

# **SOUTH WEST AREA COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES**

**THURSDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2017**

**ST PETERS CHURCH HALL, STOKE PARK DRIVE IP2  
9YP**

**6.30 PM**

**Present:** Bridge Ward Councillors: B Rudkin and P Smart  
Gipping Ward Councillors: P Gardiner and J Macartney  
Sprites Ward Councillors: H Clarke, R Fern and C Smart  
Stoke Park Ward Councillors: B Hall

There were 16 members of the public in attendance.

**36. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Grant, Ellesmere, Powell, Cenci and County Councillor Abbott.

**37. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 September 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017 were signed as a true record.

**38. To Confirm or Vary the Order of Business**

The Order of Business was confirmed as printed on the agenda.

**39. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Fern declared an interest in Item 12 SWAC/17/13 Funding Request – Let's Talk Reading as he was a member of the steering group.

**40. Chair's Update and Actions from the Previous Meeting**

There were no updates from the previous meeting.

#### **41. Police Priorities - South West Ipswich**

- 41.1. Inspector Horton, Local Policing Inspector for South West Ipswich, provided an update on policing across Ipswich and the specific issues in the South West.
- 41.2. With regards to policing generally a number of priorities had been identified for Ipswich that centred on the recent incidences of violent crimes and drug issues known as “County Lines”. This involved the current issues whereby drug dealers from London were coming to Ipswich and preying on vulnerable members of society. There had been some incidences of ‘cuckoo-ing’ reported in Kelly Road and Gipping Street. This was where drug dealers took possession of properties for drug dealing purposes. A multiagency action plan was now being developed to consider intervention, prevention and enforcement.
- 41.3. It was confirmed that since March 2017, following the implementation of the Urban Street Gang Unit, there had been 230 arrests. This included money, drugs and weapons being seized. Many children were involved in these offences and therefore it was a policy priority to work with various services to tackle this issue.
- 41.4. There had been an increase in the number of robbery and burglary offences in the area and the individuals involved had since been arrested.
- 41.5. It was confirmed that 90% of 999 calls had been received within the target times however, the number of calls had increased by 70% compared to the previous year. Therefore, the police continued to consider how resources could be prioritised in the most appropriate way. The Police and Crime Commissioner had requested extra funding in the budget, due to the challenges that Officers were facing however, no further information could be given at this time.
- 41.6. Inspector Horton confirmed that Suffolk Constabulary had been rated “good” following an inspection from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services who inspect the efficiency of police forces nationwide.
- 41.7. Sgt Curtis reported that the priorities for Ipswich West continued to be around Gipping Street and Kelly Road. There was some ongoing ASB surrounding the shops in Hawthorn Drive and discussions had taken place with regards to how this could be best resolved.

#### **42. SCC Highways - Mark Stevens**

- 42.1. Mark Stevens, Director of Transport Highways at Suffolk County Council, provided a presentation to the Committee on road maintenance within Ipswich.
- 42.2. The benefit of concrete roads was that they were durable, lasted longer and required less maintenance. Concrete was resistant to fuel spillage and had less

- of an environmental impact when compared to asphalt roads. Some negatives included the initial construction costs, the cost of major maintenance and noise.
- 42.3. Mr Stevens advised that many concrete roads across England had a top layer of asphalt to reduce noise as much as possible whilst still retaining skid resistance. Over time, the asphalt would start to become worn, however the key part of maintaining concrete roads was to ensure that the 'joints' were intact.
- 42.4. Prior to the meeting, Councillor C Smart had submitted some pictures of roads that presented a number of issues such as grass breaks, differential settlement and peeling asphalt. With regards to what maintenance work would be required Mr Stevens confirmed that only the joints would be considered as there were no other indications of safety hazards to vehicle traffic.
- 42.5. Mr Stevens confirmed that Central Government had requested that all Local Authorities consider risk and preventative maintenance rather than 'active' maintenance. A new Code of Conduct had been agreed and this introduced the issue about risk and how roads could be maintained forming part of SCC's Highways Operation Plan for potholes. The County Council had a prioritisation process in place for all the busier 'A' roads through to local roads and cul-de-sacs. With regards to minimum intervention, if a pothole measured 25mm deep then maintenance would be considered if this was on a busy "A" road however, a local road required a minimum of 50mm before intervention. For example, if a pothole was reported as 40mm deep, a Local Authority would only be required to investigate the area. The introduction of the Highways Operational Plan had allowed maintenance to become more controlled, consistent and provided a more cost effective service.
- 42.6. Following funding from Suffolk County Council towards the highways budget, a large amount of re-surfacing had been undertaken that had benefited the County overall. Previously 5% of "A" roads required repair and since this, the number had fallen to 2%, 'B' roads had fallen from 10% to 4.2% and 'C' roads had fallen from 10% to 7%. Mr Stevens advised that if the road network condition was managed this would mean less money would be spent on reactive maintenance.
- 42.7. Mr Stevens confirmed that funding continued to be a key issue and since 2010 there had been a 33% drop in the revenue maintenance fund and by 2018 there would be 38% less. The Capital programme funding would also reduce by approximately 20% than the previous year and this was reflected in the preventative approach that SCC was required to take with regards to surfacing roads within the County.
- 42.8. Mr Stevens detailed the number of options available to the County Council with regards to the action that could be taken toward maintaining the roads. Of the four options presented, the only viable option was to take no action except continuing to ensure all roads were safe and considering any concerns that met the criteria in the Highway Maintenance Operational plan. This would have no cost implications on the County Council.

- 42.9. Other options considered included the repair of existing joints, investment in the removal of the asphalt overlay, or re-surfacing every road in Suffolk. However, each of these options would involve vast costs.
- 42.10. Mr Stevens confirmed that other maintenance challenges facing the Council included disrepair to bridges and obscured road signs caused by overgrown vegetation. However, because this was not considered a safety issue and therefore would not be a priority, work would not be undertaken at this time.
- 42.11. Councillor C Smart advised that the County Council outsourced a contractor to assess Ipswich's concrete roads and the report by AECOM dated February 2010 found that many roads in Ipswich, and Chantry, required improvement. He asked why there had not been a programme of replacement of the concrete roads in Chantry in the years since the survey had been carried out. Mr Stevens explained that there would not be enough funding to replace the concrete and that only concerns around the joints would be considered further.
- 42.12. Councillor C Smart explained that the asphalt overlay was causing concern to residents and asked if the depth did not meet the criteria. Mr Stevens confirmed that the aesthetic of roads would not be considered a concern.
- 42.13. Councillor C Smart asked how money for repairs was distributed through the county and how Chantry compared with other county divisions. Mr Stevens confirmed that funding was not divided on a geographical basis following the approach Central Government required local authorities to follow. All work would be prioritised.
- 42.14. Councillor C Smart asked if any of the roads he had highlighted would be covered in the work programme in 2018/19. Mr Stevens confirmed that although the asphalt layer was shallow, the concrete underneath the roads highlighted by Councillor C Smart had been in good condition. With the level of funding available it would be highly unlikely that the roads would be resurfaced.
- 42.15. Councillor P Smart commented that the differential settlements in the roads would be hazardous to cyclists. Mr Stevens explained that although this was a challenge, it would cost £13m to resurface all the asphalt in Ipswich.
- 42.16. Councillor Hall asked why asphalt was used to repair concrete roads when it would not last. Mr Stevens advised that available funds had to be stretched as much as possible and asphalt was significantly cheaper to provide.
- 42.17. A resident commented on issues with potholes on Robin drive and advised that this could be dangerous for motor scooters or cyclists. He asked if the County Council's Leader was aware of what had been presented tonight. County Councillor West responded that the Leader was aware of the concerns residents had around roads, however there were financial pressures on all of the important services that Suffolk County Council provided.

- 42.18. The resident advised that he had complained regarding a dip in Hawthorne Drive and the problem was still unresolved. He also raised concern around the road signs on the A14 Copdock and the safety implications that this could cause. Mr Stevens advised that ideally obscured roads signs would be dealt with however, because this was a high speed road an experienced team would be required to undertake the works and this would cost thousands of pounds. Councillor West agreed to speak with the resident after the meeting.
- 42.19. A resident commented on the safety that road signs provided and that a casual view should not be taken. Mr Stevens advised that he received a number of complaints daily with regards to obscured road signs and that a balance was required between what would be prioritised. There was legislation and a number of processes that had to be followed with regard to removing foliage on the signs.
- 42.20. A resident commented that road tax had previously been collected and this had been put towards funding for roads. Mr Stevens confirmed that the government received fuel tax and vehicle excise duty and it was their decision where this would be distributed.
- 42.21. County Councillor Armitage asked if the locality highway budget could be removed from Suffolk County Councillors and added to the main budget. Mr Stevens responded that this would be a decision for County Councillors to make.
- 42.22. Councillor Macartney asked if Utility Companies were penalised when roads had not been repaired correctly after work had been undertaken. Mr Stevens advised that there was in excess of a million pounds received because of this every year. It was required that all utility reinstatements must be in sound condition after two years of the road surface being opened up. It was hoped that the Council would soon work with the utilities companies to do any repairs themselves.
- 42.23. Councillor Macartney asked if there was any significance in the condition of Park Road and the road outside of Ipswich School to the roads in Sheldrake Drive. Councillor West advised that Ipswich School would not be given any preference however, Park Road had been resurfaced recently.

#### **43. Ward Councillor's Feedback from their Communities**

##### Bridge Ward

- 43.1. Councillor P Smart advised that a recent planning application had been received for housing at Griffin Wharf. The application included play equipment that was much needed at this development.
- 43.2. Councillor Rudkin reported that with the help of IBC's Private Sector Housing Department and social media, the outdoor lighting in parts of the Heatherhayes

had been fixed after a long wait. She advised that if residents had an issue with a housing association they could contact her.

#### Sprites Ward

- 43.3. Councillor Fern commented that there were a number of junctions where potholes had been reported to the County Council however, following investigation these had been considered to not be a concern.

#### Gipping Ward

- 43.4. Councillor Macartney confirmed that she had been involved in a 'clear up' day at Jasmine Close. This had been well received and the police had also attended.

#### Stoke Park Ward

- 43.5. Councillor Hall reported that the issue of speeding vehicles in Stoke Park continued to be investigated.

### **44. Suffolk County Councillors Update**

- 44.1. County Councillor Gardiner reported that he had used his locality highway budget to provide a pedestrian crossing in Stone Lodge Lane to provide people a safe place to cross in that area. It was hoped that this would be implemented shortly.

### **45. Responses to Public Questions Received and Open Discussion on Local Issues**

- 45.1. A resident asked if Councillor Gardiner could provide an update on the busses. Councillor Gardiner advised that the revisions to the bus timetable had not yet been finalised however, there would be no change with regards to the Ipswich Buses service.
- 45.2. The resident reported that a Police and Crime Commissioner meeting had been held in Chantry High School where antisocial behaviour in Sheldrake Drive had been discussed. Councillor Gardiner reported that residents from Sheldrake Drive had reported information to the PCC who had discussed this further with the Police and following this, surveillance work had recently been undertaken in the area.

### **46. SWAC/17/12 Funding request - Ipswich Community Playbus**

- 46.1. The Community Engagement Officer introduced the funding request for the Ipswich Community Playbus and reported that the bus had three stops in the South West of Ipswich – Griffin Wharf, Kelly Road and Downside Close.

46.2. The bus was a longstanding institution within Ipswich across all areas of the town and included supervised 'soft play' for young people under 5's and their parents/guardians to use for free within the community. Approximately £50k was required per year to run the bus and £10k funding had been requested in total from all 5 Area Committees to be divided proportionally. As there were three stops in the South West the Committee was asked to consider providing £3,750 funding.

**Resolved:**

**that £3,750 be allocated from the South West Area Committee budget to the Ipswich Community Playbus to contribute to the running costs**

Reason: to determine the merit of providing Committee funding to the Ipswich Community Playbus for running costs to provide 3 weekly play sessions during term time.

**47. SWAC/17/13 Funding request - Let's Talk Reading**

47.1. Mr John Helleur, Let's Talk Reading Project Board member, provided a presentation on the 'Let's Talk Reading' project and reported that the project had been formed to help tackle the literacy challenges within Ipswich. Government statistics from a survey undertaken in 2011/2012 had shown that 1 in 6 adults in England could not read adequately. This had a negative effect on all aspects of daily life including food shopping, using public transport and understanding basic health information.

