



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES,
PONTLLANFRAITH ON THURSDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER 2006 AT 4.00 PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Davies - Acting Chairman

Together with:

I. MacVicar (Business Development Officer), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager), S. Smith (Senior Assistant Engineer), A. Dallimore (Urban Renewal Manager), E. Gibbs (Principal Officer – Traffic Management), J. Elliot (Policy Officer) and D. Phillips (Committee Services Officer).

Also Present:

Mrs E. Mantle (Blackwood Town Council)
PC C. Hughes and Sergeant I. Muirhead (Heddlu Gwent Police)
Messrs C. Sharpe and J. Organ (Local Residents)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Gardiner, K. Etheridge and N. Dix, and Mr I. Palmer (Blackwood Town Council)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2. BLACKWOOD HIGH STREET AND BUS STATION – PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF DRIVING, ONE-WAY TRAFFIC AND PROHIBITION OF WAITING ORDER 2006.

The Chairman opened the meeting and introduced Mr Gibbs, Principal Officer, Traffic Management, who outlined the various proposed parking and loading Traffic Orders for the Town Centre, Blackwood. Public transport vehicles have been temporary relocated to the High Street during the construction of a new bus station. The new bus station is expected to be completed in December and therefore temporary traffic management arrangements on the High Street will no longer be necessary and parking and loading requirements in the town centre reviewed. A map illustrating the proposals for High Street and the new bus station had been attached to the report.

The Chairman requested comments on the proposals from the Management Group.

A local resident expressed concern regarding the areas which had split times for loading and disabled parking as it may lead to confusion. Mr Gibbs responded that the split times are proposed to try and accommodate the needs of the retailers and the shoppers and that individual drivers must be responsible for interpreting the times when it is possible to park.

A representative from the police re-enforced this concern and suggested that more town centre areas should be disabled parking only especially as one alternative area for disabled parking was on a steep hill (Woodbine Road). The police representative also reported that a number of shops have their goods delivered to the side or rear of their premises.

Mr Gibbs responded that there were a number of retailers on both sides of the High Street who would need loading areas and this proposal was seen as compromise to them and disabled badge holders.

A further comments was raised on the need for the proposed 30 minute parking bays in the High Street which the Police considered may be difficult to enforce.

Mr Campbell, Transport Engineering Manager, replied that a number of retailers had requested a short stay parking in the High street as they rely on passing trade. This was endorsed by Mr Highway, Town Centre Development Manager.

A final concern from the Police was regarding the pedestrian crossing near Gravel Lane which during peak shopping times disrupted the traffic flow in the High Street when pedestrians left the market area.

Mr Gibbs indicated that he would look at this issue although he had not received any complaints since the pedestrian crossing had been installed. It was also pointed out from Mr. Highway that traffic delays may deter motorists who are not visiting the Town Centre to use an alternative route (e.g. the Sirhowy Enterprise Way). Mr. Smith commented that after December, when the buses return to the bus station, that the flow of pedestrians may be reduced.

Mr Gibbs confirmed that he had received these concerns in writing from the Police and they would be meeting subsequently to discuss them in detail.

Mr. Campbell reported as well as correspondence from Councillors Dix that a landlord to one of the Public House's objected to a taxi rank outside the property and from Councillor Etheridge who reported residents concerns over abusive parking on the proposed traffic orders. The Police expressed support for the taxi rank in the proposed location and that they did not consider the parking in Hall Street to be a problem.

Finally Mr Campbell reported that the next stage would be to advertise the orders and members of the public would have an opportunity to comment. A report would then be prepared by the Chief Engineer.

Mr Campbell explained that the Council was trying to accommodate the differing, and sometimes conflicting, needs for parking in the High Street and that a compromise is likely to be required. He assured members of the importance of consultation before and monitoring after a review of traffic order proposals, and that all responses will be fully considered. He also gave an assurance that a review of the orders would be undertaken at an appropriate time following their implementation.

3. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Management Group had been arranged for 23rd November 2006.

The meeting closed at 4.50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN