

Minutes



Meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

Date Thursday, 1st November 2007 (10.30 am –3.40 pm)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with `A`

Councillors

John C Allin (Chairman)

The Hon Joan Taylor (Vice-Chairman)

Reg Adair		Pat Lally
Peter Barnes		Bruce Laughton
Chris Baron		Edward Llewellyn-Jones
Joyce Bosnjak	A	Ellie Lodziak
Martin M Brandon-Bravo OBE		Joe Lonergan MBE
Kenneth Bullivant		Mick Murphy
Richard Butler		Jim Napier
Steve Carr		Jim O'Riordan
Steve Carroll		Philip Owen
John Carter		Tom Pettengell
John Clarke		Sheila Place
Jen Cole		Peter D Prebble
Barrie Cooper		Darrell Pulk
John Cottee		Alan Rhodes
M J Cox		Ken Rigby
Jim Creamer		Sue Saddington
Mrs Kay Cutts		David Shaw
Yvonne Davidson		Mrs Stella M Smedley
Alan Davison		Mark Spencer
V H Dobson		Andy Stewart
Sybil Fielding		John R Stocks
A Andy Freeman		Mick Storey
Glynn Gilfoyle		Martin Suthers OBE
Keith Girling		Lynn Sykes
Albert Haynes		David Taylor
John M Hemsall		Parry Tsimbiridis
Paul Henshaw		Kevan Wakefield
Stan Heptinstall MBE		Keith Walker
A Helen Holt		Chris Winterton
Richard Jackson		Brian Wombwell
Rod Kempster		Yvonne Woodhead
David Kirkham	A	Jason Zadrozny
John R Knight		

OPENING PRAYER

Opening at 10.30 am Councillor John Allin called upon his Chaplain to lead Members of the Council in prayer.

Following prayers the Chairman asked for Members and Officers to observe a minute's silence in memory of former County Councillor Terence Lee and Steven Atkinson who had died in a tragic accident whilst carrying out his Highways duties.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED: 2007/074

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the County Council held on 13th September 2007 be agreed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillors Jim Napier and Edward Llewellyn-Jones

The Chairman took this opportunity to welcome both Members back to the Council following recent operations.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:-

Andy Freeman
Helen Holt
Ellie Lodziak
Jason Zadrozny

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Steve Carr declared a personal interest in agenda item number 9 – Treasury Management - due to being an employee of the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Roger Latham, Chief Executive declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item number 12 – Retirement of the Chief Executive – in view of the employment issues raised.

4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Before the presentation of awards, the Chairman wished Members to note that there was a Joint City/County Council reception to be held on the 4th December

to which all are invited for the return of the Mercian Regiment from serving in Afghanistan.

He also advised on the forthcoming voting procedure for the Sherwood Living Legend project.

(a) Presentation of Awards

Councillor Storey presented an award to the Chairman given by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) which recognised Nottinghamshire County Council as an approved centre for the training and delivery of ICS professional awards.

(b) Constituency Issues

Set out in appendix A attached to these minutes is the full note of the issues discussed by Councillors.

- (1) Councillor Peter Barnes – ozone pollution in Daybrook
- (2) Councillor Mrs. Kay Cutts – Park and Ride
- (3) Councillor Jim O’Riordan – the number 54 bus service through Netherfield
- (4) Councillor Martin Suthers – siting of mobile telephone masts near schools (Orston Village School)
- (5) Councillor Alan Davison – Armistice Day – the achievements of Sergeant William Henry Johnson VC MM, a Worksop soldier
- (6) Philip Owen – road speed on Low Wood Road, Nuthall

5 (a) Presentation of Petitions

The following petitions were presented to the Chairman by Members as indicated below:-

- (1) Councillor Martin Suthers – regarding a residents’ parking issue in Bingham Town Centre
- (2) Councillor Martin Suthers – regarding local traffic problems in Bingham Market Place
- (3) Councillor Steve Carr – cycling along Beeston High Road
- (4) Councillor Stella Smedley – save Bishops Court against proposed closure

- (5) Councillor Sybil Fielding – regarding the proposed closure of Raines Avenue Post Office, Worksop
- (6) Councillor Keith Girling – solution on parking de-criminalisation in Newark and the effect on businesses
- (7) Councillor Keith Girling – Newark Bus Station to remain on its current site
- (8) Councillor Peter D. Prebble – against the proposed closure of Woods Court, Newark
- (9) Councillor Yvonne Davidson – about the proposed closure of Kirklands Residential Day Centre?

6(a) QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 6.1

Eight questions had been received as follows:-

- (1) Church Street car parks, Southwell (Environment) (Councillor Bruce Laughton)
- (2) Interactive speed signs programme (Environment) (Councillor Andy Stewart)
- (3) Recent Comprehensive Spending Review (Finance and Property) (Councillor Richard Jackson)
- (4) Council's current Property Portfolio (Finance and Property) (Councillor Sybil Fielding)
- (5) Travel to School in Nottinghamshire Pathfinder Scheme (Children and Young People) (Councillor Bruce Laughton)
- (6) A 5% levy on school credit balances – this question was withdrawn by Councillor Martin Suthers due to a recent announcement by Central Government on this issue.
- (7) Supply of music sets for Nottinghamshire choirs (Culture and Community) (Councillor Stan Heptinstall)
- (8) Reservists working for the County Council (People and Performance) (Councillor Brian Wombwell)

The full text of the questions set out above together with the answers given is included at appendix B to these minutes.

6(b) QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 6.2

There was one question asked under Standing Order 6.2.

There was one question for the Chair of the Nottinghamshire Police Authority as follows:-

Best Value Performance indicators regarding crime (Chair of Police) (Councillor Joe Lonergan).

The full text of the question set out above together with the answer given is included at appendix B to these minutes.

7. REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Leader presented the reports to the meeting. He also informed Members that they may indicate to the Chairman any question or comment they wished to put to Cabinet Members on matters arising from them.

Comments and questions are included at appendix C to these minutes.

RESOLVED: 2007/075

That the reports be noted.

8. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

On a motion by Councillor Chris Baron, seconded by Councillor David Taylor, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/076

That the Statement of Accounts for 2006/7 published in September 2007 be approved.

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

On a motion by Councillor Chris Baron, seconded by Councillor David Taylor, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/077

That the Annual Report on Treasury Management be approved.

10. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A motion in terms of resolution number 2007/078 moved by Councillor Stella Smedley and seconded by Councillor Sheila Place.

The motion that was put to the meeting was carried on a show of hands. The requisite number of Members requested a recorded vote and it was ascertained that the following 32 Members voted '**For**' the motion

'FOR'

John Allin	David Kirkham
Peter Barnes	John Knight
Chris Baron	Pat Lally
Joyce Bosnjak	Edward Llewellyn-Jones
Steve Carroll	Jim O'Riordan
John Carter	Sheila Place
John Clarke	Darrell Pulk
Jen Cole	Alan Rhodes
Jim Creamer	Ken Rigby
Yvonne Davidson	David Shaw
Alan Davison	Stella Smedley
Sybil Fielding	Mick Storey
Glynn Gifoyle	The Hon Joan Taylor
Albert Haynes	Parry Tsimbiridis
Paul Henshaw	Brian Wombwell
Stan Heptinstall	Yvonne Woodhead

and the following 26 Members voted '**against**' the motion.

'AGAINST'

Reg Adair	Bruce Laughton
Martin Brandon-Bravo	Joe Lonergan
Kenneth Bullivant	Mick Murphy
Richard Butler	Philip Owen
Barrie Cooper	Tom Pettengell
John Cottee	Peter D. Prebble
M. J. Cox	Sue Saddington
Mrs. Kay Cutts	Mark Spencer
V. H. Dobson	Andy Stewart
Keith Girling	Martin Suthers
John M. Hempsall	Linda Sykes
Richard Jackson	David Taylor
Rod Kempster	Keith Walker

The motion was declared to be carried and it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/078

- 1) That the proposed revisions to the draft consultation Rights of Way Improvement Plan be approved as set out in appendix 1 attached to the report and
- 2) that the submission of the Final Plan to DEFRA and its adoption be approved.

11. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION - OFFICER SCHEME OF DELEGATION

It was moved by Councillor David Kirkham and seconded by Councillor Mick Storey:-

“That the County Council approve the Officer Scheme of Delegation as set out in appendix A and delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any further revisions, additions or other changes as may, in her opinion, be properly and reasonably required to give effect to the proposed scheme of delegation and which may be necessary to ensure the lawful operation of the County Council’s business and the proper maintenance of the Constitution.”

The following amendment was moved by Councillor Mrs. Kay Cutts and seconded by Councillor Martin Brandon-Bravo

“that the motion be amended with the insertion of the following words before the motion:-

“Subject to paragraph 9.3.4 of the Officer Scheme of Delegation set out at appendix A being amended to read:

Power to settle ombudsman complaints in accordance with current legislation, and that a composite report will be presented to Council at six monthly intervals detailing the number of complaints and some background information as appropriate, having regard to the issue of confidentiality and data protection legislation”

Councillor David Kirkham, having indicated that the amendment was acceptable to him, the motion as amended, took place of the original motion and was then put before the meeting for debate.

The motion as amended was put to the meeting and following a show of hands it was declared to be carried unanimously. It was therefore:-

RESOLVED: 2007/079

The Officer Scheme of Delegation as set out in appendix A and authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make any further revisions, additions or other changes as may, in her opinion, be properly and reasonably required to give effect to the proposed scheme of delegation and which may be necessary to ensure the lawful operation of the County Council business and the proper maintenance of the Constitution.

That subject to paragraph 9.3.4 of the Officer Scheme of Delegation set out at appendix A being amended to read:

Power to settle ombudsman complaints in accordance with current legislation, and that a composite report will be presented to Council at six monthly intervals detailing the number of complaints and some background information as appropriate, having regard to the issue of confidentiality and data protection legislation.

12. RETIREMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Following his declaration at the commencement of the meeting the Chief Executive, Roger Latham, left the room whilst discussion and voting took place.

On a motion by David Kirkham, seconded by Councillor Mick Storey, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/080

- 1) That the Chief Executive be granted early retirement under the terms contained in the report and
- 2) that the recruitment process to appoint a suitable replacement be commenced.

