



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTLLANFRAITH
ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH DECEMBER 2004 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Councillors L. Gardiner and K. Etheridge, J.C. Rogers (Senior Solicitor), L. Jones (Community Safety), J. Elliot (Policy Unit), L. Williams (Traffic Management), R. Campbell (Traffic Management), G. George (Committee Services).

R. Tanner (Planning), I. MacVicar (Business Development), A. Dallimore (Planning), E. Gibbs (Highways), A. Highway (Town Centre Manager).

Blackwood Town Council

I.L. Palmer (Clerk), Councillors Mrs. E.D. Mantle, D. Jones.

Market Trader

Mrs. J. Fletcher

Blackwood Residents

Mr. C. Sharp, Mr. D. Vaughan, Mr. J.E. Organ

Gwent Police

P.C. Mike Price

Police Sergeant Michael Moyles

Also present:

Mr. Trevor Spice (Costains) and Mr. Mike Pritchard (Capita Symonds)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Edwards (Blackwood Chamber of Trade) and Manager Asda Stores.

CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor L. Gardiner was appointed as Chairman and Councillor K. Etheridge was appointed as Vice Chairman of the Management Group

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2. ANDREW HIGHWAY – TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Andrew Highway to his first meeting of the Town Centre Management Group. Andrew has specific responsibility for the town centre developments in Blackwood, Bargoed and Caerphilly.

3. MCGREGOR SMITH FOLLOW UP STUDY

Mr. Tim Rose was present to give a presentation on the Blackwood Public Realm Study Phase 2. This covered three areas: Blackwood Library, Bus Station and area behind Red Lion Public House. He gave details of the proposals for each of these three areas and responded to questions from members of the group.

The following matters were raised during this question and answer session.

1. The possibility of covering over the market square.
2. During works on the bus station buses would be allowed to pick up and deposit passengers in the High Street. A temporary traffic order would be made to permit this.
3. Market traders should be consulted on the water fountain feature. There should be minimum disruption to the market during the works.
4. The improvements would be completed within the next two to three years. Some CCTV cameras would be relocated and extra ones provided.
5. A planning application would be submitted in January 2005 and a start made in October 2005.
6. Members asked that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the market and its future in its current form.
7. Members requested that meetings of the Management Group should be held 2/3 months maximum to receive progress reports.
8. Library access should be improved to provide a better pedestrian flow.
9. Funding issues with the Welsh Development Agencies were discussed which in combination with funding provided by the Council, should be sufficient in meeting the costs of the development.
10. New public conveniences would be provided in the new Community Building

4. SIRHOWY ENTERPRISE WAY (SEW) UPDATE

The Costains representative gave an overview of progress to date on site clearance and civil engineering. The road was anticipated to open in December 2005 and be completed in early 2006. Newsletters were circulated in the immediate vicinity and examples were available at the meeting. Public meetings had been held and had been well attended. Details were given relating to:

- Advance notification flyers had been circulated in the area
- A website had been set up
- A Schools Liaison programme was in place
- A complaints system had been established
- Personal visits were arranged when necessary
- Information on traffic calming measures in Sunnybank Road and Twynyffald Road had been provided

- A mechanism for residents consultation was in place
- Local schools had been visited to explain the scheme
- The existing A4048 would be downgraded

5. COMPLETION OF THE HIGH STREET BLACKWOOD REAR LANE TRAFFIC ORDER

The Group were informed that the High Street rear lane resurfacing works, together with the minor widening scheme at its junction with Bridge Street had been completed in September this year. Most of the Traffic Regulation Order road markings were painted on the new surface in October and the white loading bay was marked in November. The loading bay's associated sign was erected on 31st October and the Police Liaison Officer at Cwmbran Police HQ was notified that the TRO was now enforceable from 1st December 2004.

On the three occasions the site was inspected over the last two weeks there were still some private cars being parked in the daytime, in the loading bay. The new owner of property number 197 High Street claimed that he has planning permission for the access/shutters and can park up to 12 cars in his basement. The loading bay will be police enforced in the future and the Chamber of Trade were asked how many traders intended to utilise the bay in the working day and, if possible, their loading frequency and duration to assist with any TRO review. There are no other intended plans for levelling and widening of the rear lane

The order will be reviewed in the next 3/5 months and officers would investigate the claims from the owner of 197 High Street regarding planning permissions.

6. HIGH STREET BLACKWOOD NO U TURN 7.00 P.M. TO 7.00 A.M. EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC ORDER

The report gave an update on this experimental traffic order. The order had been advertised on 25th November 2004 and consultation period expired on 17th December 2004. Four letters of objection had been received but their substance did not justify any changes to the order.

It was suggested that an effect of the order would be to move the problem onto Gordon Road either at the Library entrance or the bus station junction. Consideration was given to duplicating the order at the new Northern Roundabout near the Asda store. The Chief Constable had requested that the order be made permanent. The working group supported his proposal and a duplicate order at the Northern Roundabout.

Arising out of discussions on this item, residents voiced concerns about traffic issues in and around the northern retail development. Residents suggested several measures to combat these including examples used by neighbouring authorities such as physical barriers and more imaginative use of current legislation.

The Town Council supported the proposed order at the northern roundabout but suggested it include the roundabout adjacent to "Blockbusters". When in place both orders would be monitored.

7. ITEMS RAISED BY GROUP MEMBERS

A list of concerns raised by individual group members was considered at the meeting, many of these had been dealt with by officers and measures put in place to alleviate concerns arising out of the general discussions, it was agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on opening hours of takeaway establishments in northern end of Blackwood and enforcement procedures that could follow in the event of a breach of conditions.

The Police agreed that they would look at the complaints received about drinking outside Blackwood Magistrates Court before court sessions and draw this to their officers and Community Support Officers attention.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN