

The **NORTH WARWICKSHIRE AREA COMMITTEE** met  
in **NEWTON REGIS VILLAGE HALL, AUSTRY LANE, NEWTON  
REGIS** on 11 July 2007

**Present:**

Councillor	Ray Sweet (Chair)
“	Colin Hayfield
“	Anne Forwood
“	Richard Grant
“	Colin Hayfield
“	Joan Lea
“	Brian Moss

**Officers:**

Bill Basra, Area Manager North Warwickshire, Performance and Development Directorate.

Roy Burton, Operations Manager, Waste Management, Environment and Economy Directorate.

Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate

Christine Lambert, Village Transport Plan Officer, Environment and Economy Directorate.

Chris Nason, Group Engineer, Environment and Economy Directorate.

Alistair Rigby, Community Partnership Officer, Performance and Development Directorate.

Peter Samwell, Policy Manager, County Highways Policy Transport and Highways, Environment and Economy Directorate.

Sian Stroud, Senior Solicitor, Performance and Development Directorate.

John Scouller, Head of Skills, Tourism and Economy, Environment and Economy Directorate.

Lee White, Project Manager – Major Public Transport Schemes, Environment and Economy Directorate.

**Also in Attendance:** Colin Bridgeman and Alex Cliff (James Gilmore & Partners), Davina Key, Community Development Worker (NWVCS), Robert ???? (Polesworth Parish Council), and Colin Swinterton (N.T. & K. Swinnerton (Farmers)

**1. General**

**(1) Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mick Stanley.

## **(2) Declarations of interest**

Members declared personal interests as set out below:-

- (1) Councillors Anne Forwood, Peter Fowler, Colin Hayfield, Joan Lea, Brian Moss and Ray Sweet – as Members of North Warwickshire Borough Council.
- (2) Councillor Richard Grant - As a member of the North Warwickshire and Hinckley College Board of the Corporation.

## **(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2007 and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting of the North Warwickshire Area Committee meeting held on 23 May 2007 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to, on page 1, the venue of the meeting being amended to read Fillongley Village Hall.

### **Matters Arising**

#### **Page 3 – minute 4 Public Question Time – Nursery, Mancetter**

Bill Basra reminded Members of the late question received at the last meeting and circulated a copy of the question and response prepared by Norma Smeaton, Early Years-CYPF as follows –

#### **Question from Mr Hopkins (Area Committee – 23 May 2007)**

A privately run Nursery in Mancetter which had provided superb service, which had received funding from the County Council and the Lottery Fund had been closed. It was alleged that this was due to financial grounds through a failure to report to Companies House within a designated time and a resultant dispute over rental etc.

Did the County Council have any procedures in place for reviewing financial matters such as these where public money had been spent to ensure this did not happen again?"

#### **Response from Norma Smeaton, Early Years-CYPF**

"Mr Hopkins correctly states that the provision at Mancetter was of high quality and I wish to reiterate that view because I would not want parents to worry that their child was not being cared for appropriately. The problem was essentially one between landlord and tenant and the Council, as a Local Authority, can advise but cannot enforce. In this instance my staff offered advice and financial support but our help was declined by the proprietor of the nursery.

The funding that this nursery received was as follows:

- The Big Lottery granted funding for the capital development and they may wish to claw back some or all of the money that they allocated. They are aware of the situation and will make an independent decision on what to do next.
- Revenue funding was awarded by the DfES Sure Start Unit who require monitoring information on a regular basis.
- Some funding is paid by the County Council to provide free places for nursery education. This has been audited and the funding has been allocated appropriately (ie. free places have been allocated to those children whose parents signed a declaration that they had received them).
- No other County Council money has been allocated to this setting.

This case is very unusual in that the provider of the service would not allow us to help him. The issue of not complying with company legislation only came to light after the landlord had taken action. Normally, we work very closely with providers so that if they are in difficulty we can help them by providing advice or practical help, included financial help. We currently have around 250 providers in receipt of nursery education funding and this is the only case of its kind.

When a contract is let to a new provider, as will be the case for the emerging Children's Centres, we go through the formal process of tendering which includes taking out a range of references. The provider's business track record and future plans are scrutinised by an evaluation panel to ensure that they are fit to undertake the role.

Having said all of the above, we are constantly trying to improve our standards and are looking at ways to tighten up procedures to ensure that our provision is of the highest quality and that public money is used as effectively as possible."

## **PART A Non-Executive Functions**

None

## **PART B Executive Functions**

### **2. Public Question Time.**

#### **Question from Councillor Ray Payne**

Water Orton

Vehicles continually parking on grass verges within the village, which result in damage to footway/kerbs and excessive damage to grass verges. WCC Highways and the Police have responsibility to maintain the areas concerned.

Could we have an investigation and some policy of protection installed?

## **Reply from Bryn Patefield, Area Manager, County Highways Operation (North Warwickshire).**

“The County Highways team can target specific areas of damage and undertake repairs to maintain a safe network. The areas of concern will be addressed as part of the general maintenance cycle.

