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Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 26th July 2021

PRESENT: Councillor J Hubbard (Chair)
Councillor P Aves
Councillor S Crundell
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor C Goodhind
Councillor S Mortimer
Councillor J Oatley
Councillor T Price
Councillor S Rabey

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor M Sankey Wiltshire Councillor

OFFICERS: David McKnight Economic Development Manager
Christine Hunter Committee Clerk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Nine members of the public and one member of the press were present.

Councillor Sankey explained he was interested in four items on the agenda, three of which were connected:

1. the Community Area Transport Group request to designate Snarlton Lane as no entry for all vehicles except for access to reduce the number of vehicles and address the ongoing speeding issue.
2. the suggestion of putting in a pedestrian crossing from Nightingale Close – he supported making the area safer and suggested asking the Parish Steward to cut back the vegetation at the crossing.
3. the Metro Count request for Skylark Road to quantify speeding issues at this locality, stating that it was difficult to understand the scale of the speeding problem without a Metro Count; cats have been run over and there is a children’s play area nearby.
4. the application for 150 houses at Beanacre – the Committee were asked to bear in mind that the Neighbourhood Plan had already considered the site unsuitable for development.

Chris Tweedy, resident of Bowerhill and business owner, wanted to speak to the by-pass consultation. The Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, confirmed he would move item 10 to the

start of the agenda, and suspend Standing Orders until after the by-pass presentation, to accept questions on the subject from members of the public and councillors.

94/21 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Cook.

95/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

96/21 Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor Mortimer, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting held on 5 July 2021, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard.

97/21 Wiltshire Council By-pass Consultation

A presentation was given by Steve Wilson, Major Highways Project Engineer at Wiltshire Council who advised that the second consultation was launched at the Area Board meeting on 23 June 2021 and would close on 8 August 2021.

Steve Wilson referred members to consultation documents on the Wiltshire Council website.

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-a350-melksham-by-pass>

Information was provided on the following:

- where Wiltshire Council is in the process
- the route choice
- specific potential areas of interest for Melksham town, e.g. traffic flows, and potential walking/cycling considerations
- the envisaged timescales - if the proposal is approved work would not commence before 2025 and should last approximately two to three years

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor S Crundell and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders.

Steve Wilson held a 'question and answer' session.

Chris Tweedy stated that :

1. the by-pass plan was developed from traffic data pre Covid-19 and increasing numbers of people are now working from home. He asked in view of the Government and Wiltshire Council's push to become carbon neutral, would there be further research into the need for a by-pass when traffic levels are lower than they were previously?
2. one of the key priorities of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan was to protect and enhance green infrastructure and the proposal to build a very large polluting road would ruin the ambiance of the countryside and impact on the canal area. As the location of the road route affects the canal area and causes most concern, could the by-pass route be altered?

Steve Wilson confirmed:

1. the Wiltshire-wide traffic model was used in the development of this scheme. Traffic had reduced at the start of the pandemic but has generally returned to pre-pandemic levels. Working from home could flatten the peak hours in the morning and evening and traffic flows could be more regular throughout the day. The methodology of the work being carried out is, and must be, in accordance with latest Department of Transport standards.
2. the impact of the road would be considered and addressed through the Environmental Impact Assessment as part of the planning application process which would identify any mitigation required. The route 10D option to bring the by-pass away from Bowerhill and across the canal had already been considered and rejected as the increased costs outweighed any benefits. The best possible business case option needs to be produced for the scheme to be attractive for investment.

Joe McCann asked if the by-pass business case would include the benefits to the town, i.e. semi-pedestrianisation of the town centre, improved access to the railway station etc. or would these be costed at a later date?

Steve Wilson explained that the potential complementary measures would be reviewed and if they made good sense in terms of the business case, they would be incorporated within the route. The proposed route is longer and has given the best Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR). If the complementary measures can't produce the best BCR in their own right, the opportunity for such a proposal would be developed through another funding route. The impact on walking and cycling affected by the by-pass route would be included in the scheme.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, asked at what point in the process would the cost benefit analysis be carried out to include the complementary measures, and when would residents be notified as to whether those benefits would be part of the substantive bids or facilitated for in the future?

Steve Wilson confirmed that it is anticipated that a clearer view of the overall scope of the scheme would be available by the end of the summer.

Paul (a resident attending via Zoom,) asked what consideration had been given to zero emissions targets, congestion and zoning charges, and the impact of displacing vehicles into the by-pass as a result of traffic restrictions on Cleveland Bridge, Bath, and when in the process had this been considered?

Steve Wilson advised that Bath did not form part of the traffic modelling carried out for the by-pass but would be considered. Its impact is not clear presently.

Councillor Hubbard returned the meeting to Standing Orders

Councillor Mortimer asked how the increased traffic coming from Bath to Chippenham would impact on the town?

Steve Wilson confirmed that the traffic from Bath on the A365 would meet the A350 which would still be open to traffic. As the A350 became less used it would open up opportunities. e.g. a cycle link between Melksham and Lacock, but it would continue to be a designated "A" road.

Councillor Price asked whether increased public transport use, as supported by the government, would be included when planning for the next 20-30 years, meaning that the by-pass would be obsolete? He also raised residents' concerns about the negative effect the by-pass would have on local house values.

Steve Wilson confirmed that the scheme would need to be measured against a suite of government documentation regarding alternatives to car use, and that the 1973 Land Compensations Act dealt with Part 1 Claims for Compensation for reductions in property values.

Councillor S Crundell stated that Melksham enjoys its rurality and that the by-pass would establish a ring road around Melksham, fundamentally changing the nature of the town and Beanacre. Councillor S Crundell questioned whether the by-pass would actually solve problems in Beanacre, and if not, what was the point of it?

Steve Wilson replied that the strategic role played by the A350 for the whole of the county had been considered. One option was for a shorter, cheaper by-pass which would have severed the town centre from Bowerhill. However, by using the longer route better travel around the town would be facilitated.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor S Crundell and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, be asked to call an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 9 August 2021, to consider Melksham Town Council's response to the by-pass Consultation for agreed receipt by 10 August 2021.

98/21 Planning Applications

The Council had **no objection** to the following planning applications:

[PL/2021/03098](#) 6 Conway Crescent, Melksham, Wilts, SN12 6BA
Replace existing back garden and side garden fence and gate
Consultation Deadline: 28-07-2021
Agreement Unanimous

[PL/2021/04786](#) 11 Wharf Court, Melksham, SN12 7NS
Removal of existing window to be replaced by double French doors
Consultation Deadline: 03-08-2021
Agreement Unanimous

[PL/2021/04787](#) 2 Wharf Court, Melksham, SN12 7NS
To remove a window in lounge and replace with a patio door on to the garden
Consultation Deadline: 03-08-2021
Agreement Unanimous

[PL/2021/05345](#) 24 Hazelwood Road, Melksham, SN12 6HP
Single storey extension and a refurbishment of the garage.
Consultation Deadline: 02-08-2021
Agreement Unanimous

[PL/2021/06128](#) 44 Primrose Drive, Melksham, SN12 6GB
Proposed second storey side and rear extension over existing garage and wrapping around rear ground floor extension.
Consultation Deadline: 05-08-2021
Agreement Unanimous

The Council **objected** to the following planning application:

[PL/2021/05391](#) Land to the West of A350 (Beanacre Road) North of Dunch Lane, Melksham, Wiltshire
Outline planning application for up to 150 dwellings with formal and informal public open space, including areas of play, associated landscaping and vehicular and pedestrian accesses off the A350 (Beanacre Road). All matters reserved except for vehicular access.
Consultation Deadline: 30-07-2021

It was noted that Melksham Town Council had responded to the developer following a confidential pre-application

meeting and that the concerns of councillors at this planning application stage reflected those previously raised.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor Ellis and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to object to the application on the following grounds:

- the Council wished to emphasise that the proposed development site had been considered unsuitable for development and, therefore, not been adopted by the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2026.
- A350 traffic coming from the north of the site and queuing to turn right to enter the development, would cause considerable standing traffic within Beanacre village, and, as a result, increased air pollution.
- traffic exiting the development turning right in a southerly direction towards Melksham would have to cross the habitually busy carriageway.
- to ensure safe access into and egress from the site, Councillors requested the construction of a roundabout at the junction of the estate road with the A350.
- from a landscape perspective the site's location would mean coalescence of Melksham with the village of Beanacre which was not considered desirable.
- a secondary access point to the development should be included, because, in the event of the entrance to the development being blocked at the A350 junction, emergency vehicles called to a second incident within the development would require means of access and egress.
- the development, if approved, risked greater pressure on existing drainage systems. A robust site drainage proposal with appropriate attenuation would be required for the site.

