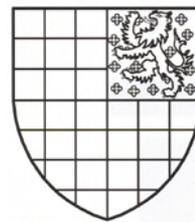


Town Hall
High Street
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2QS

☎ 01273 471469 Fax: 01273 480919

✉ info@lewes-tc.gov.uk
🌐 www.lewes-tc.gov.uk



**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to address traffic-related issues in Lewes held on **Thursday 28th November 2013**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall**, Lewes at **6:30pm**.

PRESENT Cllrs S Catlin (Wischhusen); L F Li; M Milner (*Chairman*); S Murray; R O’Keeffe. Also present (*not nominated to serve on Working party*): Cllrs L Allsobrook, and R Murray.

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*);

TIWP2013/01

WELCOME: The Chairman warmly welcomed all those representatives of stakeholder bodies who were attending in response to his invitation to discuss opportunities offered by imminent projects, such as improvements to the road bridge at the Railway station; developments at North Street, Waitrose, the Bus station site, *etc.* Several others had offered apologies as they were unable to attend, but had noted their interest in any future discussions. Cllr Milner had presented the view that these issues would all have wide-ranging implications as they impact upon Rail; Road; Parking; Bus; Cycle; and Pedestrian needs for Lewes, and could benefit from a coordinated approach insofar as practicable.

Attending for this discussion were:

Lindsay Frost, *Director of Planning & Environmental Services, Lewes District Council (LDC)*;

Tal Kleiman, *Planning Policy Officer, Lewes District Council*;

Mark Valleley, *Team Manager - Infrastructure Design & Delivery, East Sussex County Council (ESCC)*;

Mike Best, *Operations Director, Brighton & Hove Bus Company (B&HB)*;

Simon Chapman, *Route Enhancement Manager, Network Rail (NR)*;

Miss Sam Bryant, *Development Officer, Sussex Community Rail Partnership (SCRIP)*;

Derek Barnett, *General Manager, Community Transport in the Lewes Area (CTLA)*;

Simon Giddey, *Chairman, Cycle Lewes (CL)*;

Kevin Moore, *Chairman, Lewes Living Streets (LLS)*;

Norman Baker MP

TIWP2013/02

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: There were none. No message had been received from Cllr A Dean.

TIWP2013/03

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none

TIWP2013/04

MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting on 21st February 2013 were signed as an accurate record.

TIWP2013/05

PUBLIC QUESTIONS: There were none. (public present: One)

TIWP2013/06

BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

20mph speed limit programme – Mr Valleley gave a short update on the status of this project, and noted that a detailed report was due to be considered at an ESCC Lead Member meeting in December. There were design proposals for schemes in six areas: Malling; Nevill; Landport; Houndean; Winterbourne, and Barons’ Down. A question was raised as to the likelihood of a single, town-wide, scheme being introduced and Mr Valleley stated that the area schemes were believed to be the best and most practical option. An argument was posed that the existing town-centre scheme was ineffective and the signage too unobtrusive. ESCC surveys had established that current average speeds on the arterial roads across town were too high to allow the imposition of a 20mph limit under current guidelines. There had

Continues...

been clear demand identified in the residential areas, and these were straightforward to implement. Physical engineering features that would be necessary to allow a town-wide scheme would introduce complications, such as impediment to emergency vehicles. Lewes Living Streets contested this point, and promoted the use of an extension to the national guidelines that had been allowed recently. The matter of funding was raised, and it was accepted that “hard engineering” costs would be substantial and beyond the scope of ESCC’s present or foreseeable budget. LLS would continue to press for a single scheme, and their vision of five main gateways to Lewes where it could be made obvious to drivers that they were entering a 20mph area.

Potential expenditure items for recommendation to Council - Cllr O’Keeffe introduced three items that she considered could be acceptable for Town Council support. An additional pedestrian crossing on the Offham Road, near the junction with Prince Edwards Road had now been rated as desirable under ESCC’s safety assessment scheme. There was a requirement of around £40,000 to top-up available funds, and Members of the Working Party agreed that Council should be asked to consider supporting this. There was a demand and demonstrable need for a handrail to footway steps in Dorset Road, and also near to the junction of Prince Edwards Road and Ferrers Road. Cllr O’Keeffe had no information on the likely cost of these items and was asked to establish this, and the position of the responsible landowner or public authority, before support could be considered.

“Transport vision” – Cllr Milner introduced a discussion which, he hoped, might “lead to an integrated transport plan for the next twenty years”. Now that the Station Road railway bridge was to be repaired; developments in North Street were in sight, and developments at Waitrose and the current bus station site could be anticipated, it was an opportunity to collectively look at the County Town’s rail and bus provision, road, bicycle and pedestrian traffic routes and parking provision. The results of this and further meetings would provide valuable information for Lewes’ Neighbourhood Plan, being facilitated by the Town Council.

A long and detailed discussion ensued, touching upon topics such as the “shared space” concept and other public realm initiatives. Signage/urban way-finding needed improvement, it was said, and several comments referred to the need to reduce circulating traffic and the number of large vehicles within the town centre. The research carried-out by LDC during its clean air surveys was cited as potentially very useful in refinement of these views. Despite recognized problems with the availability of suitable land, the idea of outlying carparks and regular ‘park & ride’ shuttle services was thought worthy of further consideration.

It was recognized that the future disposition of car parking and retail space in the town would significantly affect demand for such facilities as a bus-station. The current bus station was a topic of particular interest, and there was extensive discussion as to how the environment and visitor experience might be improved in the short- medium-term. One view suggested that residents of surrounding villages, when they had a choice, were opting to travel in to Lewes by car as the bus station was so “inhospitable”. There was speculation as to the real possibility of maintaining a bus station facility on the present site once redevelopment of the adjacent workshops took place. It was acknowledged that the station was not owned by a transport operator, and that its history was not straightforward. Further speculation arose as to the possibility of buying the site with public funds, or identifying it as an asset of community value under provisions of the Localism Act 2011. The planned development in the North Street Quarter was known to include provision for additional parking, and the potential developments in the vicinity of Waitrose held the possibility of altered traffic flows in the immediate area. A statement that B&HB were to increase the frequency of service after 2pm on some key Lewes routes, from April 2014, was welcomed.

The “gateway experience” for visitors arriving in Lewes via the railway station was due to be enhanced alongside scheduled work to strengthen the road bridge. This was planned for September 2014, and it was important to adhere to plans as the funding required completion by March 2015. It was noted that the work did not include any changes to the junction system with Pinwell Road/Lansdown Place/Southover Road. With regard to the potential reintroduction of a Lewes-Uckfield rail link (LURL): the likelihood of this was said to be stronger than ever, with recent studies and other initiatives affecting the regional rail network. A special report on the link was shortly to be presented to the Transport Minister by Network Rail, and regional operators’ franchise renewals were imminent. It was known that funds were actively being sought to “unblock” problem issues in the area of Croydon. Some informed views suggested that a reinstated Lewes–Uckfield link was a preferable alternative to the more comprehensive (and environmentally-controversial) BML2 proposals and that priority for LURL would escalate in the next few years (up to 2020). There were outstanding issues such as long-overdue electrification of some lines, but there was a current government initiative to improve these aspects. Network rail were committed to improvements ‘beyond’ Uckfield, and it was accepted that any success in meeting capacity shortfalls could, conversely, damage the case for LURL.

There followed some discussion on the concepts of “smart travel”, and the options for management of demand, and it was acknowledged that it was essential to engage with major employers in this regard.

TIWP2013/07

As the discussion had drawn to a natural conclusion, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending what had proved to be a most useful meeting, and declared the meeting closed.

The meeting closed at 8:45pm

Signed:

Date: