

Central and South Mid Sussex County Local Committee

12 November 2019 – At a meeting of the Committee at 7.00 pm held at Albourne Village Hall, The Street, Albourne, BN6 9DH.

Present:

Mrs Jones (Chairman) (Burgess Hill East;), Mrs Dennis (Hurstpierpoint & Bolney;), Mr Barrett-Miles (Burgess Hill North;), Mr Hillier (Haywards Heath East;), Ms Lord (Hassocks & Burgess Hill South;) and Mr Wickremaratchi (Haywards Heath Town;)

Apologies were received from Mr Bradbury (Cuckfield & Lucastes;) and Mr Lea (Lindfield & High Weald;)

Also in attendance: Mr Jupp (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills)

Officers in attendance: Adam Chisnall (Democratic Services Officer), Gulu Sibanda (Principal Community Officer) and Richard Speller (Area Highways Manager)

13. Election of Chairman

13.1 Mr Chisnall informed the Committee that Mr Bradbury had decided to stand down as Chairman of the Committee. The Committee was asked to elect a new Chairman for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year.

13.2 Resolved – That:

- Mrs Jones is elected as Chairman of the Central and South Mid Sussex County Local Committee for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year.
- Mrs Dennis is elected as Vice-Chairman of the Central and South Mid Sussex County Local Committee for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year.

14. Welcome and introductions

14.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members and Officers introduced themselves.

14.2 The Chairman noted the high level of public attendance to discuss Woodlands Meed and agreed to allow time at the start of the meeting for a discussion.

14.3 The Chairman introduced Mr Jupp who had been recently appointed as Cabinet Member for Education and Skills. Mr Jupp confirmed that he was aware of the current situation with Woodlands Meed and that he was due to attend the school and college to see the daily operation in person.

Mr Jupp explained that he was catching up on the backlog of history with Woodlands Meed and was reading all correspondence.

14.4 Mr Jupp explained that his role was to understand educational requirements and needs across the whole county. The Progress Statement outlined the review that was due to take place for Woodlands Meed, with a decision expected in early January.

14.5 The Chairman confirmed that Woodlands Meed had been added to the 4 December agenda of the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee where external witnesses would be invited.

14.6 The Chairman invited questions from the public.

- A pupil spoke about the current arrangements at the school and how the teachers were doing their best despite the issues with the building, such as the lack of hot water. The Council were asked to honour the promises that were previously made. – *Mr Jupp thanked the pupil for their comments and confirmed that he would be attending to school to look at the facilities personally.*
- A member of the Complete Woodlands Meed group confirmed that they would continue to fight for the school to ensure their children would not be let down, as she felt that the school was unable to meet its statutory duty. Questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting concerning the draft Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy, which did not refer to Woodlands Meed; provisions for post 16 SEND pupils; details on cost, risks and challenges; and clarity on how the Council would deliver on the promise made to the Department for Education on provision and compliance with statutory obligations. A response had been received, but it was felt that the questions had not been satisfactorily answered.
- Queried what had happened to the funds from the sale of the Court Meadow site. – *Mr Jupp confirmed that the site was up for sale, but had not been sold. Mr Jupp resolved to investigate what would happen with the funds on sale completion.*
- A parent applauded the staff at the school for their work. The parent expressed the specific challenges faced by parents of special needs children and their need to be an advocate. An example was given of children using wheelchairs who were required to use specialist frames to stand, which led to the child being stuck inside and at a disadvantage compared to other students.
- A parent expressed concerns with the site, and gave examples of situations where hygiene was compromised. Teaching in huts could raise issues with overheating which could cause issues for vulnerable children. Children were also required to leave the site to attend classes at other facilities, which impacted their attendance in lessons.
- An attendee highlighted the assurances previously given by Mr Burrett, former Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, and queried why a review was required and stressed the need to honour the assurances given. – *Mr Jupp responded that he understood the upset in the room and explained that the plans were a large project and that the initially estimated costs could be inaccurate as the*

costs were likely to increase. Mr Jupp confirmed that his role was to ensure that all children in the County had their Special Educational Needs (SEN) met.

- The Chair of Governors confirmed that they had submitted questions in advance of the meeting concerning the proposal to open a new SEN Free School in place of Woodlands Meed and concerns with the adherence to the Seven Principles of Public Life. The Chair of Governors rejected the received responses which she considered misleading. – *The Chairman confirmed that she had spoken with the Director of Education and Skills who had denied the plans for the proposed free school. Mr Jupp resolved to look into the issue and noted that The Chair of Governors was due to meet with the Director of Education and Skills and resolved to try and attend the meeting if possible.*
- The Chair of Governors gave examples of consultants' opinions that the required school could be built for £20m and felt that if this was not the case the Council needed to be transparent with the reasons why.
- The Chair of Governors made it clear that the completion of Woodlands Meed was not linked to school numbers, it was linked to the unsuitable facilities and the failure to comply with Ofsted statutory duties. A list included 20 issues where buildings did not meet requirements.
- Attendees in the room raised concerns regarding the needs of children, maintaining childrens' dignity, the delay in the new school, and the lack of trust with the County Council. Attention was drawn to the 4000 signature petition for the school which had been voted down at a full council meeting. The public felt there was no excuse not to deliver the agreed plan and felt that the proposed review was not required. The public had avoided going to the media as they had no wish to embarrass the Council. Mr Jupp was asked to provide a press release on plans for the new school.
- The Public noted the upcoming Select Committee meeting and requested that the meeting be held in Horsham to assist with their attendance. – *Members resolved to ask the Chairman of the Select Committee to move the meeting to Horsham.*

14.7 The Chairman confirmed that she would be meeting with the Chair of Governors at the school and expressed the importance of being well informed and working with Mr Jupp. The Chairman noted the need for urgency and supported the opinion that a review of the plans was not necessary. The Chairman had been present at two project board meetings since being appointed to the board and felt there should have been more.

14.8 Members of the Committee spoke about the plans and expressed personal disappointment and shame with the delays and admitted they were embarrassed to represent the Council on this issue. The delays were unacceptable and the County Council's priority to provide the best start in life for children should be honoured. The children deserved adequate facilities. Members confirmed they had continued to ask questions at full council on the matter, and acknowledged that the new Leader of the County Council had been asked to respond on issues for the school. Money had been committed as part of the Capital Programme, and any additional money that was required to complete should be allocated.

14.9 Members gave personal accounts to emphasize they understood the particular fighting that was required by parents of SEN children. Assurances were given to the attendees that Members had been continually working to keep the Woodlands Mead agenda on track and that they were angry with the lack of progress. The members asked that Mr Jupp note the seriousness of the concerns raised and that he emphasized the priority to his Cabinet colleagues.

14.10 The Chairman thanked the attendees for coming to the meeting and raising their concerns.

15. **Declarations of Interest**

15.1 Mr Hillier declared a prejudicial interest as the Mid Sussex District Council Cabinet Member for Economic Growth in relation to the Hassocks Parish Council Parking Review 2019 agenda item. Mr Hillier left the room for this agenda item.

15.2 Mr Wickremaratchi declared a personal interest as the Senior Adviser to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure in relation to the Hassocks Parish Council Parking Review 2019 agenda item.

16. **Minutes**

16.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. **Hassocks Parish Council Parking Review 2019 (CSMS03 (19/20))**

17.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Highways, Transport and Planning (copy appended to the signed minutes).

17.2 Mr Speller introduced the report and explained that Hassocks Parish Council had picked up the review and had developed the scheme and put it out for advertisement. The review had received many responses, and many of the objections had been ratified. Mr Speller confirmed that other alternatives had been considered, including park and ride and additional car parks. Whilst the County Council would support these alternatives, however it was noted that they would require significant investment.

17.3 The Chairman welcomed Mr Weir, Chairman of Hassocks Parish Council, to talk through the scheme. Mr Weir explained that the scheme had been a long running exercise that covered a large area. The scheme sought to resolve traffic flow issues by addressing parking issues. The County Council had provided feedback on the scheme.

17.4 Mr Weir spoke about the objections that had been received. Some objections were linked to requests to include additional roads in the scheme; other comments were linked to the siting of passing places, which had been moved to address the concerns. Mid Sussex District Council had objections on elements of the scheme for 1 hour parking restrictions in the middle of the day which would be difficult to enforce. In response to the objection, the particular restriction had been removed

from the scheme which resolved the objection. Mid Sussex District Council were happy to enforce the restrictions in the amended scheme.

17.5 Ms Lord, Local Division Member, gave support to the proposed scheme.

17.6 The Committee made comments including those that follow.

- Raised concerns that all the objections had not been resolved and that the proposals may cause displacement issues. – *Ms Lord explained that the consultation happened in December and almost a year had passed to investigate and address the issues. The comments in the papers relating to displacement were linked to misunderstandings with the scheme. Mr Weir confirmed that the County Council had advised on displacement consideration at the start of the scheme and that work had been done to reduce displacement issues as much as possible. For example, three extra limited parking spaces had been included in an area where restrictions had been introduced.*
- Felt that the proposals may impact Mid Sussex District Council's enforcement over other areas. – *Ms Lord commented that the proposals looked to introduce parking restrictions which would help emergency and refuse vehicle access and formalise parking that drivers should already be respecting.*
- Queried the secondary project to introduce a new multi-storey car park. – *Mr Weir reported that the County Council had been approached on this as the proposed location was contaminated land which would only be available to a public body. A local resident who had been involved with the scheme confirmed that the site near the station was up for sale. The County Council had confirmed they would enable infrastructure access and a potential footbridge. Network Rail had been approached who had confirmed that they did not buy land; however if funding was secured they would maintain the site. Mr Speller confirmed that the funding would not come from the County Council, but a pitch could be made for funds from the Department for Transport.*

17.7 Resolved – That the Committee, having considered the responses to the public consultation, authorise the Director of Law and Assurance to make the proposed Traffic Regulation Order in part, as specified in section 4.9 of the report and the plans attached as Appendix D.

