

report



meeting **COUNTY COUNCIL**

date **9 DECEMBER 2010**

agenda item number **5b**

RESPONSE TO PETITIONS PRESENTED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL ON 21 OCTOBER 2010

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Council of responses to the issues raised in petitions presented to the Chairman of the County Council at the Council meeting on 21 October 2010.
 - A. Petition against the volume and speed of traffic through Colwick Village
 - B. Petition objecting to helicopters taking off from and landing on a new helipad close to a bridleway on Stocking Lane, East Leake
 - C. Petition requesting the removal of parking restrictions on North Green, Calverton
 - D. Petition requesting pedestrian crossings at the junction of Ashgate Road and Station Road, Hucknall
 - E. Petition against the sale of care homes in Hucknall
 - F. Petition regarding the safety of children entering and exiting Westwood Infant School, Ashfield
 - G. Petition against a reduction in the level of service at Sutton on Trent Post Office
 - H. Petition against the sale of Bramwell Care Home, Chilwell
 - I. Petition against parking charges in Richmond Road, West Bridgford
 - J. Petition against the Albert Road residents parking scheme, West Bridgford

A. Petition against the volume and speed of traffic through Colwick Village

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

2. A 263 signature petition was presented to the 21 October 2010 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Allen Clarke. The petition expresses concern about the volume and speed of traffic on Vale

Road, Colwick and requests the installation of traffic calming measures, a School Safety Zone and a 20mph limit.

3. In conjunction with the petition survey work has been carried out which shows that of the 105 vehicles travelling on Vale Road between 9.00 – 10.30am 32% were exceeding the 30mph limit and the highest recorded speed was 48mph.
4. Current policy stipulates that the introduction of traffic calming measures can only be justified to address an identified injury accident problem involving vulnerable road users. There have been 3 reported injury accidents along Vale Road in the last 3½ years and whilst two of these involved cyclists the very high cost of introducing traffic calming cannot be justified on this basis.
5. The signing and lining around the school and the School Crossing Patrol site will be reviewed under Safer Routes to School in the next financial year to determine if improvements can be made.
6. The Authority has during the past four years carried out a trial using 20mph limits outside selected schools. These have indicated only a small reduction in average speeds and no significant reductions in recorded injury accidents. The current policy of the County Council is therefore that such limits will only be introduced where there is a clear and identified road safety benefit from doing this. Due to limited Police speed enforcement resources being available any location where such a limit was considered for introduction would also have to be 'self enforcing' in nature.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

B. Petition objecting to helicopters taking off from and landing on a new helipad close to a bridleway on Stocking Lane, East Leake

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

7. A 134 signature petition was presented to the Chairman of 21 October 2010 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Lynn Sykes. The petitioners are asking the County Council to note and consider their objections to helicopters taking off and landing on a new helipad just 65 metres from the bridleway on Stocking Lane. They state that the provision and use of the helipad so close to the bridleway is causing a public nuisance, making it impossible for horse riders to ride safely and leaving pedestrians and cyclists at risk from these low flying helicopters.

8. The NCC Countryside Access Team was made aware of the potential of a helipad alongside Bridleway No. 16 West Leake (Stocking Lane) on 14 August 2009, although it was not confirmed by the owners that it was a helipad until November 2009.
9. Both the construction of a helipad and the issues of change of use of land are planning matters to be determined by Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC). The matter of the safety of the bridleway would be considered as a material consideration to the determination of the planning application. Planning permission had not been sought by the landowner prior to the construction. RBC issued two enforcement notices on the owner of the helipad on 15 September 2010, based on the change of use of land (from agricultural land to land for the landing and taking off of helicopters) and the construction of the helipad. The landowner appealed against the two enforcement notices and this was to be determined by the Planning Inspectorate. This team was consulted and sent a comprehensive letter of support for the enforcement notices to the Planning Inspectorate on 12 October 2010, based on the potential danger to equestrians and other public and private users of the bridleway. The matter is now an outstanding issue waiting for a determination by the Planning Inspectorate, which is expected in the next few months.
10. Since November 2009, Rights of Way have undertaken considerable research looking at comparable planning cases nationally, discussions with both the lead protester and RBC, contact with user groups and colleagues around the country with similar experiences in this matter. Whilst this upheld the belief that the helipad and its use was a very real danger to equestrians on the bridleway it also confirmed that the planning process was the correct and most effective process to address the problem. Throughout, Rights of Way officers have been in close and regular contact with both the lead petitioner and RBC planning officers.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

C. Petition requesting the removal of parking restrictions on North Green, Calverton

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

11. A 17 signature petition was presented to the Chairman of 21 October 2010 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Mark Spencer MP. The petition requests the removal of the residents parking scheme and waiting restrictions on North Green, Calverton on the grounds of permit costs and that the restrictions are not wanted.

