

Minutes of a Meeting of the North Warwickshire Area Committee held on 31 May 2006 at the Magistrate's Court Building, Sheepy Road, Atherstone

Present: -

Members of the Committee

Councillors Anne Forwood
Peter Fowler
Richard Grant
Colin Hayfield
Joan Lea
Mick Stanley
Ray Sweet (Chair)

Officers Julia Brook, Organisation Development Manager
Nigel Exell, Demographics and Statistics Officer
Alison Hallworth, Adult and Community Team Leader
Mohammed Jamil, Area Community Education Officer
Ann Mawdsley, Senior Committee Administrator
Alistair Rigby, Community Partnership Officer North Warwickshire
Peter Samwell, Policy Manager
Catherine Twigg, Area Administrative Assistant
Alison Williams, Area Manager North Warwickshire
Nick Williams, Education Officer

Also in Attendance 6 Members of the Public attended.

1. Appointment of Chair

Councillor Colin Hayfield, seconded by Councillor Richard Grant, proposed that Councillor Ray Sweet be appointed Chair of the Committee.

A vote was taken and it was resolved that Councillor Ray Sweet be appointed Chair of the Committee.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Councillor Anne Forwood, seconded by Councillor Peter Fowler, proposed that Councillor Richard Grant be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

A vote was taken and it was resolved that Councillor Richard Grant be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

3. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor Brian Moss, Dave Clarke, John Lyons and Phil Astle.

(2) Members' Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Members declared personal interests as set out below:

- (1) by virtue of them serving as North Warwickshire Borough Councillors as follows:-

Councillors Peter Fowler, Colin Hayfield, Joan Lea, Brian Moss, Mick Stanley and Ray Sweet.

- (2) Councillor Anne Forwood declared a personal interest in Item 5 as a member of the Management Team of North Warwickshire CVS and North Warwickshire Voluntary Centre.

(3) Minutes of the Meeting held on the 22 March 2006

The minutes of the North Warwickshire Area Committee meeting held on 22 March 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Page 6 – 7. Capital Programme for Transport 2006/07

Alison Williams reported that funds had been secured for the Village Traffic Plans Officer and a report would be brought to the July meeting.

4. Public Question Time

(1) Question from Mr Paul Reader, resident of New Arley and member of New Arley Parish Council

"The Springhill Surgery in Arley needs modification and following discussions between developers and the Working Men's Club, plans submitted to the Borough Council had been turned down. Local residents were concerned that a relocation of the surgery would cause hardship to members of the Arley population.

What are the views of the Area Committee?"

The Chair replied that as the question had only been received 15 minutes before the meeting, the Committee was not in a position to reply to the issues covered in the question. He added that the issues raised by Mr Reader were mostly to do with the Borough Council but that a written response would be sent to Mr Reader.

The Chair requested that any future questions be submitted at least five days in advance of the meeting to allow enough time to prepare a response.

(2) Question from Mr Paul Reader, resident of New Arley and member of New Arley Parish Council

"Does the Area Committee have confidence that the current level of policing in North Warwickshire is sufficient to cope within such a large area?"

The Chair replied that there were a number of changes taking place such as the Safer Neighbourhoods Initiative which would be in place by November and the national police reform and that the County Council, Borough Council and other organisations were working together looking at these initiatives to improve safety. He added that money had been set aside in the budget this year for an additional 20 police officers and 40 community support officers.

(3) Question from Area Forum North (6 April 2006)

"The Alvecote site was purchased by the County Council and set up as a travellers' site in 1990. Until March 2003 this site was managed on behalf of the County Council by North Warwickshire Borough Council who employed a resident warden. Subsequently the site has been managed by private agents on the County Council's behalf. At a recent meeting of the Area Forum North a preference was expressed for a manager to live on the site.

Following the proposed refurbishment of the site, what management arrangements are planned and will these arrangements taken into consideration the views of the local community?"

Julia Brook reported that the County Council was reviewing their dealings with gypsy sites and that the County Council felt it was important to get this site up and running and to address the wider situation and find the best approach to moving forward. She added that the County Council were looking at how other Authorities throughout the country were dealing with their gypsy sites and noted that only one site currently had a resident warden and that elsewhere this was not seen as the best approach. Members noted their concerns about keeping the site in good condition once it had been refurbished and the Chair noted the ongoing problems and the need to get the solution right this time by working together with all stakeholders.

(4) Question from Mr Martin Askill, Hartshill

The Chair noted that as Mr Askill's questions were linked to Item 9. on the Agenda (Delegated Transport Budget), the two would be considered together.

"The question is in three parts and is as follows:

1. Why was this system adopted by the Council in 2002?
2. I first made a complaint regarding the speed humps on Laurel Drive/Beech Close in November 2004. Why is it taking so long to alter this system?
3. Could you please advise whether the cables that have recently been fitted across the road were used to measure the volume or speed of traffic?"

See page 7 below.

Part A Non-Executive Functions

None.

Part B Executive Functions

5. North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Plan

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development outlining the progress on the North Warwickshire Community Partnership and informing Members of the preparation of a new Community Plan for 2006-09.

Alison Williams noted that the Area Committee Funding Subgroup had received 6 final reports and 2 midterm reports from Partnership Theme Groups and Members were pleased with the progress made. Discussions had also been held on priorities for the Well-Being Fund for 2006/07.

Members noted the following:

1. Theme Groups were monitored through Action Plans and quarterly reports to the Partnership Board.
2. The Warwickshire Local Area Agreement will be informed by local priorities detailed in the new Community Plan.
3. Members requested a report to the 26 July meeting looking at Arts in North Warwickshire including where Arts fitted into the area, how far it had progressed and what expectations were. A representative from the Borough Council and the County Arts Office would be invited to attend.
4. Members agreed that the Arts were a way to foster and sustain community life and the aim and vision outlined in the Sustainable Community Plan should not be undermined.
5. Members noted the need for theme groups working on cross-cutting issues such as drugs, for example the health related issues as opposed to legislative enforcement issues, to work together to reach a common purpose and improve health and wellbeing.
6. The PCTs were experiencing a period of change which could impact on other stakeholders and partnership arrangements.

