

## **APPENDIX A**

### **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2017 QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN**

#### **Question to the Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee, from Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts MBE**

Does the Chairman of the Transport & Highways Committee share my anger at Nottingham City Council's decision that their Park & Ride sites are now classed as '*amenities*' that do not fall within the National Concessionary Travel Scheme, so although they will still accept City residents' bus passes as discretionary from these sites, they will not now accept bus passes issued by other local authorities?

Will he challenge City Council colleagues to reverse this illogical rule, which means a County resident cannot use their concessionary travel card to catch a bus direct from a City Park & Ride site, but if they park at the site and then walk out to the next stop, their pass is valid?

#### **Response from Councillor Kevin Greaves, Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee**

To clarify the current arrangements for the use of Nottinghamshire bus passes on the park and ride services within Nottingham, namely Queens Drive and Colwick services. Since April 2016 these services have not been available for use by holders of English National Concessionary Travel passes issued by any authority other than Nottingham City Council. This was introduced following a decision by Nottinghamshire City Council to class the services as having an amenity element when accessed at the park and ride stops.

All other stops on the route are available for use and therefore offer free travel. The rationale from the City Council is that the provision of free parking is an amenity which under the current legislation does allow them to introduce these restrictions, as they are responsible for the reimbursement of any concessionary travel, on these services, irrespective of which authority in England issued the pass.

The County Council have advertised this change and actually very few complaints have been received to date.

I understand the frustration that Councillor Cutts has and I share it with her and I will once again raise this with our counterpart at Nottingham City Council.

#### **Question to the Leader of the Council, from Councillor John Ogle**

Would the Council Leader join me in welcoming the outcome of Derbyshire County Council's High Court challenge to Sheffield City Region's consultation on whether SCR should expand its devolution deal to include Chesterfield?

High Court Judge, Mr Justice Ouseley, ruled that the consultation was unlawful because it failed to ask local residents a direct question. He observed that “something had gone seriously and significantly wrong”.

Would the Leader agree with me that the consultation was equally as unfair to residents of Bassetlaw as those in Chesterfield, and that there is evidence to believe Bassetlaw residents would not want to become a constituent member of Sheffield City Region, if they received the courtesy of being asked ‘a direct question’?

### **Response from Councillor Alan Rhodes, Leader of the Council**

The Judicial Review brought forward by Derbyshire County Council challenged the lawfulness of the public consultation exercise carried out by the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority, in support of the proposals to extend the area of the Combined Authority to include Chesterfield Borough Council and Bassetlaw District Council.

It is important to stress that no actual decision has been taken by the Secretary of State and therefore there was no actual decision for the Courts to quash through the Judicial Review. The central issue was whether or not it would be unlawful for the Secretary of State to rely solely upon the public consultation completed by the Combined Authority in deciding to proceed with laying orders to expand the Combined Authority and proceed with the transfer of powers and responsibilities.

The judgement of Mr Justice Ouseley is that a decision could still be made by the Secretary of State, but not on the basis of the consultation alone. This is because the consultation did not explicitly ask the public whether or not they agreed with the proposal to include Chesterfield in the Combined Authority. The implications of the court judgement would appear to apply equally to Bassetlaw.

Technically although there are a range of options open to the Secretary of State at this stage we do not know how the Sheffield City Region or the Government intend to respond to the judgement. It will be important for both to clarify that position.

I will make it clear, as I have done consistently throughout this process, I am against Bassetlaw being part of Sheffield City Region, I believe that it will have a negative impact for the economic prospects for Bassetlaw and my position remains unchanged on this matter.

### **Question to the Chairman of the Finance and Property Committee, from Councillor John Wilmott**

Would the Chairman of the Finance and Property Committee provide this Council with an update on what provision of resources are going to be provided for the Hucknall residents by the County Council, Gedling Borough Council and by the Ashfield District Council for all the infrastructure that will be required as the many 100s of new houses are being built in the area?

This includes sewerage, roads, schools, social services, surgeries, policing, trading standards, street lighting, leisure and transport.

## **Response from Councillor David Kirkham, Chairman of the Finance and Property Committee**

May I begin by clarifying that the County Council is not responsible for provision of sewage systems, surgeries and policing and I suggest that he should address these questions to the water company, the NHS and Nottinghamshire Police. Nor am I able to respond on behalf of Gedling Borough Council or Ashfield District Council on their services.

Having said that Councillor Wilmott does ask a very interesting question. As all members are aware we neither set out our budget nor account for revenue expenditure and the provision of services by specific geographic area within the county. Instead the County Council has determined that services are better and more efficiently provided over a larger geographic area for at county level, such as Trading Standards. In addition the level of spend in some areas are determined not by the number of residents or new developments but by other determinates such as general wear and tear or prevailing weather conditions such as maintenance of roads or the provision of gritting.

As Councillors will be aware, with new housing developments comes an obligation upon developers based on national criterion to provide capital monies for County Council services such as schools, transport and leisure. This will also include for the provision of other bodied services such as doctors surgeries. Contrary to this, developers make appeals regarding the viability of their schemes as a way of avoiding their obligations and it must be remembered that the level of capital monies received is decided by each District Council. Too often the level of these Section 106 monies they have negotiated is inadequate.

But I did say the question was interesting and that is because it raises a specific issue of adequate funding for ongoing local authority services. As Councillors will be aware it is Central Government that determines the limit of Local Government funding each December in the Local Government Settlement. The Settlement establishes the total size of the cake for local resources that form part of the Department for Community and Local Government's (DCLG) departmental expenditure limit. In this annual statement the DCLG takes into account all funding available for local government, be that from assumptions about increasing council tax, the introduction of the adult social care precept, the new homes bonus funding, the retained element of business rates and the ever decreasing amount of government funding through the revenue support grant.

On the other side of the equation the government also uses a flawed complex formula for determining each authority's relative need for funding. The flaw not only being in the inadequacies of the formula itself, which has long been recognised by Government but the fundamental mistake that it is not the absolute need for funding but a relative need. In an extended period of austerity the Government has reduced the funding available to Local Government and has singly failed to recognise the increasing pressures faces authorities who are responsible for social care. It is this failing in funding assumption by the Government that we recognise by the continuing funding shortfall in our medium term financial strategy. The ongoing financial challenge has been one that the administration has been making great strides in closing and

including collaboration across party lines to resolve. If you recall we inherited an initial funding shortfall for £154 million when we came to power.

So I return to your question Councillor Wilmott what is the update on provision of services in Hucknall? This is the same issue on adequate funding for all services provided by the County Council. The short answer is the Council will continue to strive excellent services, whether that be by innovative means or alternative service delivery, to all residents of the County while addressing the reductions in Local Government Funding faced by this Council.

**Question to the Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee, from Councillor Richard Jackson**

Councillors from the Plains ward on Gedling Borough Council have asked me, in my capacity as Conservative Transport & Highways Spokesman, to relay some feedback from residents they represent who regularly use Coppice Road in Arnold.

These residents assert that road humps, as depicted in a recent 'Via' consultation letter, would not be a suitable solution for the Coppice Road speed management scheme proposed in the 2017/18 Draft Integrated Transport Programme, and that permanent speed cameras would be preferable.

Would the Chairman of the Transport & Highways Committee take these views into consideration when he seeks approval for the final 2017/18 highways capital programme?

**Response from Councillor Kevin Greaves, Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee**

I have already been working on this with the councillors for the area, Councillor Michael Payne and Councillor Pauline Allan.

The Council recently consulted the residents along Coppice road and has already noted their preference for speed cameras rather than road humps. Their views are being taken into account and we are working to come up with an appropriate solution for this road.