12. This request was discussed with Councillor Spencer prior to the petition being formally presented. Given the petition represents 12 of the 18 households on North Green it was agreed to seek formal views from all residents before considering the matter further.
13. Subsequent consultation has confirmed that of the 18 households affected 13 give their support to the removal of the scheme whilst 3 do not.
14. If the scheme were to be removed it would be appropriate to retain the existing waiting restrictions given the limited road width and to protect the turning head.
15. All requests for amendments or removal of existing residents parking schemes will be prioritised and put forward for possible inclusion in a future year's programme for consideration subject to sufficient priority and availability of funding.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

D. Petition requesting pedestrian crossings at the junction of Ashgate Road and Station Road, Hucknall

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

16. A petition of 278 signatures was presented to the Chairman of the 21 October 2010 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Mick Murphy requesting that the County Council consider installing formal pedestrian crossing facilities at the Ashgate Road / Station Road roundabout in Hucknall. The petitioners contend that crossing this roundabout using the uncontrolled crossing points which use the splitter islands is dangerous as the junction is very busy and the traffic travels in a number of different directions. In addition, all three arms of the roundabout feature three to four lanes. The junction is on the walking route from New College Nottingham to the Tram Stop on Station Road and there is also an off-road shared use cycle route which uses the same route.
17. The County Council has recently reviewed the process by which it assesses pedestrian crossing requests so that pedestrian accidents and the presence of elderly, young and mobility impaired pedestrians is given additional priority. Strategic routes linking pedestrians with other forms of sustainable transport such as cycling and trams are also taken into account as this principle is an important aim of the Local Transport Plan.

18. The County Council is proposing to signalise the Station Road/Ashgate Road junction as part of the Hucknall Town Centre Improvement Scheme. However, in light of revised Government guidelines, it is not possible to reasonably forecast a commencement date for the scheme. For this reason, it would be appropriate to consider a zebra crossing at this location as an interim measure if formal pedestrian facilities are shown to be justified.
19. It is proposed to carry out surveys of vehicles and pedestrians using all three arms of the junction and to review the pedestrian accident history. This information will then be assessed to determine the priority of this location for available funding when compared to other requests received. Consideration will then be given to possible inclusion of a scheme in the works programme for 2011/12 and beyond.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

E. Petition against the sale of care homes in Hucknall

Response of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health

20. A petition of 1,118 signatures objecting to the proposed changes in the way that the provision of care homes are to change was presented to the Council on 21st October 2010 by Councillor Mick Murphy. The front page of the petition stated:

“We the undersigned Hucknall residents are very concerned at this ill conceived plan to sell off care homes in Hucknall that would save county council some 31 million pounds in budget cuts. We see this solely as loading of public expenditure into the private sector to profit from the ill and elderly. We implore our Hucknall county councillors and full county council to drop this idea that puts peoples quality of care at risk, by cost cutting exercises to widen profit margins leaving vulnerable people to the worst vagaries of the private health systems who are wanting to manage these care facilities”.

21. The Councils Aiming for Excellence strategy was agreed at a meeting of the full Council on Thursday 25th February 2010. The sale of the Councils residential care homes as continuing care services will not only realise a revenue saving to the council but also a capital receipt which will enable the Council to develop extra care housing for older people across the county.
22. Selling the homes as continuing care services means that the existing residents will be able to continue living at the homes and the staff also will transfer to the new owners. The existing residents will also continue to have their care funded by the Council and the fees for both existing residents and self-funders will be protected.

23. The council will work with each individual service user and their carers to complete a review of their support needs. This process will provide each person the opportunity to consider the most appropriate means of meeting their social care needs in the future.

