



Minutes of the meeting of the SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND ROAD SAFETY FORUM held on MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2009 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor D McCall (Chair)
Councillors Bint and Bristow

Forum Representatives

P Ayles (Castlethorpe Parish Council)
J Brown (Central Milton Keynes Women's Institute)
A Dnes (Stony Stratford Town Council)
E Dodworth (Hanslope Parish Council)
C Ennew (Campbell Park Parish Council)
M Fagan (Haversham and Little Linford Parish Council)
M Geddes (Woburn Sands Town Council)
S Kennedy (Stantonbury Parish Council)
S Rolfe (Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council)
D Stabler (Great Linford Parish Council)
G Stimpson (Haversham and Little Linford Parish Council)
J Smith (Newport Pagnell Town Council)
C Wylde (Emberton Parish Council)

Officers: P Bhamber (Head of Transport), T Dove (Traffic and Transport Manager), J Harper (Transport Policy Manager) and G Lane (Senior Committee Manager)

Apologies: Councillor Potts, A Francis (New Bradwell Parish Council) and R Hatton (Woburn Sands Town Council)

8.0 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reiterated that the Forum was concerned exclusively with strategic, rather than operational, issues. Any operational issues that Parishes wished to broach were best discussed with officers and would not be placed on the agenda for consideration by the Forum.

9.0 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Transport and Road Safety Forum (STARS) held on 29 September 2009, be

approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to the following amendment to Point (a) of Minute 6, as follows:

- (a) Councillor Dnes (Stony Stratford Town Council) felt that bus services did not start early enough in the mornings and the day time services stopped running at 6.00 pm, which was too early.

10.0 MATTERS ARISING

Officers agreed to produce a report on progress regarding the East-West Rail Link for circulation to Members outside of the meeting.

11.0 LORRY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Forum considered a report by the Traffic and Transport Manager on implementation of the Lorry Management Strategy.

The Forum heard that, following analysis of consultation responses received, the final version of the Council's Lorry Management Strategy was agreed by Cabinet on 16 December 2008.

Cabinet resolved to approve the Strategy and Action Plan, subject to any minor amendments being agreed by the Head of Transport.

The Forum heard that changes to the text had been proposed by Olney Town Council and were being considered for inclusion in the final Strategy, due for publication on the internet in February 2009.

Members heard that the designation of Olney as an air-quality control area had made the delivery of the Strategy more urgent.

The Forum heard that appropriate signage would be employed around Haversham to reduce speeds on the existing lorry route.

Members heard that several local Council's had been approached regarding the proposed changes under the Strategy, due to the potential traffic implications and pressures for their respective roads.

Ward Councillors would also be consulted regarding the Strategy.

The Forum heard that the Strategy has been devised to address a range of issues, including the necessity to prevent lorry's parking in residential areas, thus creating congestion and parking difficulties.

Members heard that vehicles in excess of 3.5 tonnes should not be parked in areas beyond their base of operations and, if found to be in violation of this rule, haulers could have their licences revoked.

Parish representatives identified Hunter Drive and the Lakes Estate as areas adversely affected by the parking of commercial vehicles.

Members heard that the Fenn Farm haulage site was not a transient lorry park and that, in the event of closure, vehicles would be required to transfer to another facility entirely, away from the area.

The Forum heard that the Strategy identified three potential sites for the development of a haulage facility in the western expansion area.

As the development of a high quality haulage facility at any of these sites would require significant investment, officers were working with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to identify a provider.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

12.0 FOOTWAY AND VERGE PARKING ISSUES

The Forum considered a report by the Transport Policy Manager on initiatives pertaining to Footway and Verge Parking Issues.

The Forum heard that at its meeting on 16 December 2008, the Cabinet had considered a report on the success of recent initiatives to address issues surrounding footway and verge parking across the city, together with proposed recommendations for further action.

At this meeting, the Cabinet resolved that, following a survey to identify specific areas of concern, appropriate signage would be erected and the enforcement of footway and verge parking contraventions would be undertaken by enforcement contractors.

The Head of Legal Services was also requested by the Cabinet to advertise a Council-wide footway and verge parking restriction covering all roads (when signs show), except those where orders were in place that specifically permitting footway or verge parking.

Members heard that Ward Members, Parishes and Neighbourhood Action Groups had been consulted on the suitability of locations in their areas for enforcement and, upon completion of this process, suitable sites for the initial phase of enforcement would be identified.

The Forum heard that although parking on footpaths did not actually constitute a criminal offence, obstruction was a criminal act, although in practical terms it proved difficult to secure convictions.

Individual Members of the Forum made the following points:

- That it was incumbent upon drivers to exercise judgement and caution when parking and to always do so responsibly.
- That any change to parking arrangements on estates should only be undertaken after consultation with residents, in order to avoid the possibility of inadvertently exacerbating existing parking problems. For example, the installation of bollards in inappropriate places that may encourage dangerous parking.
- That the prevalence of parking on verges and footpaths on local estates was often frustrated by individual occupiers using their garages for storage, rather than for parking. The Council should strive to encourage occupiers to use their garages solely for the intended purpose of car parking.
- That parking congestion on verges and footpaths on estates was often a consequence of poor urban design by

developers, including lack of parking; small garages that cannot house modern cars; the provision of rear parking that is disliked, and thus underused, by residents; and dipped curbs at 45° that seem to be designed to allow verge parking.

- That parking congestion was the consequence of ill-conceived parking standards and design guides that required revision in the light of increasing density across the city, especially in relation to the Northern Development Area.
- That developers must be encouraged to provide adequate parking provision on new estates to forestall congestion.

The Forum heard that less generous parking standards introduced by Government had created difficulties in securing parking provision on estates and that garages were not included in assessing provision due to the fact that many residents used them for storage.

The Forum heard that revised parking standards and urban design codes were in development, with a pressure against the provision of rear parking that is disliked, and so underused, by local residents.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

13.0

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT 2008

The Forum considered a presentation by the Transport Policy Manager on the Local Transport Plan Progress Report 2008.

The Forum heard that public transport and footpath maintenance remained key priorities for the present Council administration.

Individual Members of the Forum made the following points:

- That the success of the Plan was contingent upon robust and recent assessments of transport usage, not outmoded assessments in the previous Sustainable Transport Strategy.
- That the Council should adopt a robust approach at the regional level to ensure that the interests of the city are recognised, for instance, in relation to regional road building.
- That the Plan must strive to increase capacity by remedying existing problems with the local road network, including congestion at the B&Q roundabout at Bletchley, the bus stop at Princes Way and the difficulties with Junction 13.
- That the Council should work alongside utility companies and developers to minimise labour-intensive excavations of roads and paths so as to manage the potential for disruption.
- That greater investment was required to increase bus patronage and reduce pressure on existing parking provision across the city, but especially in Central Milton Keynes.

- That improvement in the frequency and reliability of local bus services would be pivotal to any increase in bus patronage.
- That, irrespective of recent increases in the cost of parking in the city centre, it still remained cheaper and more convenient to travel by car than to use public transport, with clear and negative implications for levels of patronage across the city.
- That residents would always prefer personal modes of transportation, like the car, to public transport and do not entertain the possibility of using public services unless compelled to by circumstance. For example, as a consequence of parking congestion in CMK at Christmas.
- That the Council should set the example for local employers by encouraging its own staff to travel on public transport.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the need to increase bus patronage be raised with the Head of Transport.

14.0

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) Councillor Dynes commented on the necessity to encourage cyclists to equip their bikes with adequate lighting when using redways and suggested the possibility of enforcement action.
- (b) Councillor Rolfe commented on the necessity for robust management of the road works at Drayton Road, Bletchley.

15.0

DATE AND AGENDA OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED -

1. That it be agreed that the next meeting of the Forum be held on 27 April 2009 at 7.00 pm in Room 2 (Civic Offices).
2. That the following items be considered by the Forum:
 - (a) strategy on repairing potholes, including an outline on the allocation of priority and the process.
 - (b) strategy on the replacement of highway signs.
 - (c) strategy to combat the theft of roadside safety equipment.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.00 PM