

CABINET MEMBER FOR TOWN CENTRES, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY
5th March, 2012

Present:- Councillor Smith (in the Chair) along with Councillors Dodson, Pickering and Walker.

G99. REGULATION OF THE OPERATION OF ALL SAINTS' FOUNTAIN, TOWN CENTRE

Consideration was given to a report presented by Graham Kaye, Principal Engineer, which raised concerns about the gradual increase in anti-social behaviour and safety problems in and around the All Saints' fountain area, which had led to additional maintenance visits required by both the Council's pump technician and Town Centre cleansing team.

It was proposed that the fountain, currently in constant operation, be regulated by turning off the fountain at night between the hours of 18:00 hours and 08:00 hours the next day and during winter months between December and March, to minimise the anti-social behaviour problems and to prevent any future potential injury to the public caused by the freezing icy conditions and damage to the fountain, associated pumps and ancillaries.

Over the years there had been an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour in and around the fountain and the majority of the damage appears to occur at night and at weekends. There was a wide range of vandalism and damage caused to the fountain such as foam or washing up liquid being poured, broken glass or bottles, fast food and litter being dropped into the fountain, damage to the grids on the peripheral to the fountain causing the edge of the grids to be raised with sharp edges. In addition the fountain appeared to attract people on mountain bikes and skate boards at night which again caused damage.

During the winter months, mainly between December and March, there have been problems as a result of the adverse weather conditions causing the water within the fountain and surrounding pedestrian access way to freeze and ice over. During the freezing weather conditions there was always the danger that serious damage to the pumps operating the fountains could occur when the water could no longer be pumped because it was frozen.

If the fountain was turned off at night and during the cold winter months this would lead to a saving of approximately £9,000 per annum. These costs were based on the projected costs for maintaining the fountains, keeping the fountain safe and reducing the risk of anti-social behaviour over the next two to three years.

A similar comparison of savings had been made with some of the fountains in Sheffield City Centre where it was understood that some of these fountains were also turned off at night.

Resolved:- That All Saints' Fountain be regulated by turning off the fountain at night between the hours of 18:00 hours and 08:00 hours the next day and during the winter months between December and March, to minimise the anti-social behaviour problems and to prevent the risk of injury or damage.

G100. PROPOSED CLOSURE OF FITZWILLIAM ROAD CAR PARK, OFF RAWSON ROAD

Consideration was given to a report presented by Colin Knight, Network Manager, which provided details of the proposal to close the car park located on Fitzwilliam Road, off Rawson Road.

The temporary car parks on Fitzwilliam Road were opened in 2007 due to the loss of the large car park on St Ann's Road/Effingham Street (the site of the St Ann's Leisure Centre development).

Use of the two car parks on Fitzwilliam Road, furthest from the town centre, was minimal which resulted in these car parks being closed in 2010 and 2011.

Use of the car park which was now the subject of this report had decreased since the move of staff from the town centre offices to Riverside House and now averaged around fifty vehicles per week. This figure was highly likely to decrease further as more employees moved into Riverside House by April, 2012.

The business rates for the car park cost the Council £3,200 per annum and the machine maintenance contract costs around £300 per annum. The projected usage was very unlikely to generate enough income to cover these costs. Accordingly, it made financial sense to close the car park as soon as possible and declare the land surplus and returned to the Council's land bank. The closure would equate to a significant year on year saving for the Council and there was a possibility of raising revenue through the sale of the land.

The cost of installing the physical closure (barriers etc) of the car park could be met within the car parking budget.

The car park off York Road had the capacity to accommodate all the users of this car park.

- Resolved:-
- (1) That the car park be closed as soon as possible;
 - (2) That the land be declared surplus to requirements.

G101. ENTERPRISE ZONE SITES WITHIN ROTHERHAM AND PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDERS

Consideration was given to a report presented by Bronwen Knight, Planning Manager, which detailed the Enterprise Zone status for specific sites within Rotherham and sought approval for the commencement of public consultation on the draft Local Development Orders on three sites within the Borough, during March/April, 2012.

The Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was asked to identify sites within the city region to be given "enterprise zone" status and a number of sites were assessed (including the Dearne Valley and sites in the south of the borough) against set criteria.

The Local Enterprise Partnership agreed to proceed with an enterprise zone along the M1 corridor, focused around the Advanced Manufacturing Park, Templeborough and the Lower Don Valley. The decision was based on use of Enterprise Zone status to designate a Modern Manufacturing and Technology Growth Area (MMTGA) which reflected the reality of the Sheffield City Region economy, removed a number of barriers to investment and growth and spatially clustered around a number of the city region's key advanced manufacturing and related technology assets.

The selection of this Enterprise Zone, represented a varied, yet cohesive offer of development opportunities, giving businesses (those starting up, expanding or inward investors) the choice of quality, size and type of space they need.

The report set out in detail the city region's strong ambitions, the strengths of the proposals, maps showing all the sites that formed the Enterprise Zone, indicating which had been approved for Business Rate Relief (BRR) and which were Enhanced Capital Allowance sites/areas and the Enterprise Zone Incentives.

Rotherham had two geographical areas where Business Rate Relief sites were located within the Enterprise Zone (totalling 19.92ha) the first at the Advanced Manufacturing Park/Waverley and the second at Templeborough.

One of the conditions of Government designating the Enterprise Zone was to ensure simplified planning arrangements were put in place. Through the Local Enterprise Partnership the six Local Authorities involved have agreed to provide a simplified and unified approach to planning across the Sheffield City Region by way of a Memorandum of Understanding. The Memorandum of Understanding supported the vision of the Sheffield City Region Enterprise Zone across all the sites and set out the simplified planning arrangements to be put in place in each of the Authorities.

For the Rotherham Business Rates Relief sites it was proposed that the simplified planning mechanism most appropriate was the Local Development Order process (LDO) which set out parameters for development which could take place without the need for formal planning consent.

A Local Development Order offered a quick and cost effective route for developers through the planning system and, in effect, granted conditional planning permission for certain specific uses which met the criteria set out within it.

The sites have been fully assessed and specific Local Development Orders drafted for each of the three Local Development Order sites including a design code and a scheme of conditions (which may be subject to slight changes prior to publication).

The next stage in the legal process was a formal public consultation process and, in the same way as publicity for a planning application, the Local Development Orders must be published and statutory consultees notified for a period of twenty-eight days.

Resolved:- [1] That the publication of the three draft Local Development Orders for public consultation be approved.

[2] That, subject to no modifications being required, following the consultation process the Local Development Orders be submitted to the Secretary of State for confirmation.

G102. E PETITION - BLACKBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Consideration was given to a report presented by Julia Russell, Passenger Services, which detailed the receipt of an e-Petition containing 44 signatures received from parents of children attending Blackburn Primary School. The e-Petition related to the parents' objection to the withdrawal of free school bus passes.

The e-Petition expressed parents' dissatisfaction with the Cabinet Member's decision to remove zero fare bus passes after July, 2012 at his meeting held on 19th September, 2011, where it was confirmed that there was a safe walking route to Blackburn School which was less than the statutory distance limit of more than two miles. It had been highlighted that the withdrawal of such passes would affect 14% of pupils attending Blackburn School with the other 86% receiving no transport assistance.

Resolved:- [1] That the receipt of the e-Petition be noted.

[2] That the decision previously taken by the Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity on the 19th September, 2011, be reaffirmed.