Should the development be approved by Wiltshire Council the S.106 funding should be used to:

- improve links from the development to local footpath infrastructure allowing easier access for residents of the development to leisure and education facilities

along Scotland Road, over the river and to the existing footpaths to the east of the river.

- create a convenient footpath from the development through Foundry Close to Melksham Railway Station and improve the local footpath infrastructure along the A350 to help facilitate easy access to the station, bus stops and other amenities within walking distance.
- reduce the visual impact and noise pollution from the railway, and the visual impact of the development on Beanacre village to the north. The developer should plant additional mature trees, between the development and the railway as well as between the development and the northern boundary of the site, ensuring professional management of the resulting woodland areas.
- make appropriate financial contributions for the provision of healthcare and education facilities in the locality of the development. The commitment of Wiltshire Council and the NHS should be secured to develop such facilities.

99/21 Planning Decisions

Members noted the following planning decisions:

[PL/2021/04092](#)

Land at Barnwell Road, Melksham, SN12 7DG
Erection of a 4 bed dwelling.

MTC Consultee Response: No objection

Decision: Approve with Conditions

[PL/2021/05340](#)

4 Windsor Avenue, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6BE
Proposed Replacement of Pitched Roof

MTC Consultee Response: No objection

Decision: Approve with Conditions

100/21 Community Area Transport Group (CATG) issues

.1 Snarlton Lane - proposal to designate no entry to all vehicles except for access

The Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, advised that if the Committee were minded to support the request to make Snarlton Lane an access only road with a new crossing, this would be an expensive option and a request would have to be forwarded to Full Council for approval to vire additional funds into the CATG budget.

Councillor Sankey was asked to suggest to residents that if they believed a vehicle is parked and dealing drugs they dial 101 to report the incident.

It was agreed that the Highways Improvement proposal would be discussed at the meeting with the Wiltshire Council Highways Team, Melksham Town Council and Councillor Sankey.

.2 Pine Close - bend of Pine Close/Hazelwood Road

The Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, confirmed that a Metro Count had been requested from Wiltshire Council, and was still outstanding.

It was agreed to ask the Economic Development Manager to write to the resident confirming that the Town Council had requested a Metro Count from Wiltshire Council.

.3 Snarlton Lane - the crossing from Nightingale Close across Snarlton Lane

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor Aves and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Economic Development Manager be asked to arrange a site meeting with Mark Stansby of the Wiltshire Council Highways Team and Councillor Sankey to review and suggest solutions to the issues raised.

.4 Addison Road - Parking Issues

Members noted the request from Councillor Alford.

It was agreed that the Economic Development Manager be asked to write to Selwood Housing Group (a housing association) requesting that they contact residents regarding parking on the semi-circular green in Addison Road, notifying them that complaints had been received.

101/21 Traffic Survey (Metro Count) Request

Councillor Sankey was asked to forward the number of a suitable lamp post to the Committee Clerk in order that a Metro Count request for Skylark Road could be submitted to Wiltshire Council. He was also asked to notify Sgt James Twyford, of Wiltshire Police, of the issues regarding speeding in Skylark Road.

102/21 Temporary Road Closure Notices

Members noted the temporary road closure notices as follows:

- B3353 (Part), Corsham commencing 23 August 2021
- B3353 Bradford Road (Part), Melksham and Melksham Without commencing 21 August 2021
- Forest Road (Part), Melksham commencing 23 August 2021
- A3102 Lowbourne Road and Sandridge Road to the roundabout with Blackmore Road and Church Lane on Sunday 13 February 2022.

103/21 Wiltshire Council Gambling Statement of Licensing Principles

The Wiltshire Council Gambling Statement of Licensing Principles was noted.

It was agreed to ask a representative from the Wiltshire Council Licensing team to give a presentation at, or provide a briefing for, the next meeting of the Economic Development & Planning Committee to be held on 16 August 2021.

104/21 Confidential Session

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential nature of the information to be discussed, that the press and public be instructed to withdraw.

105/21 Notification of development proposal, Melksham Without Parish Council

Members noted the confidential report of the Economic Development Manager.

Meeting Closed at: 9.35 pm

Signed:

Dated:

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