

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE AREA FORUM

MELBOURNE

3rd October 2012

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Harrison (Chairman), Councillor Watson (Vice Chairman) and Councillors Atkin, Hewlett and Mrs. Watson.

F. McArdle (Chief Executive), P. Spencer (Democratic Services) and M. Guest (Policy & Communications).

County Council Representatives

Councillor Harrison.

P. Jameson (Forum Liaison Officer).

Parish Council/Meeting Representatives

M. Selby (Aston-on-Trent Parish Council), N. Hawksworth (Shardlow and Great Wilne Parish Council) and K. Cross and E. Green (Weston-on-Trent Parish Council).

In attendance

District & County Councillor Murray and District Councillor Wheeler.

Members of the Public

S. Madeley and T. Mills.

MA/9. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Mrs. H. Wheeler M.P., District and County Councillor Ford and D. Martin (Aston-on-Trent Parish Council).

MA/10. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Melbourne Area Forum held on 11th July 2012 were noted.

MA/11. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

In addition to the circulated report about the drainage issues at Woodshop Lane, Swarkestone, the Forum Liaison Officer gave a verbal update. Following the initial investigations, this drainage issue was more complex than first thought. The County Council was accepting responsibility for this matter and officers would seek to design a solution and provide periodic reports to the

Area Forum on progress. Arising from this, the Forum Liaison Officer agreed to investigate concerns raised about a trench across the nearby A5132, which had sunk following reinstatement works.

MA/12. **COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES**

The Forum Liaison Officer had circulated information about Health Watch Derbyshire. This was a new initiative established by the Government giving individuals the chance to influence and challenge health and social care services in Derbyshire. The body would provide a voice both locally and nationally, gathering views, information and concerns and then feeding these into the delivery of local health and social care services. The public were being invited to get involved to make sure Health Watch Derbyshire worked well. Residents were urged to complete the circulated questionnaire and to submit responses by 15th October 2012. A sheet containing frequently asked questions and answers was also provided.

The Forum Liaison Officer also publicised a County Council information sheet, informing residents on preparing for the winter months. The Chairman publicised the County Minerals Plan consultation and explained where residents could find out further information about the County Council's budget proposals in their "First" magazine. He also updated on the Boundary Commission review of Derbyshire, which had concluded that the County should be represented by 64 elected Members and that there would be an increase from 7 to 8 councillors representing the South Derbyshire areas. He explained how the changes would impact on the Aston and Melbourne Divisions particularly.

MA/13. **DISTRICT COUNCIL ISSUES**

It was confirmed that the next consultation phase on the Local Plan was underway. Details were provided of the local events where residents could find out more information about this process.

A presentation was made by the Chief Executive about changes to Council Tax Benefit. Residents were reminded about the current arrangements and the move from a national to a local benefit system from next April. Overall, the funding to councils had been reduced by 10% and for South Derbyshire this equated to £1/2 million each year. There were currently six thousand people in South Derbyshire that received benefits, about half of which were pensioners. A number of options had been considered to date, on which details were provided, together with the Council's initial proposals. The presentation concluded with the timetable for this review and the new arrangements would operate from 1st April 2013. Residents were urged to read the consultation slides and the further information and then to submit their views via a questionnaire.

It was confirmed that there would be no impact for parish council precepts. A local representative asked how the Council would support people to get back into work. The Council was currently in discussions with other agencies, including Derbyshire County Council to see if there was anything else it could do directly. One area being considered was to extend the taper before benefit

payments ceased, when people returned to work. Another issue raised was public transport links from the rural areas to places of work.

MA/14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date and venue of the next Melbourne Area Forum would be confirmed in due course.

J. HARRISON

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting terminated at 8.00 p.m.