The Forum requested Councillor White of the Emberton Parish Council to submit any additional information to the Forum’s Officers in time for inclusion at the next meeting’s schedule.

□ **Pensioners Free Travel**

Councillor Stabler raised the following issues regarding Pensioners Free Travel:

- Did Milton Keynes Council know of any plans by the Government to give pensioners free travel on buses?
- If so, was this not a promise made by the Labour Party during the election campaign?
- If so, who would provide the funds to subsidise pensioners’ travel, Milton Keynes Council or Central Government?

The Forum was advised that the Government did have plans to give pensioners free travel on buses. It was a statement made by the Labour Party during the election campaign for off-peak travel only. It had not yet been announced how it would be subsidised. A seminar would be held shortly to discuss this issue, it may be a mixture of local and central governments.

9.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Forum noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 7 September, at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.37PM.