

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Richard Chattaway (replaced by Councillor Barry Longden for this meeting) and Councillor Colin Hayfield.

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of the meetings of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 March 2011 and 15 March 2011

The minutes of the meeting of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 March 2011 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair. The Chair noted that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2011 in relation to the Rugby Western Relief Road would be considered together with the report (Item 8).

Matters Arising

None.

(4) Chair's Announcements

The Chair reported to Members that the Children and Young People O&S Committee had proposed a joint Task and Finish Group with the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with a wider remit than their original proposal to consider Post 16 transport to look at Bus Services more generally in light of the rural bus changes. He said that this had been discussed at the Chair and Party Spokespersons meeting, and it had been agreed that while this was a legitimate area of interest, the work required would be massive and it would be premature in terms of the changes. It was agreed that this proposal should remain with a focus on Post 16 travel under the C&YP O&S.

The Chair noted that a report setting out changes to Home to School Transport had been considered by the Cabinet on 14 April 2011, where changes to school transport and a withdrawal of passenger assistants were agreed. He said that he and Councillor June Tandy had been contacted by Governors and parents at The Ferncumbe CE VC Primary School asking for their intervention and scrutiny of the proposal. Both issues fell within the remit of the C&YP O&S, and it was agreed that Members needed to ensure that the criteria to be applied in the future was open and transparent and needs driven, not just financially driven.

2. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

3. Questions to the Portfolio Holder

Councillor Sarah Boad asked what was being done to publicise library consultations, as Lillington had been one of the first consultation meetings and there had been very limited publicising of that meeting. She added that this appeared to be the case for the libraries that were reducing hours but not closing, and it was possibly more difficult to raise public awareness. In Councillor Hayfield's absence, Councillor Cockburn, Member for Kenilworth St. John's, noted that the consultation meeting at Kenilworth library was advertised at the library and in the local paper. Members agreed that this situation needed to be remedied and that press briefings and publicity needed to be improved, for both closures and reducing hours.

Councillor Alan Cockburn

The Chair asked Councillor Cockburn, in light of a complaint that been received in the last 24 hours from a Nuneaton and Bedworth resident concerning a decision taken by the County Council to defer development in terms of a proposed cycling bridge in Nuneaton. He asked Councillor Cockburn what could be done, more generally, to improve communication and engagement with the cycling fraternity in Nuneaton and Bedworth and the county as a whole. Councillor Cockburn agreed to provide a briefing note to the Committee setting out the background and current situation, including the situation regarding the s106 monies and a record of meetings that had taken place with stakeholders in Nuneaton and other parts of the county. The Chair responded that there were three Member cycling champions (one from North Warwickshire and two from Warwick) and these had had an impact in their areas. He suggested that getting direct, regular Member engagement in Nuneaton and Bedworth could be a way forward.

Michelle McHugh stated that she had requested a briefing note on S106 monies, including how these were accessed, what they were used for, and an updated matrix, and that she would continue to chase this up.

4. Preventing Speed Related Road Casualties

Councillor Richard Hobbs introduced the item, setting out Warwickshire County Council's approach to prevent people being killed or injured in speed related road crashes in the context of the present financial restraints.

Estyn Williams noted that the new arrangements had been implemented on 1 April 2011, and would be monitored to ensure they were achieving the targets set.

Robert Gifford, Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety thanked the Committee for inviting him to speak to them and gave a PowerPoint presentation setting out the national picture in terms of road safety.

Guy Hollis, Warwickshire Police, spoke about the role of the police in partnership with the County Council in preventing speed related road casualties and using speed awareness courses for low end offenders and prosecution for high end offenders. He credited the County Council for continuing to committing funding to this area.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