Resolved

That the Area Committee:

1. Note the progress made in implementing actions within the North Warwickshire Community Plan in 2005/06.
2. Endorse the new 2006-09 North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Plan.
3. Note that priorities contained in the North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Plan 2006-09 will be considered by partner agencies for inclusion in the Warwickshire Local Area Agreement.
4. Invite North Warwickshire Community Partnership Theme Groups to submit expressions of interest for those projects contained in the revised Community Plan, particularly those which include age and intergenerational issues, which would benefit from Well-being funding.

6. Review of the Area Community Education Councils and future funding arrangements

The Committee considered the joint report of the Strategic Directors for Children, Young People & Families and Performance and Development seeking the views of the Area Committee on a draft report seeking Cabinet approval for the future arrangements for the funds previously allocated by ACECs.

Mohammed Jamil noted the proposal for the remaining £32,000 of the ACEC funding not allocated to community use in schools or voluntary youth service organisations, to be made available for grants to community groups providing services to adults through the Community Development Fund. He added the need to ensure that applications for small amounts of funding continue to be fast tracked.

Members noted the following:

1. The Community Development Fund was launched in May but applications to the funding would not be considered until after the closing date in September.
2. It was important to determine eligibility criteria for deprivation to ensure that the money reached the intended recipients.
3. There was a need to ensure that a process was put in place to respond to small ad hoc requests from the communities, which had been customer practice in the past.

Resolved

That the Area Committee note their concern about the devolvement of ACECs and recommend that the Cabinet defer their decision pending a further report setting out the disbursement of the remaining £32,000 (paragraph 2.4 of the report to Cabinet 27 June 2006) and that further consideration is given to the use of an appropriate mechanism for accessing small grants on an ad hoc basis.

7. Change to the Indicated Admission Number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People & Families setting out the proposal to reduce the Indicated Admission Number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School.

Nick Williams made the following points:

1. Cabinet had agreed to a proposal to carry out a consultation of schools in the immediate area and the results of the consultation had also been reported to the Nuneaton & Bedworth Area Committee.
2. The proposal to reduce the Indicated Admission Number from 90 to 60 had come from Nathaniel Newton School due to decreasing numbers, the impact of infant class size legislation and the inability to fund three full classes within budget.
3. The Shires housing development had not yet been designated into any school priority area but pupils from the area mainly attended either Nathaniel Newton or Galley Common Infant Schools and Michael Drayton Junior School.
4. Concerns had been raised by Michael Drayton Junior School about a knock-on effect on their numbers and the potential decrease in parental choice in the area.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were raised:

1. Members noted their concern at reducing places in schools too early resulting in schools not big enough to cope with numbers, particularly in light of the uncertainty around the impact of The Shires building development.
2. Members acknowledged the difficulties schools faced in balancing budgets with falling roles and the lack of flexibility in organisation due to the legal requirement to limit the number of pupils in an infant class to a maximum of 30.

Resolved

That the Area Committee recommend to the Cabinet that they do not reduce the Indicated Admission Number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School in Hartshill pending a review of the priority areas and the impact of The Shires housing estate.

8. Highway Maintenance Plan 2006/2007 and Five Year List of Structural Maintenance Schemes

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy setting out highway maintenance work proposed in 2006/07, listing sites where maintenance work would be required in the future and asking for priorities for road maintenance schemes funded from the additional £300,000 capital sum provided by Council in December 2005.

Resolved

That Members:

1. Support the Highway Maintenance Plan 2006/07 and the Five-Year List of Structural Maintenance Schemes.
2. Agreed to hold discussions with officers to put together priority schemes for their individual areas and to then hold a seminar where all schemes would be tabled and a programme of road maintenance schemes compiled that would best benefit the residents of North Warwickshire.

9. 2006-07 Capital Programme for Transport – Delegated Budget

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy setting out a proposal for allocation of some of the remaining 2006-07 transport delegated budget.

In response to the questions put forward by Mr M Askill of Hartshill, Julia Brooks responded as follows:

1. *Why was this system (the speed humps) adopted by the Council in 2002?*

The system was adopted because the speed humps were a technically appropriate method for delivering traffic calming which were felt to meet safety issues.

2. *I first made a complaint regarding the speed humps on Laurel Drive/Beech Close in November 2004. Why is it taking so long to alter this system?*

Due the reasons outlined in 1. it had previously not been appropriate to use money designated for traffic calming measures to remodel these traffic humps.

3. *Could you please advise whether the cables that have recently been fitted across the road were used to measure the volume or speed of traffic?"*

The cables measure both the volume of traffic and the speed of vehicles.

During the ensuing discussion the following issues were highlighted:

- i. Members agreed that normally support would not be given to altering any system put in place to reduce speed and lower the number of accidents.
- ii. The specific design of the humps used on Laurel Drive/Beech Close resulted in exceptional noise and this needed to be brought to the attention of the developers.

Resolved

That the report be deferred to the 26 July 2006 meeting following discussions with the developers.

10. Provisional Items for Future Meetings

The Committee agreed the provisional items identified for future meetings with the following additions:

26 July 2006

Well-being Funds 2006/07

Arts in North Warwickshire

2006-07 Capital Programme for Transport – Delegated Budget (deferred from this meeting)

11. Any Other Items

There were no other items.

Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday 26 July 2006 at a venue to be confirmed.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 7.50 p.m.