



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTLLANFRAITH
ON THURSDAY, 28TH APRIL 2005 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Gardiner - Chairman
Councillor K. Etheridge - Vice-Chairman

Resident Representatives

C. Sharp and J.E. Organ

Heddlu Gwent Police

Inspector M. Fleming

Blackwood Town Council

Town Councillors Mrs C. Dix, Mrs B. Mantle and D. Jones

Blackwood Chamber of Trade

P. Lambert and Mrs B. Edwards

Together with:

I. MacVicar (Business Development Officer), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), G. Thomas (CCTV Manager), H. Morgan (Principal Passenger Transport Officer), E. Gibbs (Principal Engineer – Traffic Management), Ms L. Williams (Assistant Engineer-Traffic Management), R. Campbell (Senior Assistant Engineer), R. Llewellyn (Senior Planner - Urban Renewal), A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal), J. Rogers (Principal Solicitor), D. Churchward (Network Management Engineer), R. Ball (Council's nominee – Capita Symonds), J. Elliot (Research Officer – Policy Unit), Ms K. Richards (GAVO), J.G. Jones (Architect Lead Designer – Building Consultancy CCBC) and Mrs K. Wall (Committee Services Officer)

Also present – Messrs B. Woodman and N. Grosset (Costain) and Messrs C. Woods and D. Badham (Capita Symonds)

APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor N. Dix.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman opened the meeting and introductions were made. He also indicated that only items included on the agenda would be discussed at the meeting, although he reminded

members that they could contact the Committee Services Officer in writing prior to meetings to request additional items.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made during the course of the meeting.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman -

Minutes of the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group held on 15th December 2004.

3. PRESENTATION ON THE SIRHOWY ENTERPRISE WAY

The Chairman introduced Mr. Woodman (Structural Engineer – Costain) and Mr. Grosset (Section Manager – Costain) who had been invited to the meeting to make a presentation in respect of the Sirhowy Enterprise Way.

With the use of digital photographs, Mr. Woodman and Mr. Grosset made a presentation that provided an overview of the project and showed how work had progressed in respect of the southern and northern cross valley links. Details of the cable stay bridge at the northern end, the conventional bridge at the Pioneer site and the retaining walls constructed as part of the scheme were also highlighted. In addition, the presentation provided details of traffic management issues including the proposed new roundabouts at Woodfieldside and Sunnybank Road and demolition of the railway bridge at Penmaen and realignment of the road. Mr Wood concluded his presentation with a summary of the community liaison and public meetings etc that had been held to date.

The Chairman thanked the Costain representatives for attending and for the information provided.

4. PRESENTATION ON THE PROPOSED BLACKWOOD BUS INTERCHANGE

The Chairman introduced Mr. C. Woods (Principal Engineer – Capita Symonds) who had been invited to the meeting to make a presentation on the proposed Blackwood Bus Interchange.

Mr. Woods outlined details of the proposed new development at the existing Blackwood Bus Station site and made a presentation that provided the following information –

- An artist's impression of the final site layout
- Details of the outline programme of work
- The benefits of the new design and details of the obstacles facing the development

An animated presentation of the proposal was also shown and Mr Woods invited comments and questions from Group members.

Reference was made to the fact that the public toilets currently located at the Bus Station would be removed during the construction stage and a member asked if alternative facilities would be provided. Mr. Woods reported that the contractor had been asked to provide

temporary facilities during this period.

A member asked about the installation of CCTV cameras and Mr. Woods explained that funding was available as part of the scheme to provide additional cameras at the site and that the final details would be discussed with Council Officers.

Several members expressed their concern that the proposal would result in the loss of eighteen disabled parking spaces at the rear of the existing Bus Station and emphasised the need for alternative disabled parking facilities to be provided.

These comments were noted.

Representatives from Blackwood Chamber of Trade expressed their concern in respect of the proposals for buses to stop and pick up on the High Street during the construction period and referred to the existing traffic congestion in the town centre. They also highlighted the need for local traders to be fully consulted on the proposals. Mr. Woods reported that within the next two weeks, a questionnaire would be developed for distribution to traders asking questions about deliveries, servicing etc so that the least disruptive proposal could be developed.

Inspector M. Fleming, the Inspector based at Blackwood Police Station also indicated that the Police would work closely with the Council's Traffic Management Section to alleviate any traffic congestion problems occurring in the town centre as a result of the development.

In closing the debate, the Chairman thanked Mr Woods for his informative presentation and members for contributing to the debate. He also suggested that a public display and video of the proposals could be arranged to keep the public fully informed of the proposed developments. The Group supported this suggestion and it was agreed that discussions would be held with the Market Place Manager to consider the feasibility of utilising a vacant unit in the shopping precinct for this purpose.

5. MATTERS OF INFORMATION

The Group noted information reports in respect of the following matters –

- Town centre development;
- Town centre improvement group;
- Olympic torch parade – 5th May.

6. ISSUES RAISED BY GROUP MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Etheridge had requested that the following items be placed on the Agenda for discussion at the meeting –

- Proposals to locate a Civil and Family Court at Hall Street, Blackwood
- Allocation of Area Forum funding to Town Centre Management Groups

During discussion, the Chairman reported that since preparation of the agenda papers, he had received an email from Councillor Etheridge asking that the item in respect of the proposed new court be withdrawn as he was awaiting further information from the Magistrates Court Committee. The Group agreed to this request.

In respect of Area Forum funding, it was noted that a sum of £3,370 would be allocated to the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at the Council Offices, Pontllanfraith on Thursday, 30th June 2005 at 5.45 p.m.

The meeting closed at 6.40 p.m.