47.2. The project aimed to engage with schools facing the toughest literacy challenges and provide them with additional funding. A fundamental part of the project was encouraging parents to engage with their children from an early age as the first four years of a child's development was the most important. The focus of the project last year had been around ensuring every child could read effectively. This included working with parents in nurseries and primary schools and providing 500 book bags for all two year olds in disadvantaged areas. Guidance on adult reading had also been distributed around community places such as libraries, hairdressers etc. for free.

47.3. At this time there was little capacity for adult literacy guidance within Ipswich however, work was being undertaken with agencies to try and raise awareness of this "hidden issue". It was anticipated that this would be a sustainable project over a ten year timeframe.

47.4. Partnership working with charities and other organisations continued to be important and it was hoped that volunteers would start working alongside the team in schools and adult literacy.

47.5. Councillor Fern advised that Suffolk New College was committed to working with the project which was of great importance especially for both children and adults. Councillor Fern also reported that he was also currently campaigning for

push chairs to be swapped around so that children faced their parent/guardian and could have conversations to help encourage speech. Councillor Fern left the room at this point.

- 47.6. Councillor Gardiner asked if the 'Raising the Bar' funding would be the same next year as what had been received this year. Councillor West confirmed that this had been raised at a previous committee meeting and that they were awaiting a response to this.
- 47.7. Councillor C Smart supported the project and commented that it was crucial that every child could read.
- 47.8. Councillor Clarke declared a non-pecuniary interest and advised that he had been involved with three of the schools who had benefited from last year's funding and there had been improvements in all of them, some of which had been because of the work of "Let's Talk Reading".

**Resolved:**

**that £4,615.00 be allocated from the South West Area Committee to the Let's Talk Reading project towards the overall costs until September 2018, be agreed.**

Reason: To determine the merit of providing Committee funding to the Let's Talk Reading project towards the overall costs until September 2018.

**48. SWAC/17/14 Funding Request - Newnham Court Improvements**

- 48.1. The Community Engagement Officer confirmed that £2,411.63 funding was requested from the South West Area Committee for improvements to the Council owned land and fencing adjoining the footpath from Newnham Court to the Birkfield Drive underpass. This would include repairs to the fence and resurfacing the land.

**Resolved:**

**that £2,411.63 be allocated from the South West Area Committee budget to the improvements at Newnham Court.**

Reason: to determine the merit of allocating funds to improve the appearance of the local area.

**49. SWAC/17/15 Area Action Plan Update**

- 49.1. The Community Engagement Officer reported that £3,600 had been funded by the Committee for three South West Ipswich schools to visit the Ipswich Museum to take part in activities and provide feedback. There was some

money to be returned to the Committee due to one session taking place however, the sessions that had taken place had been successful.

- 49.2. The Officer reported that Ground Works had also made a successful start on their project with regards to fly tipping in the area and had been attending school assemblies to promote the subject.

**Resolved:**

**that the revised South West Area Action Plan attached at Appendix 1, be noted.**

Reason: Priorities provide the basis of an action plan that will enable the Area Committee to clearly communicate its vision and priorities for the area and will help demonstrate how its budget is being allocated to deliver the priorities set for the Area.

**50. SWAC/17/16 Area Committee Budget Update**

- 50.1. The Lead Head of Service presented this item and confirmed that as noted earlier, there were outstanding committed funds which had not been fully drawn against with regards to the funding for the Ipswich Museum Service. Therefore, it was requested that the Committee consider this commitment to return £2,232.27 the South West Area Committee unallocated budget.

**Resolved:**

- 1. that the financial statement in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.**
- 2. that the surplus funds, as identified above, be returned to the unallocated South West Area Committee budgeted, be agreed.**

Reasons: (a) to provide clear and transparent details of the amounts of funds available to the Area Committee to deliver the priorities in its action plan.

(b) to release the South West Area Committee budget funding where there was no further expenditure anticipated

**51. Dates of Future Meetings 2018, all to be held at 6.30pm:**

- Thursday 18 January 2018 – Gipping Room, Grafton House, Russell Road IP1 2DE**
- Thursday 8 March 2018 – Chantry Methodist Church, Kingsfisher Avenue, Ipswich IP2 0QN**

The meeting closed at 8.26 pm

**Chair**