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14 November 1976

**MINUTES OF THE LONDONDERRY CITY CENTRE LIAISON COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
ARMY CONFERENCE ROOM - RUC STRAND ON WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 1976**

<p>Present: Lt Col T S SNEYD Ch Supt HAMILTON Supt H MING Mr B DUDDY Mr R FERRIS Mr W FERRIS Mr J HUGHES Mr F THORPE Cllr Mrs M JEFFERSON Mr R D HILL Major R I H HAUGH QOHLdrs Major C D HANN RE Major A J WRIGHT RE Major C J SANKEY RAPC</p>	<p>CO 21 Engineer Regiment Comd RUC 'N' Div Sub Comd RUC 'N' Div Londonderry Chamber of Trade Londonderry Chamber of Trade Manager Ulsterbus Western Region Roads Department Head Postmaster Londonderry Londonderry City Council Senior Civil Advisor GSO 3 Liaison HQ 8 Inf Bde OC City Sqn OC 2 Armd Engr Sqn CRO 21 Engineer Regiment (Secretary)</p>
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Apologies were received from Mr L HASSON
Mr J V ARTHUR

INTRODUCTION

1. The Chairman opened the meeting by giving a brief review of the security situation since the last meeting on 13th October 1976.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND POINTS ARISING

2. Strand Road/Clarendon Street Checkpoint turnstile has now been installed.
3. Butchers Gate Checkpoint A second handrail has now been put in to the checkpoint and it is hoped to make the ramp less steep and also to lay a non-slip surface.
4. Shipquay Gate The hold ups here are less frequent now that there has been a relaxation of the rule requiring a clearance certificate.
5. Customs House Gate Checkpoint Mr THORPE said that the installation of a post box outside this gate would only invite attention from terrorists and he believed this would not be desirable. Major WRIGHT commented that since there is no longer a car park in the area few people would use it. Mr R FERRIS believed the public were entitled to this convenience. Mr THORPE agreed to look at some other location in the same area and report back.
6. Parking in the Area of the Post Office The problem of the Post Office vans is a short term matter and no immediate solution could be seen. However a much more important matter is the use of the site of the old Victoria RUC Station. Mr DUDDY said that if the site were free for any significant time it would be of great benefit as a car park. Mr THORPE agreed to look into the time table for redevelopment of the site to check the feasibility of this idea, which was strongly supported by Mr FERRIS.

7. Letterkenny VCP The Chairman said this subject would not be pursued further as it was outside the terms of reference. A meeting on site had taken place in accordance with the previous minutes. Mr HASSON could raise the matter with Major HAUGH on his return from holiday if he wished to.

8. "Hedgehogs" Strand Road/Lawrence Hill These will soon be removed under the new security system. The road has been widened to take two lanes, and Mr HUGHES considered it was not necessary to sign the double traffic facility at the hedgehog. It was agreed that parking north of Lawrence Hill junction was a problem, but that there was a double yellow line on this stretch of road, which should suffice as a deterrent.

9. Quayside Checkpoint As a result of installing two lanes for car traffic, all agreed that traffic was now flowing smoothly. Mr W FERRIS was also delighted with the improved Bus arrangements on the bridge as well as expressing amusement at the "beware" sign on approaching the checkpoint.

10. Resiting of short wall in Great James St This problem was being looked at as a new siting was desirable. Mr DUDDY considered the wall was not necessary as whenever he passed through there was never a soldier using it !

FUTURE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CITY

11. The Chairman explained the current security system whereby 18000 cars a day are passing through checkpoints. It had been strongly represented at the previous meeting that cars being held up tended to go to Limavady and other places to shop while Derry was losing trade. In order to improve the situation for our "customers", a system had been devised whereby commuter traffic could move freely from the north as far as the west side of the Craigavon Bridge. It was the intention to make a City secure zone, inside which traffic and pedestrians could move freely without being checked. The scheme would remove altogether certain checkpoints eg Quayside (P9), Guildhall (P8A) and Shipquay Gate (P8), Abercorn Rd (P5), Foyle Rd (lower bridge P3), Ferryquay Gate (P6) while additional checkpoints would be installed at the south west corner of Guildhall, bottom of Wapping Lane and a further checkpoint in Carlisle Road. The result would be a secure area of the Strand, the walled city and the Fountain estate, with entry checkpoints at Wapping Lane, Carlisle Road and Shipquay Place/Whittaker Street. There would be a HGV check on the quayside (NE side of car park by Guildhall), and additional car parking space. Under the new system more people would go into the City to shop, security would be kept at the present level with less checkpoints, but with additional spot checks by patrols. A lot of trouble and thought has been given to the new concept, which should benefit all sections of the community. The one snag encountered so far has been one of communication down to grass root level, and in particular the Fountain Estate and the traders on Carlisle Road. Their representatives had been slow to pass information downwards or warn us of disagreement.