1. Only permanently dormant cameras had to be covered.
2. The County was able to make a small profit from speed reduction courses for low end offenders, which was fed back into speed reduction initiatives.
3. Members endorsed speed reduction schemes being developed in rural areas together with local communities and the police.
4. Rob Gifford and PACTS were working with the industry to improve safety through technology, including intelligent speed adaptation. He added that speed reduction was more likely to be successful through promotion of fuel consumption and increased safety rather than a "big brother" enforcement approach.
5. Any cameras used had to Home Office Type Approved, as evidence from these had to be acceptable in a court of law.
6. Officers agreed it would be useful to consider using the County Council's fleet of vehicles to publicise speed reduction.
7. Members agreed that Government should be leading on a campaign to reduce speed limits outside schools to 20mph.
8. It was acknowledged that the effectiveness of cameras was only for a limited stretch of road, however evidence supported the success of speed cameras in reducing deaths or serious injuries.
9. There were programmes such as the Driving Ambitions Programme targeting young people to try to influence views on speeding as early as possible.
10. Officers undertook to e-mail to Members details of the costs of the mobile speed cameras.
11. Members welcomed the continued support of Warwickshire Police and noted that where behaviour could not be influenced, Police involvement was crucial.
12. Warwickshire had a policy not to reduce speed limits unless they were able to be complemented by engineering changes'. This was not the case in all Local Authorities and it was important that this policy was reviewed regularly.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their contributions and noted that while the County Council strategy, in conjunction with Warwickshire Police had broad support, this was an area the Committee wanted to keep under review and continue to monitor in terms of funding cuts and seeking further reductions in accidents.

5. Implementing the Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Plan

Rachel Evans gave a PowerPoint presentation giving an update on delivery of the Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Plan, which was on target.

The Committee requested a briefing note giving an update on the current activity levels at Warwick and Brinklow Fire Stations.

Gary Phillips agreed to arrange for a half day session at the Fire College to increase general awareness, particularly in terms of the Improvement Plan.

The Committee noted their satisfaction with the progress achieved.

6. Fire Sprinkler Systems

The Committee watched a DVD on home fire sprinkler systems and then a PowerPoint presentation as part of the Fire Services ambition to promote the installation of fire sprinklers in residential premises, schools commercial and industrial premises.

It was agreed that Gary Phillips should investigate providing a training session for the Regulatory Committee, which could be open for colleagues from the District/Borough Councils in their planning roles.

The Chair thanked Gary Phillips for his presentation and for raising the awareness of the Committee. The Committee strongly endorsed the proposals on moving forward with this agenda and agreed the recommendations set out in Paragraph 11 of the report.

7. Update on Financial Inclusion

The Committee considered the report providing an update to Members of progress made towards the recommendations agreed by the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2009, with the objective of making long term improvements both in terms of the County Council's contribution to individual financial well-being, and in the contribution of partner organisations, such as the Citizens Advice Bureaux and Credit Unions.

Members noted the work undertaken to date following the review and agreed that an in-depth seminar should be held for all Members on progress to date and the next steps in light of the fact that Members of

this Committee had not been involved in the original scrutiny and it covered a vast area of work. The Chair agreed to discuss with Monica Fogarty and Councillor Richard Hobbs how best to involve other partners.

8. Scrutiny of the Rugby Western Relief Road

The minutes of the special meeting of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 March 2011, to consider the Rugby Western Relief Road, were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

The Committee considered the draft report outlining the proposed findings and recommendations from Select Committee in relation to the Rugby Western Relief Road.

There was a discussion held regarding necessity for the report to be sent to full Council after it had been considered by the Cabinet.

Councillor Jeff Clarke moved, seconded by Councillor Chris Williams that the Committee support the proposed findings and recommendations from the Select Committee in relation to the Rugby Western Relief Road and having considered the independent report from Stradia (which was not available at the select committee meeting), agree the report be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration at the 12 May meeting. A vote was taken and the motion was unsuccessful with four votes in favour and five against.

The Chair moved , seconded by Councillor Barry Longden, and it was resolved with five votes in favour and four votes against, that the Committee support the proposed findings and recommendations from the Select Committee in relation to the Rugby Western Relief Road and having considered the independent report from Stradia (which was not available at the select committee meeting), agreed a final report be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration at the 12 May meeting and agree that following Cabinet consideration of the report on the 12 May, the report is then considered by full Council.

9. Committee Work Programme

The Committee agreed the draft work programme for the Committee.

10. Any Other Items

There were no urgent items.

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Chair

The Committee rose at 1:40 pm