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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting - 2nd November 2017 Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Ratification of new Neighbourhood Forum members
4. Guest Speaker- Digital Angels
5. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on 5th October 2017
6. Police Report
7. Beeston Neighbourhood Plan Workshop
8. Other issues relating to the Beeston Neighbourhood Forum
9. Discussion about meetings during 2018
10. To ratify the decision of the Neighbourhood Forum Committee to co-opt Pam Jones to the Neighbourhood Forum Committee
11. Report of the Committee meeting held on 19th October 2017
12. Correspondence
13. Any Other Business

Forum members are reminded that the Annual General Meeting of the Beeston Community Forum will take place at 7.30p.m on Thursday 7th December 2017 at the Function Room, The Old White Hart. Officers and members of the Committee wishing to remain in office will be required to seek re election. Officers and members of the Committee must be residents of Beeston (as defined by the Constitution of the Beeston Community Forum) . Anyone who is interested in seeking election to the Committee is more than welcome to speak to a Committee member

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 5th October 2017

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair) PCSO Brown (West Yorkshire Police) , Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Mr. M. Clayton, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mr. C. Hendrick Ward , Mr. K. Hewson, Mr. J. Hook, Miss P. Johnson, Mrs. P. Jones, Mr. E. Leatham , Mr. A. Mahmood, Mr. J. Morton, Mrs. M. Munro, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr. M. Parry, Rev L. Pearson, PCSO Rhodes (West Yorkshire)

Police) and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting and observed that the nights are drawing in quickly
2. Apologies for absence were received from Bill Birch, Maureen Broadbent, Councillor David Congreve, Adam Cooper, Arthur Kirby Diane McGuigan and Steve Francis
3. Guest Speakers – Digital Angels. Robert Winfield noted that Digital Angels were originally intended to be represented at the meeting by Morag Wright, who left Digital Angels some time ago. Subsequently, Robert Winfield liaised with Rachel McHale with a view to securing an alternative guest speaker . Rachel McHale telephoned Robert Winfield on the Tuesday prior to the meeting, presumably with the intention of discussing arrangements for attending the Forum meeting, but as Robert Winfield was in a fringe meeting at the Conservative Party Conference he had been unable to take the call. A number of subsequent attempts were made to return the call, but Robert Winfield had been unable to speak to Rachel McHale. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Robert Winfield that as Digital Angels would only be making a very short presentation, they would be invited to the November meeting
4. The Highways Agency. Christine Thornton introduced a number of guest speakers from the Highways Agency ; Sarah Kearns, Project Manager; Louise Pavitt , Programme Leader; Andrew Potter, Highways Engineer and Tom Peekitt , Assistant Project Manager
- 4.1 Sarah Kearns said that the Highways Agency had been asked to attend and speak about the plans to relieve congestion on the M621. Copies of a brochure explaining the proposals had been distributed around the community . These had been sent to householders within a designated distribution area , around the M621, during August. Eddie Leatham noted that he had received a copy of the brochure. Additionally, copies of the brochure had been brought to the meeting. Forum members should feel free to take copies to give to neighbours. Highways England had been given the task of relieving congestion along the M621 and had developed three options in connection with which it is currently consulting members of the public and other bodies such as Leeds City Council and the emergency services . In the centre of the brochure, there is a questionnaire which Sarah Kearns encouraged local residents to complete and return. Additionally, the Highways Agency had received a formal response from the Beeston Community Forum . She added that the consultation process closes on 15th October and noted that anyone responding to the consultation must ensure that their comments are received by the Highways Agency by this date. There are three options aimed at relieving congestion on the M621 . The Highways Agency had carried out very early assessment work to improve some key elements. The capacity of Junction 2 (Elland Road) will be increased so as to increase capacity and provide free flowing links. This will help traffic to and from the Armley gyratory move more smoothly and remove congestion. In connection with the westbound junction at Junction 3 , it is noted that on the westbound carriageway the M621 reduces to one lane which causes congestion. It is intended to widen the carriageway to two lanes. In order to do this , the slip road joining from the city would be reduced to one lane , and traffic would join at the outside lane of the M621. Sarah Kearns noted that Junction 2a must close. She noted that the Highways Agency would be concerned about vehicles joining two lanes of much busier traffic which would cross at Cemetery Road. Sarah Kearns added that the M621 is constrained by houses and commercial buildings so there is limited space to do things. The hard shoulder could be converted into a running lane for extra capacity as in options b and c . **When the minutes were submitted for approval to the following meeting , Ken Hewson queried the apparent absence from the minutes of suggestions at the meeting that there should be a wider consultation area than that actually used by the Highways Agency**
- 4.2 The meeting opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Mark Parry noted that in relation to option c) it was pointed out that changing junctions would involve buses crossing all three lanes. Eddie Leatham noted that buses leave the M621 at junction 2 . Mark Parry clarified that Eddie Leatham is referring to the Morley bus service. Sarah Kearns said that plans are at the early stages of design, and more work is needed. She added that the distance between junctions 3 and 2a is very short and there are concerns about traffic weaving to change lanes in such a short section. The distance between junctions 3 and 2 is not as short as would be desired , but there is sufficient space for HGV s and buses to manoeuvre into the inside lane before exiting the motorway at junction 2 . Andrew Potter said that the distance is 900m, and there would be cameras in place to ensure that traffic keeps to the speed limit . There is no such enforcement in place now.
- 4.3 Rev Lindsey Pearson expressed concerns about the implications of the changes on roads in this areas. She asked what has the Highways Agency's research shown about the impact of the proposals. . Sarah Kearns said that this is in the early stages , and once responses to the consultation are in , the Highways Agency will select a preferred option next spring. No construction will take place until 2020 so there is a long way to go. A model has been developed to show how traffic along the M621 will react to the changes. This model is in the process of being updated. The model will look at the motorway in its entirety, but she conceded that the model is not the best way of looking at local roads . It is intended to build a more detailed model to show how traffic will move around and this will either highlight any problems or show that there is no problem. The Highways Agency will consult again when work is completed to get answers and the public will again get the chance to have their say
- 4.4 Jeremy Morton asked about the flow of traffic at junction 2 of the M621 towards Ingram Road and the Armley Gyratory. He noted that this road is already congested . Sarah Kearns said that the Highways Agency is working with Leeds City Council on plans to improve the Armley Gyratory junction. This is in its early stages . The problem is the way in which that junction operates when traffic reaches Armley Gyratory . She stressed that this is a Leeds City Council project in which the Highways Agency is not directly

involved . Ash Mahmood said that it could take thirty minutes upwards for traffic to move from one side to another . If Leeds City Council is looking to increase the amount of traffic , this could be horrendous. Everyone would pile out at the next junction. He said that we must look at this carefully. He noted that he works in Meanwood, and it takes him an hour and a half to drive there . The impact on the wider community will be horrendous. Sarah Kearns noted that the Highways Agency is working closely with Leeds City Council, even though these are separate projects by separate organisations. It is untrue to say that they are exactly the same and they are looking at slightly different issues.

4.5 Colin Hendrick Ward asked whether any closure of junction 2a would be permanent . Sarah Kearns confirmed that such a closure would be permanent. Colin Hendrick Ward asked how traffic would get into Beeston. Sarah Kearns acknowledged that more detailed modelling would be required but current thoughts are that some traffic would use junction 3. The capacity of junction 2 would be increased. Colin Hendrick Ward said that traffic would use Wesley Street. Sarah Kearns noted that the Beeston Community Forum's objection had stated that more traffic would use Wesley Street . Myra Munro said that traffic in both directions along Wesley Street is horrendous at mornings . Colin Hendrick Ward said that some traffic would go onto Dewsbury Road then up Tempest Road, Barkly Road or Old Lane . What impact would there be on the new Dewsbury Road scheme ? He noted that it had recently taken him ¾ hour to travel to Leeds City Centre by bus . Colin Hendrick Ward and John Hook referred to the installation of cycle lanes on Dewsbury Road. John Hook described this as lethal, noting that when alighting from a bus it is necessary to look both ways as a passenger is stepping out into a cycle lane . He noted that he nearly got killed as he stepped off a bus at the stop before Tesco. There is a cycle lane at both sides of the road at the Dewsbury Road Community Hub. It is necessary to cross 3 feet of cycle carriageway. John Hook noted that he is 76 years of age. If a passenger is not watching there could be problems . It is possible to step off and look but if a person is short sighted it is ridiculous for them to be stepping out into a live cycle lane . He added that modern bicycles are electrified and many pedestrians cannot hear them. A person could step off a bus and end up on the ground with bags of shopping. Colin Hendrick Ward said that he is concerned about traffic going onto Dewsbury Road and Wesley Street . He noted that Beeston tends to be a repository for things which we do not want or need. Things need to be done about the level of congestion on the M621 but we suffer. He asked about traffic entering the fast lane. Sarah Kearns wondered whether Colin Hendrick Ward ever joins the M621 from the dark arches. She noted that the slip road is two lanes , and that the proposal is that M621 traffic is increased from one lane to two. The slip road would be reduced to one lane but traffic will enter at the outside lane. She added that it is proposed to install speed cameras so that in off peak times , traffic goes at 50 mph rather than faster when the road is not busy as at present. The Highways Agency will ensure that the design is safe. She believes that the distance between junctions 2 and 3 is sufficient for traffic to manoeuvre. She said that it is unsafe to allow junction 2a to remain open as there is only a distance of 100 to 150m . This is fundamentally unsafe. This situation is the only reason for proposing the closure of junction 2a . In connection with option c , could the volume of traffic at that junction cope with the change. The questionnaire allows the respondent to select an option. Ken Hewson noted that Cemetery Road which leads from junction 2a is jam packed in both directions. Christine Thornton noted that there are lots of accidents or near misses . The left turn is the easier route but the right turn needs traffic lights. Sarah Kearns noted that this is an awkward junction but the plans will eliminate accidents. Louise Pavitt wondered whether traffic using junction 2a is traffic using it as a rat run, rather than Beeston residents. Pam Jones noted that there is a lot of rat running , and suggested that the only way to get an accurate assessment of how traffic would behave is the temporary closure of junction of junction 2a . She added that Beeston is like a traffic congestion zone. The proposals will either work really well or really badly. She noted that her area is having issues with parking and the blocking of entrances which have occurred in the past three to four years. These problems had never previously been experienced . Sarah Kearns said that the Highways Agency can look at that , but mechanisms to do this are very unusual . Any temporary closure would need to be preceded by a full safety assessment. She would not want the temporary closure of junction 2a to cause an accident . Councillor Angela Gabriel said that there had been no actual accidents at the other junction, but along Cemetery Road, there had been an accident where the driver of a vehicle thought he was going along Top Moor Side but actually went straight across . The vehicle came down Cemetery Road in the belief that it is a two lane road, then went onto the Motorway , then onto Top Moor Side. Sarah Kearns asked whether improved signage would have helped with this situation . Several Forum members indicated that it would . Christine Thornton noted that her granddaughter said that she had been going down there to Holbeck and had encountered someone coming in the other direction, the last time two weeks ago

4.6 Sarah Kearns said that the closure of junction 2a would discourage rat running through Holbeck. She wondered whether the issue of accidents on the eastbound junction had been raised. She noted that less serious accidents where drivers get back in the car and resume their journey after exchanging contact details may not be picked up . She could enquire to get other statistics. . She added that she would be happy to discuss signage with Leeds City Council to improve things. However, this had not been coming up in the Highways Authority's discussions before public discussions. Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that what we are discussing is the effect of the proposals on Beeston. Robert Winfield noted that the Forum's objection to the proposals was on the grounds that it would lead to an increase in traffic along Wesley Street and Dewsbury Road. He noted that Wesley Street is an accident blackspot , where there had been a number of fatal accidents, whilst he referred to the point previously made that the traffic along Dewsbury Road would then turn up Tempest Road or Barkly Road (both these streets have had road humps installed, with the specific object of reducing traffic) or Old Lane , which is a mile long road which is often gridlocked from end to end during the day . Robert Winfield added that Bill Birch, whose comments had motivated the Forum's objection , had referred to the dangers of HGVs and buses travelling along a one lane road . Sarah Kearns noted that this HGV query is similar to an earlier question dealing with buses. She noted that there is already a relaxation in relation to this ; there is a section of the M621 in which HGVs are allowed to go in the outside lane . There is no proposal to change this . The Highways Agency does believe that there is sufficient space between junctions 2 and 3 for HGVs to move over . Risks are significantly lower as HGVs typically have a destination in the city centre. On most motorways traffic travels the length and breadth of the country . This scenario is only valid for HGVs joining at junction 3 , which are very few in number. Robert Winfield

asked how many HGVs join at junction 3. Sarah Kearns noted that 4 to 5% of vehicles using the M62 are HGVs and the figures for this junction are similar. Robert Winfield noted that there will be a further round of public consultation and asked whether the Highways Agency representatives would be willing to return to a future meeting of the Forum so that Forum members could be fully involved in this consultation process. Sarah Kearns said that they would be willing to return to the Forum and added that whatever option is selected must come before a statutory planning process which requires a further round of consultation. Colin Hendrick Ward asked whether we can be exposed to the modelling so the Highways Agency can show us. Sarah Kearns said that the modelling is for a residential area, and that she can show in a presentation how that will work. She added that the Highways Agency did have a look at accident statistics for Wesley Street after they had received the Beeston Forum's letter of objection. Although there is a record of some accidents, there were no fatalities; however, the records are confined to the past five years and do not therefore reflect accidents taking place before then. The same process had been carried out in relation to Dewsbury Road. Robert Winfield recalled how our late committee member John Hodgson had spoken about fatal accidents on Wesley Street and even watching such accidents from his living room. Ken Hewson asked whether the Highways Agency would consider the temporary closure of junction 2a. Pam Jones noted that Beeston is complex and noted that Dewsbury Road had gone from three lanes to two with parked cars. Sarah Kearns said that she would take away these comments as it is not as easy. Pam Jones referred to the bus lanes and cycle routes along Dewsbury Road. She noted that the section of the motorway is busy and questioned whether closing the slip road is a good idea. People pull out, drivers get angry and she is surprised that no one gets killed. If measures intended to control traffic are taken in one place, the problem tends to shift to another area and get worse. Myra Munro notes that when she gets on a bus to Leeds City Centre, the journey can take 45 minutes. Pam Jones referred to new developments in the area, notably the new cinema at the White Rose Centre, and relatively new developments, including the police station on Elland Road. She noted that planners have not taken account of the cumulative impact of these developments. She added that her daughter lives in the centre of Beeston. Pam Jones has herself lived in Beeston for around 25 years, but in the past five years traffic has grown worse. One asset of Beeston was that it was possible to get to a range of places fairly quickly, but this cannot happen now. It might be possible to eliminate rat running from Beeston. It might be good to do that and the Highways agency could sell it to a lot of people. Sarah Kearns said that the modelling will hopefully give statistics about rat runs. She added that the Highways Agency could look at high level options. High level testing had been carried out about the impact of closing junction 2a with no improvements to junction 2. The modelling had indicated that this would not work, as this would disperse traffic with no improvement at junction two. A temporary closure of any junction might last a minimum of six months. She appreciated that this would be a balancing act and that she would need to take these comments away. The Highways Agency could put a temporary closure in place with no other improvements to help the closure work. Colin Hendrick Ward asked whether other areas could be modernised before junction 2a is closed. Sarah Kearns said this could happen, and would be one project which they would go through when the statutory process is considered. They would look at the entirety and look at this as a complete project. The construction of any improvements would be carried out in a logical order. Junction 2a would not be closed until junction 2 had been improved so that it could cope with additional traffic.

4.7 Eddie Leatham noted that if junction 2a is closed traffic would leave the motorway at junction 3. If traffic goes onto junction 2 it would go up; to Elland Road joining up to Cemetery Road, making this a dangerous junction. There would be a lot more traffic on smaller roads. Sarah Kearns noted that the situation in relation to the junction between Elland Road and Cemetery Road had been brought to the attention of the Highways Authority. Ash Mahmood noted that if all the improvements had been carried out and the scheme is not working, would junction 2a be closed down. He noted that we would be stuck either way and local traffic could go bananas. Residents and Beeston as a whole would suffer. Myra Munro noted that this is a very congested area. Louise Pavitt said that the modernisation of junction 2 would be carried out to cope with the additional traffic flow, but they would not open two lanes without closing junction 2a. Ash Mahmood said that if there is a permanent closure, no one would have any say and the decision would already have been made. Louise Pavitt said that junction 2 must be improved before junction 2a is closed. She added that Dewsbury Road had not yet been converted and that some roads would be closed off once the Dewsbury Road scheme is implemented. There were however fears that congestion would double and it would take an hour to travel by bus to Leeds City Centre. Tom Peekitt noted that the Highways agency is investing in wider strategic traffic modelling and that this is in the outline design stage. Ash Mahmood asked whether the Highways agency would consult with Leeds City Council or just look at the motorway. Louise Pavitt noted that the Highways Agency is in consultation with Leeds City Council which is drawing up plans for the Armley Gyratory. They will take account of plans by the Highways Agency. Ash Mahmood however noted that everyone piles into the same place and that congestion would double if not triple. The rush hour starts at 7 am and ends between 9.30 am and 10 am. Schools then close at 2.45pm so there is congestion again up until 7pm.

4.8 Ken Hewson asked whether traffic modelling includes local roads. Sarah Kearns confirmed that modelling does include local roads. It is a high level model which looks at a large area; however it is not the best tool for looking at how local roads work. The Highways Agency would look at the results. If there is not sufficient detail, the Highways Agency may need to build a separate model with such detail. A high level model is complex and there is lots of information. If a model is built with the local area, this would show how traffic is expected to move along local roads. Colin Hendrick Ward noted that Forum members are saying how badly congested Beeston is, and asked the Highways Agency Representatives are aware of this. Sarah Kearns said that the Highways Agency is aware of this, but this is no substitute for local knowledge and that they do not have the full picture. Colin Hendrick Ward felt that residents could take responsibility for providing the picture. Sarah Kearns said that she would be happy for this to happen and also urged local residents to complete the questionnaire whether they are for or against the proposals. If residents have any concerns, they should be specific and should mention the junctions or streets involved rather than simply saying 'we do not want you to close it' which is not helpful without an explanation as to why a particular road or junction should not be closed. She acknowledged that there had been a lower than expected turnout at the consultation event at Hillside, but they are receiving responses to the survey. She added that the

Holbeck Neighbourhood Forum supports the closure of junction 2a in both directions. Residents expressing a preference, are she noted divided equally between supporting and opposing the proposals . There is also a split in preferences between the communities . Ash Mahmood asked how the Highways Agency is gathering information and suggested getting details of bus services and approaching local taxi firms . The Highways agency could get large amounts of data needed for this . They could discover what junctions and roads are problematic , and where traffic goes the most. Ken Hewson suggested consulting Parent and Teacher Associations of schools in relation to school runs . Eddie Leatham asked about controls on Wesley Street . Sarah Kearns said that the Highways Agency meets with Leeds City Council every month and there will be more discussions once the responses from the consultation about the M621 plans is available. The Highways Agency will go on to a more detailed level of design and speak to Leeds City Council in detail about local roads, and the signage on the east bound exit . Eddie Leatham noted that there had been an accident on Wesley Street earlier in the day involving a transit van coming off a blind bend . A car rammed into the van but no one was badly hurt. Pauline Johnson said that if traffic goes along the no 1 bus route , there would be a long tailback of traffic along Beeston Road turning into Dewsbury Road near the old police station. Ken Hewson asked what the reason for change at junction 3 is . Sarah Kearns said it would affect traffic waiting on the M621 westbound .

5. The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on Thursday 7th September 2017 were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting . There were no matters arising.

6. Police Report. It was noted that PCSOs Rhodes and Brown had arrived at the meeting before leaving after one of them had had a conversation on his radio

7. Beeston Neighbourhood Forum. Robert Winfield pointed out that he had written separate letters, on behalf of the Beeston Community Forum and in a personal capacity, in support of the proposal to extend the Beeston Neighbourhood Area by including the area around Stank Hall Barn. It was noted that the consultation finishes at 5p.m on Monday 16th October, so there is still some time for Forum members to put forward their views in relation to the consultation.

8. Correspondence. None had been received

9. Report of Committee meeting held on 18th September 2017 . Christine Thornton noted that the meeting had discussed the questionnaires which had been completed at the Beeston Festival which are being collated. There was a discussion about future speakers . There was a discussion about how we could apply for funding for the Neighbourhood Forum together with what we should apply for.

10. Co-Options to the Committee. There were no proposals. Robert Winfield noted that this had been included on the agenda because Arthur Kirby who had resigned from the committee for health reasons had expressed a wish to return to the committee , but had been prevented by his health from attending a succession of meetings . Robert Winfield noted that as all committee and officer positions are subject to re election at the AGM on 7th December , it would be sensible for potential new members of the Committee to wait until then

11. Any Other Business

11.1 Ken Burton said that the Beeston History Society had produced a new book selling at £4. This had taken 2 ½ years of work and covers religion, carnivals, murders , houses and personalities . This is a good read

11.2 Rev Lindsey Pearson said that St Mary's Church would be organising a Murder Mystery at 7p.m on Saturday 28th October . The bar would be open. Tickets (obtainable from Lindsey Pearson or the church) are priced at £5 including food. Lindsey Pearson noted that the last similar event had been sold out and people had to be turned away