

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 8.05PM ON MONDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2012 AT THE CIVIC HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr Gabor Bartos, Deputy Town Mayor

Cllrs. M Beanland, L A Clarke, C Gorst, P Hoyland, Cllr H Murray, Mrs J Saunders, Mrs J Sewart, A Smith, G Smith and R West

58. Questions to the Mayor

None

59. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Ms R Horsman, Mrs S Horsman, G King, M C G Sewart

60. Absent

Cllr B Lewis

61. Requests for Dispensation (under Section 33, Localism Act 2011)

None sought

62. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on the 15th October 2012 are approved as an accurate record and signed by the Deputy Mayor (NC)

63. Other Business – Matter of Urgency

RESOLVED: That at the request of Cllr L A Clarke, and as ruled by the Deputy Mayor, the issue of street lighting be taken as an agenda item under ‘Other Business’ at this meeting, as permitted under SO16(c). The issue is urgent inasmuch as there is a risk of street lights being removed (NC)

64. Town Council Response to the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road Consultation

A number of residents were present, and five opted to speak on this issue. The Deputy Mayor agreed to allow a total of 20 minutes for this.

Kim Barrett, 'Conray', Woodford Road

Argued that residents have not been given all the facts, and wants honesty from Stockport Council (SMBC), and to be told the real reason for the road. SMBC has a woeful command of the facts, and their traffic counts are misleading and exaggerated. Mrs Barrett's fear, as a result of this road, is that traffic congestion will grow so bad in Poynton that residents will agree to a Woodford/Poynton Relief Road whatever the consequences.

Steve Houston (sp?), 218 Chester Road

Represents a group known as 'Poynton Against Unnecessary Link Roads To Airport', and claimed to have 300 people on a mailing list, all of whom are concerned about the loss of countryside. He expressed considerable concern about loss of ancient woodland near Simpsons Corner (Carr Wood) on the proposed route of the road, which SMBC has only recently acknowledged. Asked that the Town Council goes to Cheshire East, explaining that SMBC will be tarmacing over ancient woodland.

Sarah Peak, 15 Mill Hill Avenue

Was extremely concerned about noise and pollution – the proposed route of the road is just three houses away from her property. She was also speaking on behalf of her near neighbours.

Judy Waddaker (sp?), 17 Mill Hill Avenue

She made the point that much has changed since 2008, with development vastly increasing, and asked what protection can you offer from this project.

David Tipper, Hockley Road

He said that the SMBC representatives at the recent public exhibitions were unable to answer questions. He had concerns about the junction at Hazel Grove (Location 6), and felt that if Option 2 were followed there would be a triangle of land that would lend itself to supermarket development, leading to an erosion of the separation between Hazel Grove and Poynton.

Mr Tipper also made the point that Woodford Road should not have exits or entrances. He was also concerned that, at Location 4, the indicative alignment for the Poynton Bypass/Relief Road was only shown as a dotted line – why was a wider road not shown?

The Deputy Mayor invited Cllr Hoyland to respond to the points raised by the local residents, as summarised above. Cllr Hoyland said that Councillors had been working hard on this issue. Their expectation was that SMBC would be straight with us. The level and effectiveness of their communication was perhaps more at fault. Councillors were seeking to get more information, e.g. about Mill Hill Hollow, and also had concerns about the public exhibitions and traffic modelling. In response to concerns expressed about ribbon development along new roads, Cllr Hoyland spoke of the importance of the Poynton Town Strategy, which would form part of the Cheshire East Local Plan – this becomes their core strategy for the next 20 years. The Town Strategy makes it clear that we want to avoid development, and want to retain the Green Belt around Poynton.

Responding to points raised about why the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road was no longer labelled as SEMMMS, Cllr Hoyland said that SMBC could not afford to go back to the original SEMMMS scheme.

The Town Councils' Cheshire East Councillors have argued with Cheshire East about the proposed road, and have in the process put things back by about 4 months. From a Poynton perspective we do not need the road, but we cannot stop it – it's government funded infrastructure. Back in 2002 a survey had shown the vast majority of residents in favour of the road, but this had included a Poynton Bypass. Most of those attending the Poynton exhibitions would not be in favour of the scheme without a Poynton Bypass/Relief Road. Cllr Hoyland fully agreed with this stance, as did Cllr Murray. The Town Council has secured significant funding to prepare a business case for a Poynton Bypass/Relief Road, but Cllr Hoyland accepted this did not help locations like Mill Hill Hollow.

On ancient woodlands Cllr Hoyland said that SMBC had been aware of this status for about a year – he had been to an SMBC-led environmental seminar at the end of last year where the issue was discussed. On Mill Hill Hollow Cllr Hoyland has asked for more detailed plans, and he was aware that some residents are seriously affected by the proposed route. He will try to get hold of the 2008 plans, and will bring pressure to bear on SMBC. Cllr said he would be happy to pay another site visit to the area.

Referring to the various options for road layouts, Cllr Hoyland said he had seen 10 layouts for Location 4, with factors such as house demolition, traffic loads etc to be considered. For Location 5 the Town Council will recommend Option 1, the bridge. On Location 6 at Hazel Grove, the major issue for Option 2 is the potential it provides for developments such as a supermarket or housing. As far as the Town Council is concerned we will fight tooth and nail against any development along that road.

On all these issues Cllr Hoyland agreed to meet with those residents likely to be affected.

Options for Junctions

Cllr Hoyland said that the Town Council should take on board many of the points raised. In the Council's strong view there should be roundabouts at the junctions rather than traffic lights.

Dealing with each of the six locations in the consultation paper Cllr Hoyland said there was no view on Location 1, Styal Road, Wythenshawe, which had no local impact. On Locations 2 and 3 Option 1 was preferred in the interest of freer flowing traffic. On Location 4, the Chester Road link, Option 1 would be the best in terms of accommodating a Woodford/Poynton Relief Road – Option 2 would only lead to further disruption when the Woodford/Poynton Relief Road was constructed. Location 5, Woodford Road – Option 1 was the only sensible choice, given that Option 2 would be lethal. Location 6, Macclesfield Road, Hazel Grove, was likely to be the most contentious locally. If Option 1 incorporated a roundabout rather than being controlled by traffic lights, this was almost acceptable. A light controlled junction would recreate another Fountain Place, as it used to be, and would cause traffic to stack back towards Poynton. Option 2 would clearly not be popular with residents of Towers Road or Glastonbury Drive, but it would create a freer flowing junction – it was a tough call.

Cllr Saunders agreed with Cllr Hoyland's assessment outline above, but with one exception – she would prefer Option 1 at Location 6, since our residents would be greatly affected by Option 2. Cllr Clarke also agreed with Cllr Hoyland's preferences, again with the exception of Location 6, where he supported Option 1, but with a roundabout. Option 2 would isolate a triangle of land that would be an excellent site for a supermarket or housing development in the medium term, so that was out of the question in his view. Cllr Mrs Sewart agreed, and said that in any case Option 2 would lead to similar levels of traffic stacking back into Poynton as Option 1 with traffic lights. Cllr Gorst also agreed on the comments made by Cllrs Saunders and Clarke with regard to Option 2 for Location 6 – this would also encroach on the green 'buffer zone' between Glastonbury Drive and Hazel Grove.

Cllr West spoke in support of roundabouts at these major junctions, instead of traffic lights, citing the new Alderley Edge Bypass as an example.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council favours Option 1 for Location 6, but with a roundabout instead of traffic lights (10-1against)

Cllr Murray gave his views on the road scheme. He said that the SMBC staff at the recent exhibitions were not competent to answer questions posed by residents, and some of the statistics used were misleading and dubious. The new road had little connection with the original SEMMMS scheme, and more to do with enhancing the Manchester Airport complex. As had been said, the scheme would lead to the loss of ancient woodland. Cllr Murray also criticised the widespread use of traffic lights at junctions – these worked out at c.£280k per set to install, and £30k running costs. Moreover some 80% of all accidents occurred at traffic lights.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk, in conjunction with Cllr Hoyland, responds to the SMBC consultation on behalf of Poynton Town Council (NC)

65. Mayor's announcements

Given the absence of the Mayor there were none, but Cllr Murray took the opportunity to mention Remembrance Day, which had been very well organised.

RESOLVED: That a vote of thanks be recorded for the Clerk, in recognition of his close involvement in the arrangements, and to Inspector Jez Taylor, for the efficient police operation which contributed to a successful and dignified commemoration (NC)

66. Minutes of Standing Committees

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Management and Establishment Committee meeting held on 10th September 2012 be adopted by full Council (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Facilities, Infrastructure and Economic Development meeting held on 17th September 2012 be adopted by full Council (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on 24th September 2012 be adopted by full Council (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Environment meeting held on 1st October 2012 be adopted by full Council (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community, Order and Public Safety meeting held on 8th October 2012 be adopted by full Council (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Additional Planning and Environment meeting held on 15th October 2012 be adopted by full Council (NC)

67. Neighbourhood Plan for Woodford

Cllr Hoyland elaborated on the points made in his briefing paper. With reference to paragraph 2.1 he made it clear that the Neighbourhood Plan for Woodford Working Group (NPWWG) may not have anything to report in 3 months, and that, with reference to paragraph 2.2, he stressed the Plan would take at least 2 years to complete. The reference to "Group" in paragraph 5.2 was to the Neighbourhood Plan for Woodford Working Group.

Cllr Hoyland said he had continued his discussions with John Knight, who is advising the Group. The other parishes involved may want a Neighbourhood Plan specific to their settlement, but separate plans were not to be recommended. With the National Planning Policy Framework forming the top tier of planning, the Neighbourhood Plan would fit between the Cheshire East Local Plan, when created, and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). If 50% of the population voted in favour of it, in a referendum, then it would have legal clout.

Cllr Hoyland made it clear that a Neighbourhood Plan cannot stop development, but it can influence it. It could for example influence permitted development rights. The Poynton Town Strategy made it clear that we wanted no large scale development, and that we wanted to retain the Green Belt. The Neighbourhood Plan could argue that the level of development at Woodford satisfies Poynton's housing needs, given that 950 houses are well over what Woodford needs, based on its current population. Such a Plan represents the first opportunity to consider what Woodford will look like, since it had not been considered in planning terms since it was created as an airfield back in the 1920s.

Following SMBC's Supplementary Planning Document on Woodford, Cllr Hoyland thought the developer would probably go for outline planning permission for around 950 houses, with specific plans for 2 to 3 phases, given that on average between 60 to 100 houses can be sold per year. While the Neighbourhood Plan may not be able to influence these initial phases, it might be able to for those that follow. It might also be able to stop any spread in excess of 950 units.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Hoyland's report be received, and that the recommendations contained in the last paragraph be approved (10-1abs)

68. Code of Conduct: General Dispensations (Section 33, Localism Act 2011)

The Clerk had circulated briefing material from SLCC and Cheshire East/ChALC concerning the process for general dispensations to be applied for, permitting members and co-opted members to participate and vote on issues such as setting the precept in which it could be argued they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. After some debate it was agreed that the Town Council follow this process. At the beginning of meeting agendas the Clerk will replace "Declarations of Interest" with "Requests for Dispensations" to cover both general and individual requests. After consideration at the meeting a resolution will then indicate whether the dispensation has been granted or not. Where possible, such requests should be made in writing to the Clerk two working days in advance of meetings, using the standard form.

RESOLVED: That the briefing material be received, and that the Clerk introduce the procedure for dispensation requests forthwith (NC)

69. Boundary Commission for England's Consultation on Revised Proposals

Cllr Clarke had circulated a paper with his comments on the Boundary Commission's revised proposals. This contained a detailed critique of the proposals concerning the "Hazel Grove and Poynton" constituency, which had not changed in this latest iteration. Cllr Murray thanked Cllr Clarke for an excellent paper, which reflected the Town Council's view. He proposed that the paper be forwarded to the Commission as is, apart from adding that the two areas concerned also had different social services.

RESOLVED: That the paper be received; that a vote of thanks be given to Cllr Clarke for producing it; and that a copy of it be forwarded to the Boundary Commission with a covering letter, also copied to David Rutley MP (10-1abs)

70. Management and Establishment Committee

Following Cllr Mrs Sewart's resignation from the M&E Committee there was a requirement to agree on a replacement, and also to propose a new Vice Chairman.

RESOLVED: That Cllr G Smith becomes a member of the M&E Committee (9 – 2abs)

RESOLVED: That Cllr A Smith becomes Vice Chairman of the M&E Committee (NC)

71. Other Business - Poynton Street Lighting

(This was considered as an urgent item under "Other Business", as permitted by SO16c – see para.63 above). Cllr Clarke had produced a paper which was circulated at the meeting, and Councillors permitted time to read it. Cllr Clarke then spoke to the paper, which concerned the recent switching off at night of a long section of street lights on London Road North, with no prior consultation with the Town Council. In Cllr Clarke's opinion this was a false economy, given that it cost four and half pence per night to run a street light.

Cllr Saunders said that we needed to know the rationale for this action. Cllr Hoyland agreed with Cllr Clarke about the lack of consultation, and he recalled some debate of this issue at the Cheshire East Environment and Prosperity Committee some months back. Cllr Hoyland was fairly certain that he had argued at the time for local police to be consulted, which was accepted, and that there would be a full 12 month cycle of operation before any lights were removed.

Cllr Murray thanked Cllr Clarke for preparing such a detailed report at short notice. He also pointed out a reference in the current SEMMMS consultation booklet to street lighting of the proposed new road, which states that: "for

sustainability and environmental reasons, it is not proposed to light the route of the scheme, except at junctions”.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk forward Cllr Clarke’s report with a covering note to the Interim Chief Executive, Kim Ryley, the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Rod Menlove, and to Kevin Melling, Head of Service, Highways and Transport, at Cheshire East (NC)

The meeting concluded at 10.15pm