

South West Local Area Committee

Meeting held 6 July 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Andrew Sangar (Chair), Joe Otten, Sue Alston, Roger Davison, Barbara Masters, Ruth Milsom, Shaffaq Mohammed, Minesh Parekh, Colin Ross and Cliff Woodcraft

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Huggan and Martin Smith.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 March, 2023 were approved as a correct record, subject to the following corrections:

(a) Item 5.1 (a) paragraph 3:

“Councillor Sangar added that Operation Park Safe had been established as a pilot in the north west area. Inspector Kevin Smith, South Yorkshire Police, reports that they have had around 600 referrals to date. He has written an update on the status of the project.”; and

(b) Item 5.1 (b) paragraph 3:

“In response, Councillor Barbara Masters stated that she had been raising this issue with Transport and Highways officers on a regular basis, particularly following the displacement of traffic as a result of the Nether Edge Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN). She had been assured by officers that they now acknowledged that there were issues at a number of junctions on Ecclesall Road South and, as a result, would now monitor displacement of traffic onto Ecclesall Road South and its feeder roads. Councillor Masters strongly urged residents to raise their concerns as part of the feedback on the evaluation of the Nether Edge LTN.”

- 4.2 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 17 May, 2023, were approved as a correct record.

5. SOUTH WEST AREA POLICING PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The Committee received a verbal update from Dr Alan Billings, South Yorkshire Police Crime Commissioner, on the Police and Crime Plan for South Yorkshire (2023-2025).

- 5.2 Dr Billings explained that he had reached his third and final term of his elective post as Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire. This was due to end in May 2024, after having been in post for ten years. During this time, he had appointed two Chief Constables, one of which was Stephen Watson, who was appointed at a time when public trust and confidence in South Yorkshire Police had ebbed as a result of being accused of 'turning a blind eye' to reports of child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, and due to the findings of the Hillsborough disaster inquest. Dr Billings stated that Chief Constable Watson had 'turned the force around' during his time at South Yorkshire Police, before leaving to carry out a similar role at Greater Manchester Police. Lauren Poultney was appointed as his successor, to maintain this progress and ensure that South Yorkshire Police was a modern force, staying ahead of criminal gangs. Dr Billings added that the Force was able to attract and retain staff, and cared about the wellbeing of its staff.

- 5.3 Dr Billings noted that his role also included the production each year of the Police and Crime Plan for South Yorkshire, that set out priorities for South Yorkshire Police. He advised that he was able to hold the Force to account on the priorities, and held regular meetings to check progress on plan implementation. He noted the following three priorities contained within the Plan:

1. Protecting Vulnerable People
2. Tackling Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour
3. Treating People Fairly

- 5.4 Dr Billings advised that he set the budget for South Yorkshire Police, and that this was a challenge due to tighter budgets. Further information was available within the Plan itself.

- 5.5 Members of the Committee and members of the public present raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- The number of unsolved crimes was currently quite high, and this was due to a national and local shortage of detectives due to difficulties in attracting people to the role, due to criminals becoming more cunning and not always being able to be linked to all of the crimes they have committed. Detectives were adapting their skills to deal with these issues.
- The current Chief Constable had reviewed the Neighbourhood Police Teams to ensure South Yorkshire Police structures lined up with local

authority ward boundaries, utilising Council Tax pre-set money. This aimed to restore partnership working and building up relationships with local communities. There were four Neighbourhood Police Teams: South West, South East, North West and North East. The South West Local Area Committee incorporated both the North West and South West Police Teams.

- Dr Billings explained that he had implemented a number of changes since being elected to the role of Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire. This included setting up a panel for victims of child sexual exploitation, to better understand their survival experiences and ensure they received the right support from South Yorkshire Police. He had also set up an independent ethics panel, with an independent chair, which looked at difficult challenges facing South Yorkshire Police, and ensuring that these were addressed.
- The Operation Park Safe pilot in the north west area had been successful, and Inspector Kevin Smith had put forward a case to senior officers for the pilot to be extended.
- In response to a question from a representative of Sheffield Rotary Club about working together on prevention, Dr Billings advised the questioner to contact his office, who could provide more information on neighbourhood watch schemes.

5.6 The Chair thanked Dr Billings for attending the meeting.

6. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSION - COMMUNITY SAFETY

6.1 The Committee went into a breakout session, during which the members of the public in attendance were given the opportunity to join an engagement session on community safety.

6.2 The Chair thanked those present for their contributions to the discussion, and advised that the feedback would be compiled by the Local Area Committee team.

