

meeting **COUNTY COUNCIL**

date **24 FEBRUARY 2011**

agenda item number **5b**

RESPONSE TO PETITIONS PRESENTED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL ON 27 JANUARY 2011

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 27 January 2011.
 - A. Petition against charges being levied for parking permits on the residents of the Haywood Road Area.
 - B. Petition against the reduction in opening hours of the libraries in Selston and Jacksdale.
 - C. Petition requesting traffic calming measures on the junction of the A617 with the Radmanthwaite Estate/MARR Route.
 - D. Petition requesting the inclusion of Park Road, Bestwood Village, Nottingham in the winter gritting route.
 - E. Petition against the reduction in opening hours of Huthwaite Carnegie Library.
 - F. Petition against the proposals to change the way luncheon clubs are funded.
 - G. Petition regarding change in funding for the Shireoaks Luncheon Clubs.

A. Petition against charges being levied for parking permits on the residents of Haywood Road Area

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

2. A petition of 65 signatures was presented to the 27 January 2011 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Mel Shepherd, stating that the petitioners wished to register their strong objection to the proposal to levy charges for parking permits on residents of the Haywood Road area.

3. The County Council has undertaken to consider requests for new residents parking schemes and amendments to existing schemes where residents have made requests or where local circumstances have changed the parking patterns.
4. Haywood Road was included in public consultation undertaken in April / May 2009 by means of questionnaires. This consultation indicated that two thirds of residents responding to the consultation were in favour of a residents parking scheme.
5. Gedling Borough Council introduced charges for parking in off-street car parks in August 2009 and some change in parking patterns was anticipated. Therefore, in view of the support previously indicated and the potential changes in parking patterns a scheme was subsequently developed and further consultation undertaken regarding scheme boundaries in February 2010 and potential layouts and operation in August 2010.
6. Residents appeared to have been in general support of a scheme and the design has been modified to take account of the comments received. A number of adverse comments are currently being addressed and options sought to accommodate these if possible.
7. This petition relates solely to the policy to charge for the provision of permits to those who are entitled to park within the scheme.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. On 9 March 2010 the "Charges for Highway Services 2010/11" report to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways included the detail of this charge as being £25 per permit issued (with permits being valid for a maximum of 12 months).
11. 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.

12. 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.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

B. Petition against the reduction in opening hours of the libraries in Selston and Jacksdale

Response of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Community

13. A 638 signature petition was presented to the Chairman at the meeting of the County Council on 27 January 2011 by Councillor Gail Turner. The front page of the petition states:

“We the undersigned strongly object to the proposals that the libraries in Selston and Jackdale will only be open 8-10 hours per week. We the undersigned insist that the opening times of these two libraries remain and those people who work in these libraries keep their jobs which will avoid the need to use volunteers to do essentially a paid job”.

14. The County Council is committed to the provision of a comprehensive library service at the heart of every community. This is balanced against the need to make savings to reinvest in services for the most vulnerable children and adults in the County. There are no proposals to close any library as this would permanently withdraw access to the important community service libraries provide today.
15. The original proposal to reduce opening hours to between 8 – 10 hours per week at both libraries has, following consultation, been withdrawn. Selston Library will now reduce from 22 to 11 hours per week and Jacksdale Library from 31.5 to 16 hours per week. We are also meeting with affected communities to develop new partnerships to enhance the core service which will be maintained by the County Council. Reductions in opening hours are required to enable us to make the essential budget savings whilst retaining the network of all 60 libraries.
16. The petition has been included within the budget consultation and the decision will be taken as part of the budget item later in the agenda.

COUNCILLOR JOHN COTTEE
Cabinet Member for Culture and Community

C. Petition requesting traffic calming measures on the junction of the A617 with the Radmanthwaite Estate/MARR Route

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

17. A 23 signature petition was presented to the 27 January 2011 meeting by Councillor June Stendall, concerning the A617 / A619 / Woburn Road junction in Pleasley Hill.
18. The petitioners state that vehicles from the A617 Mansfield and Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR) arm and the opposing Woburn Road arm are coming into conflict when turning right. They believe the traffic signal phasings should be altered so that both arms operate independently to prevent this and to give Woburn Road traffic more time to exit the junction.
19. During the period 1 January 2005 to 30 September 2010 there have been no reported accidents at the junction involving right turning traffic. There have been five accidents in total, all of which resulted in slight injuries, but these did not conform to any particular pattern. None involved the Woburn Road junction.
20. The effects of separating the traffic signal phasings of the A617 MARR and Woburn Road arms has been modelled and it is estimated that this would reduce the capacity of the junction by 10%. This is undesirable as, at peak periods, the junction already operating close to or over its capacity meaning that the congestion currently being experienced at peak times would worsen, leading to additional delays and an increased incidence of motorists migrating onto less suitable rat-running routes.
21. A meeting to discuss the issues with Councillor June Stendall and some of the petitioners was held at the junction on 8 February 2011. It was agreed at the meeting that additional white lining would be introduced to guide the opposing right turning traffic which should reduce anxiety when undertaking these manoeuvres.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

D. Petition requesting the inclusion of Park Road, Bestwood Village, Nottingham in the winter gritting route

Response of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

22. A 77 signature petition was presented to the 27 January 2011 meeting by Councillor Chris Barnfather. The petition requests that Park Road, Bestwood be added to a County Council main winter salting route. The

23. The County Council's policy is intended to provide a winter maintenance service which will, as far as possible within the resources available, permit the safe movement of essential vehicular and pedestrian traffic on the highway network whilst minimising delays and accidents directly attributable to adverse weather conditions. The services are provided to facilitate essential movements on the road network and on every occasion ice is predicted about one third of the County's road network is salted. It follows that in icy conditions the remaining two thirds of the County's roads will have ice present.
24. Information is widely provided regarding the location of main salting routes and road users are encouraged to use these wherever possible in adverse conditions, whilst it is the responsibility of road users to be aware of and drive with due regard to prevailing road conditions.
25. Bestwood Village is located immediately adjacent to a main salting route on Moor Road and Park Road abuts directly on to this.
26. During the most recent spell of severe weather very high numbers of requests were received to add roads to the gritting routes. The current severe restrictions on County Council funding are such that it is not possible to provide additional main salting routes in the current winter season, or to meet the very high demand for additional treatment of routes as a matter of routine whilst wherever possible additional treatment is given in times of severe winter weather. A review of all salting routes is to be carried out to coincide with the termination of the Manage and Operate Partnerships and also with major changes to the County's road network such as the A46 dualling and Park Road will be included in this review.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

E. Petition against the reduction in opening hours of Huthwaite Carnegie Library

Response of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Community

27. A 422 signature petition was presented to the Chairman at the meeting of the County Council on 27 January 2011 by Councillor Michelle Gent. The front page of the petition states:

"We, the undersigned, oppose totally the reduction in opening hours of libraries, especially Huthwaite Carnegie Library with would reach it 100th Birthday in 2010"

Please review the decision with all residents in mind, especially with regard to the old and the young whose education would be put at risk”.

28. The County Council is committed to the provision of a comprehensive library service at the heart of every community. This is balanced against the need to make savings to reinvest in services for the most vulnerable children and adults in the County. There are no proposals to close any library as this would permanently withdraw access to the important community service libraries provide today.
29. The proposal to reduce opening hours at Huthwaite Library from 19 to 9.5 hours per week is in line with proposed reductions across the library network. We are also meeting with affected communities to develop new partnerships to enhance the core service which will be maintained by the County Council. Reductions in opening hours are required to enable us to make the essential budget savings whilst retaining the network of all 60 libraries.
30. The petition has been included within the budget consultation and the decision will be taken as part of the budget item later in the agenda.

COUNCILLOR JOHN COTTEE
Cabinet Member for Culture and Community

F. Petition against the proposals to change the way luncheon clubs are funded

Response of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

31. A petition of 52 signatures was received objecting to the proposals to change the way in which luncheon clubs are funded. The front page of the petition says:

“We disagree with the proposals that:

1. *“The Council will no longer subsidise transport for people to attend luncheon clubs. People can either make their own way or pay the Council the FULL COST for their transport”.*

***Current costs indicate £45 per minibus, or £90 per week!
Member’s fare will rise from £1 to at least £5.63 (each for eight people)!***

2. *The Council will “increase income by increasing the charge for meals from £3 to £3.95 by April 2011 and to £4.95 by April 2012.”*

3. *The Council is “to introduce a late cancellation charge for homecare, transport and meals for service users who provide no or late notice, except in avoidable circumstances”*

As the meals service usually require TWO WEEKS notice this means that most people’s cancelled dinner and transport would probably still have to be paid for!

We believe these cuts to funding penalise Senior Citizens who live alone, have severe mobility and/or health problems, and would possibly otherwise rarely leave their homes. If these proposals were implemented, our Luncheon Club would cease after 20 years continuous service to the community.”

32. The demand for services continues to increase at a time when Councils across the country are facing significant budget constraints. In order to address these budget pressures, Nottinghamshire County Council has completed a review of all of the services it provides, and all the funding it gives to other organisations, in order to reduce costs and deliver services more efficiently. As part of this, the Council has also had to consider ways in which it can reduce the subsidy where possible through increasing the charges it levies for services, or introducing new charges which have previously been free.
33. By reducing costs and increasing efficiencies, the Council will be able to focus and increase its spending on those services which meet the needs of the most vulnerable adults and children in Nottinghamshire. The County Council will be investing £12.6m for vulnerable adults in 2011/12 and will ensure that it prioritises expenditure.
34. The proposals have been part of a consultation exercise which is now concluded and the final decision will be made by Members later in the agenda. If approved the increase in charges will apply from April 2011.

COUNCILLOR KEVIN ROSTANCE
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

G. Petition regarding change in funding for the Shireoaks Luncheon Clubs

Response of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

35. A petition of 19 signatories has been received expressing concerns regarding the proposed funding cuts by Nottinghamshire County Council. The front page of the petition says:

“We the undersigned members and volunteers of the Shireoaks Luncheon Club would like to bring to your attention our concerns

regarding the proposed funding cuts by Nottinghamshire County Council.

The club caters for approximately twenty elderly people, some of whom it is the only time of the week they get out to meet other people, so it not only provides them with a hot meal, but also the opportunity to socialise.

If these cuts go ahead the possibility if that our club would be unable to continue, having just celebrated its Thirtieth Birthday, with some member s being there since it started. Closure would not only have a significant effect on these Members but also the community.”

36. Shireoaks Luncheon Club received funding of £600.00 in the current year towards their rent and insurance costs. They have applied for support for 2011/12.
37. In October, the County Council announced as part of its savings programme that it would consult on a wide range of savings proposals, including savings in the Grant Aid budget for Adult Social Care and Health which supports preventative services in the voluntary and community sector.
38. Shireoaks Luncheon Club should be able to continue to meet in this financial year until a decision is made about the level of savings to be made and whether their application should and can be supported.
39. The proposals for Grant Aid have been part of a consultation exercise which is now concluded and the final decision to determine the level of reduction in Grant Aid will be made by Members later in the agenda.

COUNCILLOR KEVIN ROSTANCE
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

RECOMMENDATION

40. 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. (SLB 11/02/2011)

Background Papers Available for Inspection

None