Councillor Kevin Rostance

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

F. Petition regarding the safety of children entering and exiting Westwood Infant School, Ashfield

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

24. A 52 signature petition was presented to the Chairman of the 21 October 2010 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Gail Turner. The petition comprises requests and recommendations to ensure children are as safe as possible whilst entering and exiting Westwood Infant School. It points out that the Westwood Infant School community are extremely concerned about the lack of safety provisions that are in place and asks for the following to be provided.
- A 20 mph speed limit outside the school
 - Warning signs highlighting the presence of the school
 - Coloured skid – resistant road surfacing outside the school
 - Traffic calming
 - Pedestrian railings outside the school
 - Provision of a school crossing patrol
25. The accident record for the area outside the school has been checked and reveals that there has been one reported accident in the period Jan 2000 to July 2010. On this basis there is insufficient justification for extensive traffic engineering measures such as traffic calming or speed limits being introduced.
26. The number of children crossing Palmerston Street is low with 27 children (all accompanied by an adult) observed between 1500hrs and 1545hrs on Tuesday 2 November 2010. When this is considered with the numbers of vehicles encountered (72 in the same period) there is insufficient justification for the provision of a school crossing patrol.
27. Whilst there are school warning signs on both approaches to the school on Palmerston Street, they are of poor standard and they can be made more visible. This work has been ordered and will be carried out this year together with the removal of some redundant signs. This work will provide improved warning for drivers approaching the school and reduce sign clutter in the area.

28. The width of the footway outside the school is very restricted meaning that it would be impossible to install a barrier safely and maintain pedestrian movements behind it. The carriageway width is also restricted at this point so the feasibility of widening the footway at reasonable cost is unlikely to be possible.
29. The school does not currently have a school travel plan and road safety staff will be visiting the school in the near future to discuss this with the head teacher. It is anticipated that this dialogue may well identify other non-engineering approaches that could be used to improve safety.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

G. Petition against a reduction in the level of service at Sutton on Trent Post Office

Response of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Community

30. A petition containing 568 signatures was presented to the 21 October 2010 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Bruce Laughton. The petition is in support of retaining the present level of service at the Sutton on Trent Post Office branch, following the closure of the previous facility.
31. It should be noted that the Sutton on Trent Post Office was not part of the Post Office Network closure programme. Post Office Limited is therefore responsible for maintaining a Post Office service in this area, to meet their minimum service criteria.
32. The County Council can confirm that Post Office Ltd's 'Business As Usual' team have been made aware of the petition and their 568 signatures.
33. It is our understanding that Post Office Ltd has been approached by two parties prepared to install a reduced 'post office local' service and one which supports the existing service. It is recommended that the Council support the community in maintaining the existing service if at all possible. In the event that a reduced service goes ahead it should be observed that this weakens provision and ultimately could lead to the service being removed in total.

COUNCILLOR JOHN COTTEE
Cabinet Member for Culture and Community

H. Petition against the sale of Bramwell Care Home, Chilwell

Response of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health

34. Two petitions objecting to the proposed changes in the way that the provision of care homes are to change was presented to the Council on 21st October 2010 by Councillor Stan Heptinstall. The front page of the petition stated:

"We support the friends of Bramwell in opposing the Nott's County Councils decision to sell Bramwell Care Home at Chilwell. This petition has been raised within the NG9 area and the service area of Bramwell, Beeston, Bramcote, Chilwell, Stapleford - September 2010".

35. Please note that both petitions have the same front page which states a total count of 2,596 + 83 signatures. However, after checking both petitions we can confirm that the actual figures for petition 1 contains 1,101 signatures and petition 2 contains 523 signatures. It was also noted that petition 2 included many photocopied pages (from a different headed document) and these were counted and included as part of the budget consultation for 2010/11.
36. The Councils Aiming for Excellence strategy was agreed at a meeting of the full Council on Thursday 25th February 2010. The sale of the Councils residential care homes as continuing care services will not only realise a revenue saving to the council but also a capital receipt which will enable the Council to develop extra care housing for older people across the county.
37. Selling the homes as continuing care services means that the existing residents will be able to continue living at the homes and the staff also will transfer to the new owners. The existing residents will also continue to have their care funded by the Council and the fees for both existing residents and self-funders will be protected.
38. The council will work with each individual service user and their carers to complete a review of their support needs. This process will provide each person the opportunity to consider the most appropriate means of meeting their social care needs in the future.

Councillor Kevin Rostance

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

I. Petition against parking charges in Richmond Road, West Bridgford

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

39. A petition of 17 signatures was presented to the Chairman of 21 October 2010 meeting of the County Council by Councillor L B Cooper stating that the petitioners disagree with charges for on-street parking permits issued in connection with Residents Parking Schemes.
40. Residents' parking schemes exclude the majority of motorists from parking in the area of the scheme thereby improving the opportunity for local residents to park nearer to their homes. Charging for permits ensures that those who obtain the benefit from such schemes contribute to their operation and management, which is a fair and equitable arrangement. The charge relates to the provision of the permit and administration of the scheme and is not a charge for parking on the public highway.
41. The proposal to charge for permits was included in the budget proposals in November 2009 and confirmed as part of the County Council's budget for 2010/11 on 25 February 2010.
42. On 9 March 2010 the "Charges for Highway Services 2010/11" included the detail of this charge as being £25 per permit issued (with permits being valid for a maximum of 12 months).
43. Concessions have been agreed for Blue Badge holders and those aged 75 and over, since Blue Badge holders and the elderly can be more reliant upon private transport than other residents and therefore have greatest need to keep a vehicle near to their homes.
44. Charging for permits for on-street schemes is common practice in the UK and the charges which are applicable in Nottinghamshire are similar to those applied by many other authorities. Charging for permits will, therefore, continue.
45. The petitioners also state that the scheme is not sufficiently effective and therefore requests that the scheme be withdrawn.
46. A review of the Richmond Road scheme was included within proposals to introduce a scheme in the Edward Road area onto which Richmond Road leads. However, following consultation for this new scheme the proposals were not progressed since residents of this larger area did not support the introduction of a scheme. This has resulted in any changes to Richmond Road falling away.
47. The County Council has undertaken to consider requests for new schemes and amendments to existing schemes, including removal where appropriate, especially where local circumstances have changed since their introduction.
48. All requests for amendments or removal of existing residents parking schemes will be prioritised and put forward for possible inclusion in a

future year's programme for consideration subject to sufficient priority and available funding.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

J. Petition against the Albert Road residents parking scheme, West Bridgford

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

49. A petition of 110 signatures was presented to the 21 October 2010 meeting of the County Council by Councillor L B Cooper stating that the petitioners disagree with charges for on-street parking permits issued in connection with Residents Parking Schemes.
50. Residents' parking schemes exclude the majority of motorists from parking in the area of the scheme thereby improving the opportunity for local residents to park nearer to their homes. Charging for permits ensures that those who obtain the benefit from such schemes contribute to their operation and management, which is a fair and equitable arrangement. The charge relates to the provision of the permit and administration of the scheme and is not a charge for parking on the public highway.
51. The proposal to charge for permits was included in the budget proposals in November 2009 and confirmed as part of the County Council's budget for 2010/11 on 25 February 2010.
52. On 9 March 2010 the "Charges for Highway Services 2010/11" report included the detail of this charge as being £25 per permit issued (with permits being valid for a maximum of 12 months).
53. Concessions have been agreed for Blue Badge holders and those aged 75 and over, since Blue Badge holders and the elderly can be more reliant upon private transport than other residents and therefore have greatest need to keep a vehicle near to their homes.
54. Charging for permits for on-street schemes is common practice in the UK and the charges which are applicable in Nottinghamshire are similar to those applied by many other authorities. Charging for permits will, therefore, continue.
55. The petitioners are also concerned that the scheme was imposed upon them when it was introduced in conjunction with the M & S development. They say that they cannot identify benefits to the local community or residents and state that the scheme should be withdrawn.

56. The County Council has undertaken to consider requests for new schemes and amendments to existing schemes, including removal where appropriate, especially where local circumstances have changed since their introduction. Prioritisation of these requests has led to a review of the Albert Road scheme to include Davies Road. This review is currently in progress and residents have recently been invited to comment on the proposals and to make their views known. The petition will be considered alongside the consultation feedback.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

57. It is RECOMMENDED that the contents and proposed actions be noted and that the petitioners are informed accordingly.

Legal Services' Comments

The contents and proposed actions in this report are for noting and the Recommendation is within the remit of Council. (MM 26/11/2010)

Background Papers Available for Inspection

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected