

**Honiton Town Council
Policy Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held at the Town Council Offices, The Beehive, Dowell Street, Honiton on Monday 22nd August 2016

Members present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr A Alder
Cllr S Edwards (Chairman)
Cllr J Taylor

St Paul's Ward

Cllr P Halse
Cllr A Mountjoy

In Attendance

Cllr Roy Coombs
Cllr J McNally

Mr D Black – Head of Transport & Planning, Devon County Council

Mr M Smith – Project Manager of proposed A30 improvements, Devon County Council

2 members of the public

Chetna Jones - Town Clerk

Meeting commenced at 9.10pm

16/40 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr C Kolek (A/L), Cllr C Melbourne (P), Cllr D Perkins (P), Cllr J Lake (P), Cllr K Smith (P) and Cllr J Wadsworth (P).

Cllr Hopkins as a non-member sent his apologies.

16/41 To receive declarations of interest and receipt of request for new DPI dispensations on items on the agenda

Cllr Taylor informed the Committee that he may have an interest in the last matter and will determine this when the item was discussed.

16/42 Confidential / exempt items

There were no items to be dealt with in this way.

The Chairman declared the meeting out of session

16/43 Public Question Time on items on the agenda

The Town Clerk confirmed there was one public question.

The Chairperson invited Mr Retter to speak.

Mr Retter asked why VAT was included as part of the cost of this scheme as this amount could potentially be saved?

Mr Black confirmed that the estimate as identified in the leaflets including all costs relating to the scheme including VAT. The scheme will be delivered by Highways England and that VAT was only exempt on maintenance work. The rules on VAT were governed by the Treasury and so Highways England will have no choice in this matter.

Cllr Mountjoy joined meeting.

Mr Retter was concerned that it was not obvious that there was a majority preferred route.

Mr Black responded confirming that after the consultation it may be that neither option was

suitable and an alternative choice may need to be considered.

Part A matters for decisions

16/44 To receive a presentation on the proposed A30 improvements and to agree a response to recommend to the Town Council

Devon, Somerset and Wiltshire working with Local Enterprise Partnership has been concerned with traffic and connectivity issues along the A303 corridor and various schemes have been proposed throughout the whole route from Stonehenge to Honiton. Schemes were now in place at Stonehenge, Sparkford, Ilminster and A358.

Devon County Council has proposed as the next step Honiton – Devonshire Inn as the scheme to put forward as it meets a lot of the criteria set by the Government in that the road currently passes through the village of Monkton with speed limits of 40mph and also includes a very steep hill.

A dual carriage way was not being proposed as the anticipated traffic was below the threshold and considerably less than the amount travelling on A358. Furthermore, Compulsory Purchase Orders will need to be imposed to acquire land and there were concerns on the environmental impact on AONB land.

The routes identified bypass Monkton. To reduce the impact on the AONB 2 alternatives were being proposed to the blue route. The blue route scheme proposed that either the road is extended on the north side making the road closer to the river or on the south side which will impact on residential properties.

Cllr Dyson, Councillor for Sidmouth Town Council and East Devon District Council stated that the scheme was important for the whole of East Devon and much better than anything previously proposed.

Statistics showed that the route through Marsh and at Stockgate had the highest accident rate but this was not part of the scheme as the Honiton to Devonshire Inn had the opportunity to be built off-line.

Concern was raised about the proposed 3 lane road arrangement considering the past number of fatal accidents on the road schemes at Ilminster and North Devon Link Road.

Devon County Council officers confirmed that originally the road designs included use of priority lanes which were confusing and that Highways England have over the last 5 years redesigned and re-marked these lanes. This has improved the safety aspects and the traffic flow.

There were no planned improvements on A35 (other than minor road improvements) and the choice of route will not take into consideration any intersection with the A35.

Devon County Council Officers confirmed that they had considered various options and carried out many assessments including using the existing road and that all this information was available on the website.

County Council Officers were thanked for providing an informative presentation.

Both officers and members of the public left the meeting

Councillors were concerned that one of the routes will have an impact on land that has been identified by the District Council as a suitable site for additional sports play pitches.

The Committee agreed that the Town Council should consider the impact on AONB, safety, connecting with Eastern Bypass and the economic impact on the town.

Recommendation

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the orange route had the greatest impact on the AONB. • That a dual carriage way was the favoured option for safety reasons but the constraints were understood. • That consideration should be given to the need for the eastern bypass to ease congestions and safety for traffic in and out of Honiton. • That the orange route was less favourable as it had an impact on land that had been proposed as a suitable site for additional sport play pitch facilities. • That the blue route was a more sensible option and that the preference should be towards extending the lanes to the north side towards the river rather than affecting residential properties. |
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16/45 To review the Media Communications Policy in particular the use of social Media

Cllr Mountjoy confirmed that using social media was an effective way of sharing information with local and national organisations and that it was a valuable communication channel.

It was agreed that the policy would act as a good information board.

Cllr Taylor suggested that consideration should be given to Article 10 of the Human Rights Act and the last two points on page 12 of the policy should be amended accordingly.

Concern was raised that it was always implied that all laws and legislation applied and there should not be the need to single out individual laws.

Cllr Alder proposed that the Town Clerk obtain the appropriate advice and make any additions if required and that the policy with its amendments be recommended to the Town Council for approval. This was seconded by Cllr Mountjoy and was agreed unanimously.

Recommendation

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Town Clerk obtain advice regarding Article 10 • That the policy with any amendments following the advice to be approved by the Town Council |
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16/46 To review the new format for the Town Council website

It was agreed that the new format provided users easier access to information

The Town Clerk confirmed that the wording will be critical and may require some assistance for a professional copywriter

Cllr Mountjoy proposed that the Committee recommend that this new template be approved by the Town Council. This was seconded by Cllr Alder and agreed unanimously.

Recommendation

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the template for the new style website be approved by the Town Council |
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16/47 To review the amended Action Plan

It was agreed that consideration to re-assign footpaths in line with any future changes to the A30 route should be added to the plan and that the Action Plan was a good plan clearly highlighting the activities and plans for the town.

Cllr Edwards proposed that the amended Action Plan be approved by the Town Council and this was unanimously agreed.

Recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the amended Action Plan be approved by the Town Council

16/48 To review the report provided by Cllr Coombs and to address his concerns

Cllr Taylor advised the Committee that he had a Conflict of Interest in this matter and left the meeting.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Councillors when making decisions were doing this as part of council business and that decisions were corporate decisions of the council and not individuals.

DALC and NALC were available to provide assistance in legal matters, policies, training and development. It was agreed that this was different to providing legal advice and that it was more likely that they would signpost on how to get such advice if required.

The Committee were in agreement that the Council had not been reckless when making decisions and that legal advice had been obtained which should be accepted and the matter closed.

16/49 To close the meeting

The meeting was closed at 9.20pm.