12. At this point the Chairman invited questions on the new review. Mr R FERRIS asked about bus routes and these were clarified by the Chairman, who also said in certain circumstances there would be body searches at bus stops by mobile patrols, (Carlisle Road and the Diamond), and also bag searches on the buses at checkpoints would continue.

13. Mr R FERRIS expressed concern about the security implications of bus traffic. The Chairman said that careful consideration had been given to the obvious risks involved. Representatives at the 8 Brigade meeting had agreed that it would be impractical to ask passengers to debus at checkpoints for a body search, but that bus entry to the secure area was necessary to achieve the hoped for regeneration of commercial activity. Bags would be searched on buses and security patrols would concentrate to some extent on carrying out thorough checks at bus stops. It was generally agreed that random checking was a valuable activity and the Chairman made a special plea that traders be encouraged to implement good checking at shop doors. This would be particularly important if more people are using the secure area.

14. Mrs JEFFERSON expressed doubts that WCA would accept a checkpoint on Wapping Lane. The Chairman reiterated that at present the Fountain Estate was not secure, but with the estate fenced in and a checkpoint on Wapping Lane, the whole of the Protestant area would be totally secure. The sentry would also be able to look up Abercorn Road, and the Lane would no longer present a "soft target" for the terrorist. The Chairman pointed out that the WCA Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary had twice been fully briefed by himself and had expressed agreement with the detailed plans.

15. Mr R FERRIS pointed out that a few years ago when security was being discussed, Carlisle Road had opted out, but had soon changed their minds when the bombs came. The Chamber of Trade felt now that they would have to make up their mind one way or the other, to be in or out of the new security scheme. It was undemocratic that the minority should be able to sabotage a scheme favoured by the majority. The Carlisle Road traders felt the presence of a checkpoint near the roundabout would turn away traffic from their area, as people would tend to go to the area of Guildhall, park there and walk into the City Centre.

16. An opinion was expressed that if some reasonable car parking could be made available fairly close to Carlisle Road, there would be some chance of the plan being accepted. Mr DUDDY commented that car parking in the city was a shambles and everyone would like to see the Bridge Street derelicts removed. Mr HILL agreed to look into the question of derelicts at Northern Ireland level.

17. Mr R FERRIS asked if it would be possible to consider an alternative place for the Carlisle Road checkpoint. He suggested that perhaps Hawkin Street could be blocked off and the checkpoint put up by the car park, with the sangar in the car park. The Chairman said he would consider this scheme with RUC, meanwhile Mr R FERRIS would try to persuade the Carlisle Road traders to accept a majority decision. The Chairman concluded the meeting by saying it would be preferable for the scheme to be put over by democratic means rather than by the iron fist of SF (which Mr R FERRIS had objected to at the last meeting !).

NEXT MEETING

18. Mr R FERRIS suggested that there be no December meeting, and the date agreed was 5th January 1977.

C Stanley
C J SANKEY
Major RAPC
Secretary

Distribution:

External:

Ch Supt HAMILTON
Supt H MING
Mr B DUDDY ✓
Mr R FERRIS
Mr W FERRIS
Mr J HUGHES
Mr F THORPE
Mr R D HILL
Mr L HASSON
Mr J V ARTHUR
Cllr Mrs M JEFFERSON
HQ 8 Inf Bde (2)

Internal:

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OC City Sqn
OC 2 Armd Engr Sqn
OC 1 Fd Sqn
OC 4 Fd Sqn
Secretary