The Chief Executive returned to the meeting

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

A motion in terms of resolution number 2007/081 was moved by Councillor David Kirkham and seconded by Councillors Mrs. Kay Cutts and Stan Heptinstall. Following full debate, the motion was put to the meeting and following a show of hands it was unanimously:-

RESOLVED: 2007/081

That this Council:-

regrets the announcement made by Post Office Ltd to close 30 post offices and replace 3 post offices with outreach services in Nottinghamshire. In view of the Government's prior commitment to a comprehensive network of Post Offices easily accessible to all customers, this Council:

- is alarmed at proposals to close further Post Offices across the Nottinghamshire area
- believes previous closures have reduced the Post Office service in this County to the minimum acceptable level
- is especially concerned about the impact further closures will have on elderly and vulnerable residents who rely most on local amenities, and
- renews its earlier objection to the short consultation period for Post Office closure proposals.

This Council will:

1. write to the Minister requesting that the consultation deadline be extended to 12 weeks as recommended in the Cabinet Office guidelines for public consultation.
2. seek the support of Nottinghamshire's Parish, District Councils and MP's to make the case that Nottinghamshire's post offices are not simply commercial enterprises, but also play a vital role in the County's communities, especially in rural and deprived urban areas.

14. ADJOURNMENT (MOTIONS) DEBATE

There were no adjournment debates.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

On a motion by Councillor Albert Haynes, seconded by Councillor John Carter, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/082

That under paragraph 3 of the Local Government Act (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business on the agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information.

EXEMPT INFORMATION ITEM

**15. PROPOSED SALE OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE INTERNATIONAL
CLOTHING CENTRE AND ADJACENT LAND, KNIGHTSBRIDGE WAY,
ANNESLEY ROAD, HUCKNALL, NOTTINGHAM**

On a motion by Councillor Chris Baron, seconded by Councillor Mick Storey, it was:-

RESOLVED: 2007/083

That the sale of the Nottinghamshire International Clothing Centre and adjacent land, Knightsbridge Way, Annesley Road, Hucknall, Nottingham be approved on the basis of the terms set out in the report.

CHAIRMAN

M_1Nov07

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 1ST NOVEMBER 2007

THREE MINUTE SPEECHES

Councillor Peter Barnes

“Thank you very much Mr Chairman.

I will try and be as brief as possible, but it is a very difficult subject - the A60 on Mansfield/Daybrook Square.

Most of you will know and especially comrades from the North of the County, that the traffic congestion from Thackeray’s Lane to the White Hart or even to Leapool Island can be horrendous and it is causing quite a lot of problems.

I know the Authority is doing its best to get people on buses etc, but we have got no tram or train, but what is the really concerning thing for me and a lot of my residents is the pollution and the ozone layer. It is the worst ozone area in the County and I know that Stella and her Department are trying extremely hard to combat the traffic on that part of the A60.

It is a worry for the people in my patch, so I would like Stella and colleagues in her Department to see if there is any other methods we can come to try in order to control the fumes and the pollution in that area.

Thank you Mr Chairman.”

Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts

“Thank you Chairman.

Currently, the A52 is undergoing major road works, necessitating a contra flow between the RSPCA corner at Radcliffe-on-Trent and the Gamston roundabout. The road to Stragglethorpe at Holme House is under a temporary closure order.

Anyone who has attempted to use this route will know that this is causing major tailbacks. This County Council currently has a policy of providing a Park and Ride site on Greenfield land at the Gamston roundabout, which is also within the Radcliffe-on-Trent Division.

The time has come for more creative thinking about park and ride sites, and you will not be surprised to learn that we Rushcliffe Members have been brainstorming to find a solution.

By the time residents from one end of my Division, Flintham, have reached Gamston at the other end to park their cars, they have run the gamut of congestion almost to their destination, so why bother parking and riding?

In a rural area such as mine, it is impossible to provide a bus service that would serve every small village and hamlet. But it is possible, and without having to tarmac over our precious landscape, to find pocket park and ride sites where the service bus could call on its regular route.

Let me explain.

In the Radcliffe Division and throughout Rushcliffe, there are numerous small car parks which are used to capacity, on some occasions, but often are under utilised throughout the working week. For example: village halls, country pubs and other private clubs such as the British Legion. This County Council could rent, say, half a dozen spaces in such car parks where commuters' cars may be left safely, providing an income for the owner and a service to the user. This could provide more flexibility for park and ride, better accessibility, better use of assets and improved air quality, all without destroying another piece of valuable countryside. In other words, a win/win!

I should like to claim that this is original thinking, but residents of Rushcliffe are way ahead of us. Many of the larger villages like Radcliffe suffer from commuters parking all day in shop and health centre car parks which are intended for use by local people to do their shopping or visit their doctor.

Do I blame the residents of Rushcliffe for this?

I most certainly don't.

As a Council, we have failed to provide for our residents' needs, and have resorted to too much 'stick' and not enough 'carrot' to persuade people to park and ride. The City Council's policy of a Workplace Parking Levy will only make things worse.

Some of the congestion on the A52 in my Division could be avoided if we adopted the pocket park and ride scheme straight away or provided an emergency park and ride site during the road works.

This Council is going to have to get used to having less money to spend, so it is high time that we considered doing things differently.

Thank you Chairman."

Councillor James O'Riordan

"Thank you Chairman.

Chairman, earlier this year Nottingham City Transport contacted myself and John Clarke to give us the news that they had decided to withdraw the 54 Bus Service through Netherfield and Gedling Ward.

This is a current bus service which runs from Netherfield to the City Hospital and to Arnold. We were very disappointed with this decision that Nottingham City Transport had made. Netherfield, in particular, is a Ward that faces many challenges and transport is vital for people travelling to work, but also for our senior citizens, mums and dads, children to enable them to get around the area. We contacted Councillor Smedley and I am pleased to say that Nottinghamshire County Council stepped in and agreed to take over this Service until January 2008. A retendering process of local bus services is due then and there may be changes to the pattern of services from March 2008. I have been speaking with many local residents in the Netherfield and Gedling Ward area who are grateful for Nottinghamshire County Council's support for their local and vital Bus Service, but now are clearly concerned about where the local bus tendering process will leave them in March.

I would like to make an early plea for continued support from the County to keep this Service running. Local people are grateful for the support that Councillor Smedley continues to give Netherfield, in many different ways, but are concerned about the future of this key Bus Service.

Thank you Chairman."

Councillor Martin Suthers OBE

"A short time ago the Head Teacher of Orston Primary School would have expected there to be 111 pupils on the roll of this excellent village school this term.

By last week, when a mobile phone mast had been erected 104 metres from the school, 11 had already been withdrawn and the staff, Governors and the entire village are now waiting to see whether a further 14 are to be withdrawn as their parents have threatened to do if the mast becomes operational.

I need hardly overstate the damage to a small school with a loss of, perhaps, 20% of its pupils over a short period of time in relation to something over which the school has no control. It is easy to blame the parents, but I want to concentrate on two weaknesses of our policy.

First, by congratulating ourselves on following the precautionary principle and no longer permitting the erection of mobile phone masts on school premises, it does undermine our credibility and any assurances we give to parents that a mast of 104 metres away is perfectly safe. But more seriously, there is the problem of trying to pass the buck to the local planning authority.

Anyone who has been concerned with events in Orston does not believe, for one moment, that T-Mobile could not have found a less controversial location in the locality that would have delivered the service they wish to provide and that the community wished to receive, but they have adamantly refused to do so and everyone is quite clear that this is because they might have needed planning permission for an alternative site.

By installing a low impact mast that does not need planning permission, they can in fact flout local opinion in the community, and more importantly, flagrantly undermine the public interest and public policy in relation to school funding and school travel plans and a host of other issues.

That, Mr Chairman, I would submit, is entirely wrong. So I would hope that this Council would give serious consideration to the implications of what has happened in Orston with a view to ensuring that no other village suffers in the same way across the County.

Thank you Mr Chairman.”

Councillor Alan Davison

“Thank you Chairman.

In 10 days’ time everyone will be wearing a red poppy to commemorate Armistice Day, a day when we all remember the sacrifices made by our soldiers during the 2 World Wars of the last century and conflicts from the Korean War up to today in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I want to take a few minutes to remember these achievements through the story of one man born in Worksop, who received the Victoria Cross on 29 March 1919 - Sergeant William Henry Johnson.

Sergeant Johnson was only the 10th member of the Sherwood Foresters to be awarded the Victoria Cross during the Great War and he received his award from King George V at Buckingham Palace. A year after this he was awarded the French Medaille Militaire.

The Worksop man received his awards due to his actions on the battlefield in Ramicourt, France.

Here’s what happened - ‘when his platoon was held up by a nest of enemy machine guns, at very close range, Sergeant Johnson worked his way forward under very heavy fire, and single handed charged the post, bayoneting several gunners and capturing two machine guns. During this attack he was severely wounded by a bomb, but continued to lead forward his men. Shortly afterwards the line was once more held up by machine guns. Again he rushed forward and

attacked the post single-handed. With wonderful courage he bombed the garrison, put the guns out of action, and captured the teams.'

After the war Sergeant Johnson returned to live in Worksop where he was a prominent Bell Ringer at Worksop Priory Church, worked as a weighman at Manton Colliery and became landlord of the Mason's Arms in Retford in 1928. Sergeant Johnson died of natural causes in 1945, aged 54, so his story spans both the world wars.

We all know individuals and families who have been affected by wars, the wars of today and the wars of yesterday.

Today I would like you to remember Sergeant Johnson, an ordinary bloke from Worksop, who did extraordinary things."

Councillor Philip Owen

"Thank you Chairman.

My comments, this morning, are as a result of the recent tragic fatality of Danny Thomas – the young man that was returning home from an evening out. He was killed as he attempted to cross Low Wood Road at Nuthall.

Another death occurred in the same area in 2004 and local residents, many in the City, but a number in my division as well because it is an area that borders the City, are in the process of collecting a petition about road speed at that point. I gather that they already have 1,000 signatures and are seeking a significant number more and no doubt that petition will be presented on a further occasion. The petition and residents are calling for a speed limit on this stretch of road. Speed limits along the road are, at best, anomolous and at worst plain crazy causing confusion for motorists.

Low Wood Road or the A611 is a continuation of the Ring Road around Nottingham from the Nuthall roundabout. Drivers at approaching, via the A610, sequentially go from an unrestricted area to a 50 mile an hour area to a 40 mile an hour area to an unrestricted area at Junction 26, to a 40 mile an hour area between Junction 26 and the Nuthall roundabout, then a 30 mile an hour zone at the Nuthall roundabout, then onto an unrestricted stretch of road where this fatality occurred and then going further, they are reduced to 40 mile an hour and then shortly afterwards to 30 mile an hour.

Now, to my mind, it is absurd that this stretch of road which has houses backing onto it and considerable pedestrian movement does not have a 30 mile an hour restriction, and this needs to be urgently reviewed.

A second issue also arises from this death. The accident took place adjacent to a toucan crossing. The crossing had been installed at least two months prior to the accident, but at the time of the accident had not been connected and was not working. Why did it take so long for this toucan crossing to be connected? A connection, in fact, took place literally a few days after the fatality. There is every reason to believe that if the crossing had been functional this death could have been avoided. I want to know why it took so long to be connected, but I think more importantly than that, the friends and family of Danny Thomas are entitled to an explanation and an urgent review of the speed restrictions or lack of them along this stretch of road.

Thank you Mr Chairman.”

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 1ST NOVEMBER 2007

QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 6.1

Question to the Cabinet Member for Environment from Councillor Bruce Laughton

Southwell residents have expressed concern at the number of people parking their cars at the Church Street car park only to catch the bus into Nottingham, leaving insufficient spaces available for those wishing to access local shops and services.

Does the Cabinet Member share my concern that the proposed Workplace Parking Levy for Nottingham City will exacerbate this problem in Southwell and at many other locations in the south of the County?

Response by Councillor Stella Smedley, Cabinet Member for Environment:

“Thank you Chair.

Can I thank Councillor Laughton for his question.

Lack of car parking space, be it off-street or on-street, is a problem facing car owners and non-car owners alike. The responsibility for managing off-street parking in our towns and district centres rests with the district and borough councils. They have to decide how to balance supply and demand and, in some cases, will use charging policies to do so. With the demand for car parking increasing relentlessly over the years, the County Council has implemented policies in its Local Transport Plans to promote the greater use of public transport, cycling and walking.

The specific problem which Councillor Laughton refers to is the use of local car parks as informal park and ride sites. These vehicles are left in the car park all day, denying some local shoppers a space even for a much shorter time. This problem is exacerbated by the car parks also being used all day by those employed in the local area, often working in the local shops and services.

The impact of the proposed Workplace Parking Levy, if implemented, would be to encourage some motorists to consider alternative modes of transport such as the bus, tram or train. Increased demand for these services will help to sustain them and, in some cases, improve them. I do, however, share Councillor Laughton’s concern that it could add to the problems of all day parking in our towns and district centres, but I am keen to address the problems which exist currently. I have, therefore, asked my officers to look at innovative solutions, in consultation with district council officers. These may include shared use of private car parks

located near existing bus routes which are under-used during the day, such as those attached to public houses and other places. It could also include more cycle parking in existing car parks. Furthermore, civil parking enforcement is planned to come into force in May 2008 and discussions are taking place between district and county officers to agree local parking strategies.

Finally, I hope I can give Councillor Laughton some further comfort. At the moment the County Council has no intention of extending the proposed Workplace Parking Levy into the County area, so he will be able to continue to park his car at County Hall free of charge in the future.

Thank you.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Environment from Councillor Andy Stewart

With reference to her reply to my Council question on 29th June 2006 regarding the interactive speed signs programme, would the Cabinet member for Environment make a statement on developments since that time?

Response by Councillor Stella Smedley, Cabinet Member for Environment:

“Thank you Chair.

Can I thank Councillor Stewart for his question.

There are now 96 interactive signs in the County and they are, in general, successful at reducing vehicle speeds.

Because of this, I continue to receive requests for these signs on an almost daily basis from Communities and from Members. I will, in December, be considering a report on policy for provision of these signs and where the next round of 30 signs funded for provision in the current financial year should be located so that some of the considerable demand can, at least, be satisfied.

Thank you Chair.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property from Councillor Richard Jackson

In light of the LGA’s statement that the Government has delivered its ‘worst financial settlement for councils in a decade’, what is the Cabinet Member’s interpretation of the recent Comprehensive Spending Review and its implications for Nottinghamshire County Council?

Given that this squeeze on local government finances was widely anticipated, and taking into account the efficiency measures already put in place by this

authority, is the Cabinet Member confident that next year's Council Tax increase will not exceed his 4% forecast?

Response by Councillor Chris Baron, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property:

"Thank you Richard for your question.

I was not surprised to hear that the Conservative controlled Local Government Association dismissed this financial settlement as the worst financial settlement for a decade because the settlements for the last ten years have been the best in living memory. Over the last ten years Government grants to local government have increased by 39% in real terms. However, we all know this settlement was going to be tightening your belt time and so it is.

The Comprehensive Spending Review delivers a 1% "real terms" increase for local government. The exact details of the implications for Nottinghamshire County Council will not be known until the Local Government Financial Settlement is announced, which is currently expected to be in early December. However, the headline figures included in the Comprehensive Spending Review are broadly in line with the assumptions made in our Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Comprehensive Spending Review includes an annual 3% efficiency target for the whole of local government. The County Council is already expecting to exceed its 2.5% efficiency target for the three years to the end of financial years 2007/2008 and will continue to seek out further efficiencies to invest in services and keep our council tax down.

We are in the midst of consulting with the Nottinghamshire public on a range of spending and council tax options, the Labour Group will take these views into account along with the outcome of the financial settlement when determining the proposed council tax level for 2008/2009.

Thank you Chairman."

Question to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property from Councillor Sybil Fielding

Would the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property provide an update on this Council's current property portfolio?

Response by Councillor Chris Baron, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property:

"Thank you Chairman and can I thank Councillor Fielding for her question.

In line with the adopted Property Strategy, Chairman, this Council has implemented a programme of office rationalisations with a view to replacing small, outdated office accommodation with fewer, larger, more efficient office buildings located right across the County.

In addition to any property benefits these properties provide improved accessibility and an improved working environment both for staff and service users with more cost effective working practices - including hot desking and co-locating teams – to help improve our service delivery.

This review programme has already delivered a 32% floor space reduction at Meadow House, a 22% floor space reduction at Lawn View House and will deliver a 23% reduction at Ollerton Area Office. These office schemes also accommodate additional staff over and above the replacement office space.

Chairman, energy efficiency is also an essential part of this rationalisation. These new buildings are substantially more efficient in terms of energy usage than the previously occupied buildings and Lawn View House has achieved BREEAM Excellent rating by using ground source heating pumps and rain water harvesting.

Even without the floor space reductions, the energy efficiency of our accommodation would have improved.

It is a success story far better than was reported in the Evening Post the other day, where some of the figures, unfortunately, were incorrect – it should have been reported as a 7% reduction in energy consumption since 2003/4, not a 43% increase. This also had an impact on the total energy consumption figure which should have been a 15% decrease and not a 1.8% increase as reported.

Thank you Chairman.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Services from Councillor Bruce Laughton

Can the Cabinet member explain why parish councils in the Southwell & Caunton division apparently were not formally notified of the *Travel to School in Nottinghamshire* Pathfinder Scheme consultation, even though these proposals have significant implications for families in rural communities?

In view of our recent commitment to enhanced working relationships with local partners, can she explain whether this was simply a local error, or whether parish councils across Nottinghamshire were left out of the communication loop on this important issue?

Response by Councillor Joyce Bosnjak, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People:

“Thank you Chairman and can I thank Councillor Laughton for your very considerate question that you did not put to Stella and gave to me instead.

Pathfinder status would present a unique opportunity to make even further improvements to transport arrangements for children and young people in the County and indeed in rural areas. An extensive County-wide consultation “Travel to school in Nottinghamshire; A school travel pathfinder scheme” has been undertaken to inform and shape our bid. Information has been available in hard copy and electronically, and through publicity across the County. Over 130,000 copies of the consultation document were circulated and in excess of 1850 responses were received between September 10th and the closing date of October 19th 2007.

I will now read out a list of where that consultation took place, just to try and demonstrate how extensive this consultation has been.

There were a series of articles in all local press including the:

Newark Advertiser, Worksop Guardian, Mansfield Chad, Nottingham Evening Post and Retford Times.

Posters were provided in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Libraries, in County Contact Points in Gedling, Sutton, Retford, Mansfield, Worksop and to Nottinghamshire Transport Contractors.

Consultation was done, as I said, as part of public consultation database, the public website, intranet and the WIRED site.

Paper copies were sent out to all parents of children and carers of those young people that attended Nottinghamshire schools.

Head Teachers were asked for comments, governing bodies, school councils, youth forums etc, etc.

Also, everyone of the Nottinghamshire County Council elected Members were sent this consultation document too and as you can see every effort was made to reach as wide a number as possible.

Unfortunately, although the consultation was extensive and far reaching, parish councils were not notified directly. This was a regrettable oversight. We did our best to try and reach as many as possible. However, it is inevitable with any form of consultation that one or two might be missed out.

Cabinet will consider whether to progress an application for a School Travel Pathfinder at its meeting on 14th November.

Thank you Chairman.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Services from Councillor Martin Suthers

Does the Cabinet Member share my concern at Government plans to impose a 5 per cent levy on school credit balances carried forward at the end of each financial year?

What impact could this have on schools prudently setting aside funds to invest in specific projects for the benefit of pupils?

Response by Councillor Joyce Bosnjak, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People:

Question was withdrawn.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration from Councillor Stan Heptinstall

The Central Library in Nottingham currently provides a service to choirs in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire which involves supplying them with music sets for their performances.

However, the Service Development Librarian at the Central Library in Nottingham has just written to all the music groups in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to inform them that this service will no longer be available.

I am informed that the effect of this will be to greatly reduce the range of music that choirs will be able to perform, could lead to increased fees in order to buy music and could exclude those who can no longer afford to take part.

This is happening at a time that singing is being encouraged because of its benefits to both physical and mental health, even to the point that the Government has appointed a singing ambassador to improve singing in schools.

Will the Portfolio Holder use his influence to try to reverse this decision that has apparently been made by his opposite number at Nottingham City Council?

Response by Councillor Steve Carroll, Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration:

“Thank you Chairman.

Thank you for this question. The brief answer is yes, I will endeavour to get this decision reversed and I have already taken action in this regard.

I am aware of the very real concerns that have been raised by music groups and, indeed, I have received a number of these direct.

The provision of music scores is a specialist service which has always been, and is still, provided by Nottingham Central Library. This is because the Central library has a specialist in-depth music collection which is noted throughout the region, if not nationally. The Central Library also has dedicated Music Librarians who have the necessary specialist knowledge and skills to identify, track down and obtain these resources.

This service has functioned well for many years and, to ensure its continuance at the time of Local Government Reorganisation, its provision was detailed in the Service Level Agreement signed between the City and the County Councils that sought to protect the interests of people living in the County post 1998. That agreement, and I quote, says that the City shall “provide, manage, maintain and develop collections of national and regional significance relating to vocal, orchestral and concert band sets”.

A few weeks ago, without our knowledge or prior discussion, the City Library Service wrote to local music groups and societies saying that it was suspending the provision of the full service pending a review. Requests would be met that could be satisfied using stock held by the Central Library. Until the review had been concluded, however, scores would not be requested from other library authorities.