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

7.1 The Committee received the following questions from members of the public who had submitted the questions prior to the meeting, and who attended the meeting to raise them:-

(a) Mary Ann Love

This question was read out by the Chair:

As King Egbert school will be expanding soon there is a need for a rethink of the area's roads and paths, before congestion builds

up and causes accidents. The road outside the school is already becoming problematical due to the amount of cars and buses trying to deliver or pick-up children to and from school. Also, the amount of parked cars at these times add to the congestion and potential accidents. The path along Totley Brook Road which serves parents and their children who attend the primary school also needs attention as it is overgrown, and SCC are not attending to the upkeep of this area even though I have requested this for safety reasons. The land does belong to SCC, so surely it is their responsibility to ensure that it is kept in good condition.

My Question is when are SCC going to start proceedings to restructure this area with pedestrians and safety in mind?

Councillor Colin Ross advised that, a number of years ago, some Community Assembly money had been used to fund installation of a footpath opposite the school, which had helped to redirect pedestrians away from traffic. He noted that the Head Teacher of King Egbert School was aware of the issue raised by the questioner, and was investigating enhancement walking to school routes and funding was currently being investigated. He added that parking outside the school increased during the year as more sixth form students passed their driving tests and drove to school.

Ms Love noted that she had reported that the path had become neglected and overgrown, preventing people from using it, but that this issue had been resolved via action from Darren Green, Local Area Committee Officer.

(b) Michael Buxton (not present – answer needed in writing)

As Amey was awarded a twenty-five-year contract by Sheffield City Council for Highways Maintenance and Management in 2012 and during the first five years (2012-2017) they quote: 'project that will see Sheffield's roads transformed from some of the worst in the country to the best in the country. We will then maintain the infrastructure at its improved standard for the remaining 20 years of the contract'.

I would therefore like to know why the roads in Sheffield are in such an appalling state and now no better than many other parts of the country?

The following response had been received from Streets Ahead:

Your enquiry has been shared with our Principal Network Manager and Principal Commercial Manager, who have advised that while we appreciate the question, unfortunately, Amey cannot comment on an individual's personal view.

Sheffield's roads are amongst some of the highest ranking in the country due to the significant investment made by Amey since the contract began in 2012.

Please note that all roads in Sheffield are subject to regular condition surveys, which are undertaken every two years, and in addition regular routine safety inspections also take place.

During the condition surveys, issues identified are added to our bespoke software system which creates a condition score. Under the Streets Ahead contract, the condition scores mean that when the average condition of a given road, or section of road falls below these pre-set condition scores, any failures must be addressed, however, as the data is only run once a year and the condition survey interval is every two years, there is often a delay before roads or sections of roads are eligible for resurfacing works to be undertaken.

This is often why interim repairs are carried out to ensure that the road remains in a safe condition for all road users.

(c) Lydia Monks (present)

At a previous meeting on January 20th, we were told that parking regulations were to be added to Brookhouse Hill at Forge Dam to try to make the entrance to the park safer for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. 6 months later, nothing has happened and there is no sign of any progress at all. It's unusual now in the city for a park to have no controlled parking at all. It's a free-for-all in summer, which on a single track, dead-end lane, is dangerous for everyone especially when the cafe has lorries delivering daily, and traffic is forced onto the pavement to avoid the parked cars. We'd hoped to have disabled bays and the option of residents and business permits.

Can I ask why the delay and when we might see some progress?

Councillor Cliff Woodcraft expressed his disappointment that this issue was not yet resolved. He noted that a scheme had been designed, and a Traffic Regulation Order was due to go out for consultation shortly. The proposed scheme would prohibit parking on Brookhouse Hill except in marked parking bays. He added that the delay was partly due to staff shortages and partly due to a new electronic system for processing Traffic Regulation Orders.

(d) Paul May (present)

Under priority Cycling and Active Travel:

1. What are the evaluations of the trial "School Streets" schemes at Crookes, Bradway and the Dobcroft schools?
2. Have you compiled a list of existing school streets schemes and if so, what is it?

3. Have you moved to identify all schools that would benefit from a school streets scheme?

The Chair read out the following officer response:

Westways was being reviewed as part of the larger Active Traffic Neighbourhood (ATN) scheme. Initial feedback is that the scheme on Mona Avenue works well when the school are able to enforce it however the school do not have the staff capacity to marshal the Warwick Road closure as well. The school have had no volunteers come forward from parents or residents despite the wide level of support.

The Bradway scheme has received no objections and feedback from the school has been positive.

Dobcroft don't have a school street. After the trial last Summer the school were keen to look at alternative solutions to their parking issues. As such the Council have installed 5 bollards to protect dropped crossing points and deter parking on the junction corners.

The list of existing School Streets Schemes is available on the internet <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/roads-pavements/school-street-closures>

Abbeyfield	Trial
Anns Grove	Permanent
Athelstan	Trial
Bradway	Trial
Byron Wood	Permanent
Carfield	Permanent
Hunters Bar	Permanent
Greystones	Permanent
Nether Edge	Permanent
Phillimore	Trial
Porter Croft	Permanent
Westways	Trial

The current SCC policy for assessing and implementing schools for a School Street scheme demands that the school be ModeshiftSTARS accredited. This is the National Accreditation for schools dealing with road safety and active travel (a basic online School Travel Plan). Involvement in the scheme means the school has done the following: a basic travel survey, established what the issues are and a variety of possible solutions, carried out some active travel and road safety initiatives / activities, established a working group within school, show a commitment to encouraging active travel to school – all of which are needed for a school street to work. Once accredited, we assess each location against the set of criteria which include KSI, air quality, type & suitability of road, severity of problem, number of residents &

businesses affected etc. The highest scoring schools go through for feasibility and development. We have assessed all the accredited schools.

Councillor Ruth Milsom was pleased to hear about the trials, and hoped that this could be extended to more schools, but noted her concerns around officer capacity for these schemes and queried how this capacity could be expanded.

In response, the Chair advised that there was a commitment at the meeting of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee meeting of 14 June, 2023, to employ a second member of staff to support the schemes.

Mr May said that he had been advised that the onus was on the school to marshal the closure points, which they had been unable to commit to. He added that he was disappointed that there were limited resources available and that the offer of volunteers had not been taken up. He hoped that there could be a push on progress and engagement, which he felt could link in with other Council programmes, for example, active travel, climate change response and healthy eating.

(e) Viv Lockwood (present)

I am asking for support from members. At the moment the report on the Nether Edge Active Neighbourhood Scheme is being written and will be presented to the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee in due course. We asked for, and received, a promise from a senior officer that there would be sufficient time between the report being published and it going to committee for it to be available to the public for inspection and interrogation. I understand that it may be just be one week, and I am asking for your support and intervention to extend this to at least a fortnight for the public to be able to look at it.

The Chair responded by stating that the Council had a legal duty to provide the agenda and report one week in advance of the meeting, and advised that this question would be taken to the work plan meeting in advance of the Policy Committee meeting.

(f) Mike Hodson (present)

The Parks and Countryside Service and Property Service are proposing to lease land from Millhouses Park to the Waggon and Horses Public House, which is owned by True North Brew Co. This proposal arose in 2017, and the Parks and Countryside Service decided to go ahead with the lease around March 2021. The Friends of Millhouses Park group have been pressing the Parks and Countryside Service to keep

them updated on the progress and content of the lease, including rent details as that was promised to be ringfenced to the park, and the length of the lease. Parks and Countryside Service took 18 months from time when the Waggon and Horses took control of this piece of land under a licence to get back to friends of millhouses park to say what was happening.

I would like to know why it took this long to receive a response, with some details not able to be released on the grounds that they are commercially sensitive. Is the Local Area Committee concerned about the failure of the Parks and Countryside Service to inform and consult and deal fairly with the Friends of Millhouses Park and the requirements of the Building Better Parks policy, under which this lease is being made, which has stringent requirements for consultation ?

Is the Local Area Committee satisfied that the proposed lease provides value for money for the Council and for the community because True North Brew Co. have had 18 months occupation of the land without paying any rent? The lease still hasn't been agreed because it's still got to go to the Finance Committee for approval, which won't happen until August. They will then have had over two years of use of that land free of rent, even though during the original consultation it was promised that True North Brew Co. were investing in the park.

How does the Local Area Committee reconcile the pressure to support a local business with the apparent failures to meet the requirements of Council policies.

Commercial sensitivity has been cited as the reason for the redaction of many of these details. Does the Local Area Committee agree that the requirements of commercial sensitivity should be balanced against the rights of the community to have such details so that the community can evaluate value for money?

In response, the Chair stated that this issue was due to be heard at the Finance Committee meeting of 1 August, 2023. He explained that the Local Area Committee did not have the ability to comment on confidential commerciality decisions.

Councillor Barbara Masters advised that the Waggon and Horses Public House had been acting under a 'Contract at Will' and with permission while negotiations had been taking place, which was the same type of contract the Rose Garden Café at Graves Park had been operating under. She stated that she was not aware of the full details, but understood this to be a recognised business arrangement whilst negotiations were taking place. In relation to Building Better Parks Strategy, she noted that concerns had been raised as part of

the planning process. She understood why Mr Hodson was not satisfied with the outcome, but noted that all of the queries that had been raised were in the public domain. She added that consultation with residents had taken place at that both positive and negative feedback had been received.

Councillor Minesh Parekh added that although he could not comment on financial matters, he felt that the relationship between the Council and the Friends of Millhouses Park had broken down and could be improved. He suggested that the Chair of the Finance Committee should meet with the Friends group in advance of their next meeting.

The Chair advised that a full written reply would be supplied to the questioner, and take up the suggestion to make sure that we engage with the Chair of Finance and LAC officers in terms of bringing together friends group, parks and countryside officers as appropriate.

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance and advised that the next meeting was due to take place on Thursday 28 September, 2023 at a venue to be confirmed.

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