

CABINET MEMBER FOR TOWN CENTRES, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY
23rd January, 2012

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

G83. HIGHWAY AND CYCLING IMPROVEMENT WORKS

Consideration was given to a report presented by Tom Finnegan-Smith, Transportation and Highways Projects Group Manager, which detailed a proposal to implement twenty-seven cycle lockers on Morpeth Street and to implement measures to improve the street scene and create a more attractive pedestrian route.

Morpeth Street was currently closed to traffic from Percy Street. The existing planters in the centre of the road did not, therefore, contribute towards an attractive street scene, acting as a barrier and as such they were proposed to be removed as part of the scheme. The planters along the side of the road were, however, to be retained and replanted with new low level and low maintenance planting. However, as the planters in the centre of the road currently also served to prevent vehicles from driving into Morpeth Street from Percy Street cycle lockers and new bollards would be positioned to prevent such access.

Discussions were taking place with the college about the potential for student involvement in the scheme to create a distinctive street scene.

Discussion ensued about the proposals, the landscaping and planting scheme proposed and how best this area could be opened up to disperse the potential for anti-social behaviour.

Resolved:- (1) That the detailed design be noted and consultation be carried out on the proposed scheme as shown on drawing number 126/17/TT176'.

(2) That, subject to there being no objections received, then the proposals be implemented during the 2011/12 financial year.

(3) That the scheme be funded from the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Integrated Transport Capital Programme for 2011/12.

(4) That information on the landscaping scheme be provided to the Cabinet Member, Advisers and Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Board for their information in due course.

G84. B6060 OUTGANG LANE/KNAVESMIRE AVENUE, LAUGHTON COMMON - PROPOSED EXTENSION TO SPLITTER ISLAND

Consideration was given to a report presented by Tom Finnegan-Smith, Transportation and Highways Projects Group Manager, which set out the results of consultations carried out in relation to the extension of an existing splitter island associated with the Outgang Lane/Knavesmire Avenue roundabout.

As a consequence of certain motorists deliberately 'straight lining' Outgang Lane at the junction with Knavesmire Avenue and subsequently negotiating the roundabout against the flow of traffic, it was proposed to extend an existing splitter island to the east of the roundabout by approximately 16 metres thus creating a physical obstruction to these motorists within the existing central hatched area, as indicated on the attached plan attached to the report.

The splitter island would, therefore, be extended by using kerbing and surfacing materials.

The Cabinet Member welcomed these proposals to safeguard the safety of users of this stretch of highway.

Resolved:- That the detailed design work to be undertaken in relation to this proposed scheme and for the scheme to be implemented be approved.

G85. THRYBERGH RESERVOIR - DRAW OFF TOWER BOLT REPLACEMENT

Consideration was given to a report presented by Tom Finnegan-Smith, Transportation and Highways Projects Group Manager, which reported on progress following the Statutory Inspection of Thrybergh Reservoir in October, 2010 and sought an exemption from Standing Order 47.6.2 (requirement to invite two oral or written quotations for a contract with an estimated value of between £5,000 and £20,000) in order that that Commercial Diving and Marine Services may be appointed to carry out the bolt replacement works to the draw-off tower.

The Cabinet Member was informed that a further quotation would require a further assessment and trial replacement by a second specialist team supervised by the Inspecting Engineer, which would further increase costs than any potential savings that may be generated.

Resolved:- That an exemption from Standing Order 47.6.2 (requirement to invite two oral or written quotations for a contract with an estimated value of between £5,000 and £20,000) be approved and the contract for the works for the replacement of the draw-off tower bolts at Thrybergh Reservoir be awarded to Commercial Diving and Marine Services.

[THE CHAIRMAN AUTHORISED CONSIDERATION OF THE TWO FOLLOWING ITEMS IN ORDER TO PROGRESS THE MATTERS REFERRED TO.]

G86. WITHDRAWAL OF FREE TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE TO ASTON FENCE JUNIOR AND INFANTS SCHOOL AND ASTON ACADEMY

Consideration was given to a report presented by Craig Ruding, Principal Officer – Education Transport, which detailed how pupils at both Aston Fence Junior and Infants School and Aston Academy resident on the Coalbrook Estate at Woodhouse Mill were currently provided with zero fare bus passes. These have been provided since 1997 due to an assessment that the walking route to school was considered unsafe.

Recent reviews by Transportation Unit have now identified an available safe walking route which removed the statutory duty for free transport assistance to be provided by the Local Authority. Walking distances to both Aston Fence Junior and Infants School and Aston Academy were less than the statutory distances of two and three miles respectively.

An initial risk assessment indicated that a safe walking route did exist, although this currently needed further work by means of an official assessment and speed surveys prior to being in a position to discontinue current transport assistance.

The proposed discontinuation of free transport assistance would not be as a result of any changes to the Transport Policy for Children and Young People; it would be as a result of a safe walking route being available thereby removing eligibility and entitlement to statutory free transport assistance.

The existence of a safe walking route to Aston Fence Junior and Infant School also had a knock-on effect in that there was also then a safe walking route to Aston Academy for pupils living on the Coalbrook Estate. It was recommended that the withdrawal of zero fare passes for pupils attending Aston Academy should be made at the same time as those for pupils attending Aston Fence School since disruption would then be restricted to a single time period.

It was proposed to allow all current holders of zero fare passes residing on the Coalbrook Estate, Woodhouse Mill, attending either Aston Fence School or Aston Academy, to retain these until the end of the academic year in July, 2012. These would not be renewed in September, 2012.

Discussion ensued on the eligibility criteria, the identification of the safe route and the need to ensure that the safe walking routes for pupils were well maintained.

Resolved:- That free transport assistance, in the form of zero fare bus passes, be not renewed for pupils living on the Coalbrook Estate, Woodhouse Mill attending Aston Fence Junior and Infants School and Aston Academy, with effect from September, 2012. Pupils would no longer be classed as "eligible" due to the existence of an available safe walking route.

G87. COMMUNITIES LIVING SUSTAINABLY - BIG LOTTERY FUNDING

Consideration was given to a report presented by Maxine Phillips, Voluntary Action Rotherham, and Michael Holmes, Policy Officer, which sought approval for the Council's involvement in a partnership funding bid to the Communities Living Sustainably Programme run by the Big Lottery.

The Big Lottery would invest £10 million in up to ten communities across England to empower people to address environmental challenges. This initiative offered a unique opportunity to access grant funding - at a time of public funding austerity - to support some of the most socially deprived communities in the Rotherham East and Boston and Castle wards.

The Rotherham bid was being led by Voluntary Action Rotherham and would draw competitive strength from the use of the assets and community infrastructure in the town centre and in areas that have received little funding

support to address long term environmental change.

The communities targeted for grant funding were set out in detail as part of the report, along with key social and economic indicators and a list of the community organisations that have the potential to actively contribute to the project. The details of the partnership arrangements were still to be defined in terms of who did what, but good progress had been made with potential partners in the private and voluntary sector.

Further information was provided on the outcomes which were included on the Expression of Interest Form, Ward Profiles and the list of Super Output Areas in the Boston Castle and Rotherham East Wards targeted for Big Lottery intervention.

The Cabinet Member welcomed any opportunity for communities to work together to access further resources and support, but expressed concern that some of the information contained within the report was outdated with a few anomalies that needed correction before the bid was submitted. It was, therefore, suggested that officers contact the relevant Ward Members of not only Boston Castle and Rotherham East for up-to-date information, but that of Valley as some of the Super Output Areas identified crossed over the three wards and not just two.

Resolved:- That the Council continue to support and be an active partner in the Communities Living Sustainably proposal, focusing on the Boston Castle/ Rotherham East/Valley Corridor.