17.8 The decision was agreed by a majority vote of the members present.

18. **Progress Statement**

18.1 The Committee considered the progress statement on matters arising from previous meetings (copy appended to the signed minutes).

18.2 Mr Speller introduced the report and spoke through the highways elements of the paper. Complete schemes in the Annual Delivery Programme had been highlighted.

18.3 Mr Speller gave an update on the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for South Road, Haywards Heath, and explained that there had been a conflict with the Atkins report and the plans from the Town and District Council. Before work progressed on the TRO it would be important to consider the aspirations of all the involved Councils. – *Mr Wickremaratchi, Local Division Member, felt that the proposed 30 minutes parking limit for the TRO was not long enough and one hour should be considered.*

18.4 Members requested an update on the Road Space Audit. – *Mr Speller confirmed that the update within the Progress Statement was accurate and that stakeholder events would be taking place in early 2020.*

18.5 The Chairman invited questions from the public.

- A resident queried the thousands of trees felled as part of the A2300 Improvement Scheme and sought clarity on the planned replanting. – *Mrs Dennis, Local Division Member, confirmed that the level of felling had not been in the thousands. A replanting scheme was planned when the work was completed. Plans for the project would be published. Wildlife consideration had been included within the project including bird nesting periods and grass cutting timetables. The balancing pond for the project would be enlarged to improve drainage. Mr Speller added that the tree planting scheme would not be a two for one scheme.*
- A resident requested an update on the McDonalds Roundabout in Burgess Hill. – *Mr Speller confirmed that the keep clear markings on the roundabout had been refreshed, but admitted that there was no practical solution to the issues without capital investment. Mr Speller welcomed ideas on affordable options. Members proposed raising the issue with Mid Sussex District Council to see if their car park could be reconfigured to improve traffic flow.*

18.6 Resolved – That the Committee notes the progress statement.

19. **Talk With Us Open Forum**

19.1 The Chairman introduced the item and advised that the open forum was an opportunity for comments and questions to be raised on items not already on the agenda, and over which the County Council has a reasonable interest. The following issues were raised and responses made.

- Questions had been submitted in advance for Woodlands Meed and the A2300 which had been resolved earlier in the agenda.
- A resident had submitted a question in advance concerning the Road Space Audit for Burgess Hill and how parking in Norman Road could be addressed. – *Mr Speller explained that it was not economical to introduce a scheme for one road. Members added that the scheme would not be able to guarantee resident parking, and noted that the pressure in the area was linked to the AMEX offices. Members asked Mr Speller to explore the options for single road controlled parking zones.*
- A resident had submitted a question in advance concerning the introduction of ID checks at waste sites, and how some Burgess Hill residents had been told they had to go to East Sussex sites. The

member also queried the evidence for the decision that waste was coming from outside the county. – *Members responded that the issue was linked to boundaries and where residents paid their Council tax. Members also explained that a lot of survey work had happened prior to the decision to investigate waste from outside the County.*

- A resident raised the issue of the felled trees in Church Walk and the need to replace them. – *Mr Speller confirmed that Church Walk was part of a redevelopment plan and the trees could be considered as part of this. A member reported that a stakeholder event for this was taking place in the new year.*
- A Parish Councillor queried if Cuckfield could be included in the Road Space Audit. – *Mr Speller queried why they would want to be included as the result would likely be a large controlled parking zone. It was proposed that Cuckfield consider the approach taken by Hassocks Parish Council in the earlier agenda item, or look to resolve any identified issues with a TRO.*
- A resident reported that they were opening the Escape Youth Club in Park Centre and queried who was in charge of the building which required refurbishment. – *Members offered their support to the project and explained that not all of the land belonged to the trust. Different areas of the site aligned with different areas of the Council.*

20. **Central and South Mid Sussex Community Initiative Funding (CSMS04 (19/20))**

20.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes).

20.2 Resolved -

(a) That the following grants be made:

404/CSMS - Community Transport Sussex, £750, towards the production and distribution of 'legacy packs' to attract end of life donations from current members.

424/CSMS – Poynings Parish Council, £725, towards a village sign post replacement.

(b) That the following pledge be deferred:

425/CSMS - Hurstpierpoint Players, 'The Big Push'. The Committee requested clarity on the project costs.

21. **Nominations for Local Authority Governors to Maintained Schools and Academy Governing Bodies (CSMS05 (19/20))**

21.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education and Skills (copy appended to the signed minutes).

21.2 Resolved – that the following nomination for appointment under the 2012 Regulations be approved:

- Mrs Christine Davies to Holy Trinity CE Primary School, Cuckfield for a four year term

22. **Date of Next Meeting**

22.1 The Committee noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 3 March 2020 at a venue to be confirmed.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm