

Minutes of A660 Joint Council meeting Monday 7th December 2015, 7.30pm at HEART

Attendance Present: BM, NS, SS, IS, CT, GL, CF, TS, MS, CR

Apologies: DCJ, SB, TB, PM

Agreement of minutes Minutes accepted as an accurate record of 2nd Nov 2015 meeting.

Matters arising

CT asked if the bundle of letters has been sent to Lord Ahmad as GL's latest was missing from the file CT sent to DCJ. The bundle has gone off. CF said he sent his draft reply to Councillor Judith Blake last week to DCJ. CF said the officers dealing with the application to develop the fields on Headingley Hill have said it will be refused. CT gave a short history of the site. CF said 'Headingley Land Developments' is run by three rich men who live in Ilkley. CF said the reasons for refusal are change of use and loss of green space. He said the site was probably left out of the latest Site Allocations Plan by mistake. CF said that if the trolleybus goes through the area, then the green space argument is lost. NS asked about the letter to Patrick McLoughlin. BM said he'd been waiting to finish the websites before sending it so links could be included. CF asked if it might be worth mentioning in it that the local councilors are discussing cycling. CF said not having a segregated route doesn't help cyclists or pedestrians.

General Discussion

CF wondered where Tbus gets its money from. CR reminded us that Councillor Richard Lewis had said the scheme would be withdrawn if people don't want it. IS said that the extra expense in Cumbria might mean money is taken from the transport budget. GL said that the DfT has driven down the amount of money it's prepared to give to the trolleybus scheme. The promoters originally boasted how good the scheme was. And then the government drove down the cost and said it wouldn't pay for any overspend. Overspends were going to be split 50:50 but now they will be met entirely by the council. CT said that underfunding is why we've got a second rate scheme. CT said that the extension along the A660 killed Supertram. CT said how the inspector saying the trolleybus would be like a tram could be grounds for an appeal. CT said that the next meeting of the West Yorkshire Transport Committee is on the 9th December. NS asked if a room had been booked for the meeting with Greg Mulholland. GL asked if we'd give GM a list of questions. CF said we would if GM wants one. We agreed we'd have a pre-meeting a few days before the actual one.

Publicity

CF asked if we can bring any more pressure to bear on council and reminded us that 60 councillors were whipped. GL said that we could point out that Hilary Benn recently said that free votes are a sign of a strong democracy. TS said that Stuart Golton has spoken as if the Lib Dems oppose the scheme. CT congratulated Jonathan Bentley and Barry Anderson for coming to the inquiry. TS said the only parties that oppose the scheme in full council are the Greens and the Morley Independents. CF said that when the Executive Board pitched the scheme to the council they only told one side of the story. CF wondered if it would be a good idea for the 'Made in Leeds' team to ask individual councillors about their views on the scheme. CT asked how we can break into the national press. BM said about the websites and the complaint about bias. CR said she'll keep the recordings of the inquiry hearings on the web. GL said that transcripts of the first half of the inquiry are on the A660 website. GL said that there are a lot of QCs representing companies in the Edinburgh tram inquiry. The QCs weren't wanting certain issues to be made public and are clearly concerned to avoid the possibility the companies might be sued. The judge however is being rigorous and has agreed that the hearings can be recorded.

Any other business

CR said that 3 or 4 weeks ago HP suggested a meeting with Rachel Reeves MP on Friday 18th December as she's on a transport select committee. HP had suggested taking PB along as an expert and to focus on the business case. CF said it concerned him that Rachel Reeves is a Labour MP and that Labour supports the scheme. A discussion ensued about the nature of the proposed meeting and who would benefit from it. TS said that at a full council meeting, Councillor Keith Wakefield said we'd be the laughing stock of Europe if we pulled out. TS added that there won't be another big scheme on this route for decades if this one fails which is why it's important for those who want an alternative to get the alternative accepted now. It was felt that the meeting with Rachel Reeves as proposed would be contrary to the interests and policy of the A660 Joint Council. A majority expressed a desire that the meeting should not take place in the manner proposed. CR asked for a critique of the business case to give to Rachel Reeves and GL said he'd send her one. CF said he was amazed that the business case monetized people's preferences regarding bus stops. CR said she was amazed it assumed that people on Queenswood Drive would walk to Headingley Hill to catch a trolleybus to town.

Treasurer's Report and Collection Treasurer's Report deferred till next meeting. £50 collection taken.

Actions	
GL	To send critique of business case to CR
BM	To email Patrick McLoughlin
BM	To book rooms for a meeting with Greg Mulholland on 14.1.16 and a room for a pre-meeting on 11.1.16