In the light of this I have asked senior officers in the County Library Service to write to their City counterparts to register our dissatisfaction with the measures implemented and to request that the hitherto normal service should be resumed as speedily as possible. I have also, at a meeting last week, raised the matter personally with the Director of Leisure Services for the City and my Cabinet counterpart Councillor Trimble.

This is a situation that I, and my library officers, will keep under review with the hopeful outcome of reversing what we feel to have been an ill-considered decision and one which does not serve the best interests of a significant number of County residents.

Thank you Chairman.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for People and Performance from Councillor Brian Wombwell

We are told that Reservists now make up 10% of the serving armed forces in peace keeping roles in various countries including Iraq and Afghanistan. It is highly probable that most Reservists will be called up at some time and I would like to ask how many Reservists do we actually employ and do we have a mobilisation policy to protect the welfare and rights of these very brave people and their families.

Response by Councillor John Stocks, Cabinet Member for People and Performance:

“Thank you Chairman.

Can I thank Councillor Wombwell for his question.

Nottinghamshire County Council recognises and appreciates the work of the Reserve Forces without whom, many of the campaigns that are currently being supported by our country, could not take place.

We have close links with SaBRE (that is - Supporting Britain’s Reservists and Employers) to ensure that our employees are supported in their roles as Reservist forces. We have been keen to identify the numbers of employees that are in the Reserve Forces and the last time we attempted to establish numbers was approximately eighteen months ago. At that time we had a relatively small number identifying themselves as Reservists, just into double figures across the County Council, however, there are likely to be more.

However, as part of the HR restructuring we have set up a Quality Assurance team to deal with data gathering for HR. The Service Director (HR) has built the requirement to gather this information into his plan.

We encourage employees to disclose their membership and have put messages out on the intranet to encourage this disclosure. SaBRE also actively encourages employees to do this too.

We fully support and comply with The Reserve Forces Act 1996, which relates to the compulsory mobilisation of any employees that may be in the Reserve Forces as well as The Reserve Forces (safeguarding of employment) Act 1985, to ensure a smooth and stress free return to work once the tour is complete.

Our agreed policy on time off for Reservists to undertake training states as follows:

Two weeks' leave of absence with pay shall be granted to all volunteers for attending Summer Camps. The timing of such leave shall be subject to the demands of the service.

Additional training is usually given at weekends or evenings. In exceptional circumstances, however, volunteers may be required to *attend for further training up to a maximum of 16 days per annum. If the additional training cannot be arranged outside working hours, volunteers should be granted up to one further weeks leave of absence with pay for that purpose.*

Furthermore, we have employees that have been high ranking officers in the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) with the Commanding Officer of Nottingham Communications Training Centre serving 31 years with the RNR before retiring! She still works for us.

SaBRE have recognised our commitment to the Reserve Forces in a formal way by awarding us a certificate of support, which I hope is now proudly on display in the glass cabinet in the reception area here at County Hall.

The County Council does not feel that it is necessary, at this point, to have a formal mobilisation policy, as the matter of release is dealt with through legislation and the returning employees will have their employment protected and receive support from managers and the in-house counselling team should that prove necessary. These measures ensure the protection of the rights and welfare of what I would agree, are 'very brave people'.

Thank you Chairman."

QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 6.2

There is one question for the Chair of the Police Authority.

Question for the Chair of the Police Authority from Councillor Joe Lonergan.

In view of the recent PricewaterhouseCoopers *County Council Benchmarking* draft report on Best Value Performance Indicators, which places Nottinghamshire as the worst County Council area for domestic burglaries and vehicle crimes, and among the worst for robberies (all per 1000 population);

Can the Chairman of the Police Authority apportion responsibility for these poor results, and is there anything the partners – including the County Council – can do to facilitate a better outcome?

Response by Councillor John Clarke, Chair of the Nottinghamshire Police Authority:

“Thank you Mr Chairman.

I would like to thank Councillor Loneragan for his question.

I am unsure as to the data on which the report he refers to is based.

What I can say is that between 2001/2002 and 2006/2007, the Nottinghamshire Force has had the fifth largest reduction in total recorded crime (in percentage terms that is). Crime has fallen for the fourth consecutive year to the end of March 2007 and the latest PPAF results showed us as joint 29th out of 43 forces in England and Wales.

To give him some even more up-to-date information and without wishing to pre-empt the Chief Constable’s report to the Authority’s Performance Committee next week; in the period April to September 2007 compared to the same period last year the County/City has seen:

- Total crime is 5.7% down;
- Violent crime is 7.9% down;
- Burglary is 10.5% down;
- Vehicle crime is 6.8% down.

However, in spite of these improved figures the Councillor is right to identify the effective partnerships as vital to success and I know that the County Council is working closely on this with other responsible partners in the crime and disorder partnerships (including the Police Authority itself).

In order to help improve performance in the County, the partnership contribution from the Force has been boosted by a Chief Superintendent being posted to the County Council and the ACC Crime leading on this for the Force, and identified leads at Divisional level.

Thank you Mr Chairman.”

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 1st NOVEMBER 2007

REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS

1. Deputy Leader

In response to comments on:-

- Regional matters – who is the Minister for the East Midlands, what is his/her constituency and has he/she a vision for Nottinghamshire?
- What are the purpose of the meetings with Sheffield City Region?

The Deputy Leader replied as follows:-

- Gillian Merron, an MP from Lincolnshire, is the new Minister for the East Midlands and it is proposed to invite her to a meeting in Nottinghamshire to hold a seminar and discuss matters of mutual interest.
- The Sheffield City Region is attended by Nottinghamshire as it incorporates Bassetlaw as a close region to Sheffield and therefore Nottinghamshire County Council needs to have a representative on the Board. The papers will be made available once they are verified as being publicly available to interested parties.

2. Adult Services and Health

Members asked questions and made comments as follows:-

- Members were pleased to support the National Stroke Strategy
- Is it true that when Beck Meadow closes the new base will only be able to accommodate 40 residents
- It was an excellent day for the Royal Visit by Her Royal Highness, the Countess of Wessex and it shows that the County Enterprise Foods is an excellent facility.
- Congratulations on the Bassetlaw Elders Action Week, it was an excellent event
- Pleased to see the Nottinghamshire Learning and Disability Partnership Board still going from strength to strength.

Councillor Alan Rhodes replied as follows:-

- With regard to the new base replacing Beck Meadow House, this I feel was a misprint and will confirm the numbers as soon as possible.
- County Enterprise Foods is an excellent service run by the County Council and it was pleasing to be a part of the Royal Visit.
- With regard to the Nottinghamshire Learning Disability Partnership's Board; it is felt on occasions the County Council could learn from this Board with regard to report writing in plain English.

3. Community Safety and Partnerships

Members asked questions and made comments as follows:-

- What was the cost of the proposed visit by the Dalai Lama?
- Following the announcement by DEFRA, will the County reduce its working time on animal health issues?
- It is pleasing to see the Trading Standards Department catching someone with 5,000 counterfeit DVDs which is positive work for Nottinghamshire.
- Thanks were given to the recent 'Week of Action' held in Cotgrave, it was felt that the village benefited from this programme.

Councillor Glynn Gilfoyle replied as follows:-

- He was not sure of the cost of the visit of the Dalai Lama but will endeavor to find out.
- It would not be true to suggest that Nottinghamshire will stop all the work that it does because DEFRA are looking at reducing funding and I would like to take this opportunity to praise the staff for all the work they have done over the animal health issues over the last number of weeks.
- The Cotgrave 'Week of Action' was an excellent week and we will ensure that when these 'Weeks of Action' take place, the County Council will endeavor to sustain further action/work with the communities in question.
- There is a draft report on the recent flooding disaster which will be completed in the near future and will be circulated to all Members for comments.

4. Culture and Regeneration

In response to questions and comments on:-

- Why was the Local Member not invited to the inaugural meeting for the Newark Beacon Management Committee?
- Congratulations to Kayleigh Black from Ashfield who had recently won a team gold medal at the Boccia World Championships in Vancouver.

Councillor Steve Carroll replied as follows:-

- The Beacon Management Committee is multi-partnership group and unfortunately we could not insist that Nottinghamshire had more than one representative. The Business Innovation Centre, which is partly funded by the Council, has already secured eight tenants. He had liaised with the Conservative Group spokesperson on the issue but unfortunately the launch of the Beacon was held on the day of the last County Council meeting.

5. Environment

Members made the following comments and asked questions as indicated:-

- With regard to the super vehicle to help combat floods, why was the maintenance not previously kept up-to-date with the drainage problems highlighted by the floods?
- Has the school and office paper recycling scheme been withdrawn?
- Is there a regional approach to highway design as there seems to be larger footpaths put in to replace or reinstate current footpaths and on occasions these seem excessive?
- With regard to the Workplace Parking Levy – how can the County Council benefit if it is introduced?
- It is pleasing to see the unique metal sculpture celebrating the area's textile history, which has been erected in Selston.

Councillor Stella Smedley replied as follows:-

- The super vehicle is one of the best purchases made by this Council and would bring future benefits; maintenance of drainage systems was ongoing prior to the purchase of this vehicle and, in any case, much of this work was not the County Council's responsibility.

- Schools will not lose out with regard to the recycling scheme as it is envisaged that an Officer will be appointed to work with schools across the County on recycling matters.
- In respect of highway design she felt this was a very good example of joint working where expertise from other areas could be put to good local use.
- It is important to work with our close neighbours to come up with the best highway design guide from all quarters. This does not mean that Nottinghamshire will just take designs but will share our best designs with others.
- It is clear to see the advantage of the Workplace Parking Levy for the City in terms of better public transport but at this stage she did not envisage any benefits to the County Council.

6. Finance and Property

Members made the following comments or asked questions as indicated:-

- Were the local Members not invited to the 'sod cutting' at Bowbridge Primary School and congratulations should go to the Head Teacher for encourage this eco-friendly school.
- Following the property tour which took place recently Members should note that the Netherfield Primary School will be having an open day on the 10th November between the hours of 10.00 am and 1.00 pm.
- Pleased to see a new school in Arnold north and extremely impressed with the workmen who have been working there who have been very polite and courteous with all of the community.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Portfolio Holder for the work done on the Living Legend Lottery Bid

Councillor Chris Baron replied as follows:-

- When 'topping out' ceremonies are held it is usually only myself and any other relevant Cabinet Member who will be involved.
- It is good news that the Netherfield school is having an open day as it is a building that is instantly likeable and extremely well designed.
- Working in partnership is very important to get the best for the communities.

- It is always pleasing when members of the community praise the work of contractors especially on a County Council development.