It would be very difficult to prosecute for damage to roadside verges and footpaths due to the difficulty in proving who actually caused the damage in the first place. It is usually the case that this sort of incident is sustained over a period of time by a variety of road users. If approached a vehicle owner could say that the verge was already damaged before they parked on it.

The police generally view this type of incident as a lower priority unless there is a serious safety issue to address. The damage to roadside verges and footpaths is a constant problem throughout the network and across the country as a whole. The answer to help address this problem lies with the implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement, a central government initiative to pass responsibility for parking enforcement from the police to the local authority. This is expected to be reviewed in North Warwickshire in 2008/9 and should result in more stringent enforcement of on-street restrictions and ticketing of offenders.

Another option is for the Borough Council to consider passing a local Bylaw to assist with the prevention of parking on roadside verges.”

The Committee noted that a Review of Parking Policies, which included Verge Parking, was currently being undertaken and that a report on this issue would be considered by Cabinet on 19 July 2007.

### **3. Presentation from North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and King Edward VI College**

Martin Ward, Principle of King Edward VI College and Paul Flett, Vice Principle of North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, with the aid of a power point presentation (attached) outlined, for information, the proposals to bring together both Colleges into Nuneaton Town Centre and the joint benefits and economies of scale (sharing services) that would arise from this initiative. They answered Members' questions on the benefits of the proposal in connection with improving the learning opportunities for students in North Warwickshire.

The Chair thanked the College representatives for their presentation.

### **4. Responsive Services and Empowered Communities – The Development of a Locality Approach**

Bill Basra presented the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development which followed on from the decision of the Cabinet on 10th May 2007 authorising consultation with elected members through the Area Committees on the principles and issues relating to the development of a Locality approach by the Council.

During discussion the following comments were noted –

- (1) That it was important to continue with the Area Committee function to enable scrutiny of issues, such as education and transport at local level.
- (2) That the Area Committees should be run in parallel with the Area Forums in the first instance to see how they work.
- (3) That the situation should be reviewed at the end of the current Council in 2009.
- (4) That the Localities Option Map 3 was the preferred option because the areas fitted in with the Safer Neighbourhood Police areas, and would be easier for partner organisations to maintain.

Resolved (Councillor Colin Hayfield moved, seconded by Councillor Richard Grant) that the –

- (1) Localities Option Map 3 is the preferred option.
- (2) Area Committees should continue to operate.
- (3) situation should be reviewed in 12 months time or in any event after the next elections.

#### **5. C7/01 Station Road Rail Bridge, Polesworth – Road over Rail Safety Scheme**

Chris Nason presented the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy, which informed Members of the safety issues concerning this bridge and proposed options for highway vehicle containment to address those issues. He circulated photographs of a trial carried out that day of a large farm vehicle being driven through the High street and which had to mount the pavement because of its width, the narrowness of the street and parked vehicles.

A representative of the farming community present at the meeting, who had been involved in the trial, expressed concern about the health and safety aspects of driving farm vehicles along the High Street and about damaging the kerbs and disruption to the traffic flow. He said that the proposal to prevent large vehicles from using the bridge and diverting them through the High Street was unsatisfactory.

Discussion followed during which Members considered the proposal to be unacceptable and Councillor Richard Grant, seconded by the Chair, moved and it was Resolved –

That the recommendation contained in the report be not agreed and the officers be asked to bring back alternative proposals (to include the option of traffic light signals to restrict traffic to single way access).

## **6. Report from the Funding Sub-group**

Resolved, having considered the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development, which sought to inform the Area Committee of key decisions made by the Funding Sub-Group in connection with overall guidance, and progress in relation to previous allocations of the Social Inclusion and Well being Fund that the Area Committee-

- (1) in terms of guidance, adopt the summary of the way forward as outlined in paragraph 5 of this report.
- (2) approves the End of Year report of the Community Development Worker (North Warwickshire) post and confirms funding of the post for the second year of the Service Level Agreement 2006/07 to 2008/09.
- (3) note the end of project reports for 5 funded projects 'Baseline Survey of Coleshill Industrial Estate'; 'Young Peoples Health Event'; PATCHES Rural North Warwickshire'; 'Provision of Learning Events'; and 'Healthy Lifestyles Pilot Project'.

## **7. Street Lighting Hours of Operation – Consultation**

Peter Samwell presented the report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy.

The report outlined that, at present, virtually all streetlights in Warwickshire operated throughout the night and that savings might be made if all (or selected) lights were switched off or dimmed after midnight. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested Area Committees be consulted and their views reported back before further consideration was given to this issue.

During discussion the following comments were noted –

- (1) That saving on the costs of street lighting if they were switched off or dimmed after midnight should, in principle, be supported.
- (2) That parish councils and the community should be consulted to gauge their reaction and to gain support for a trial of specific areas.
- (3) That trials should not be imposed on communities.

Resolved that the Area Committee supports lights being switched off in their area in the early hours the morning or lights dimmed (when this becomes a viable option) as a trial subject to consultation with, and the support of, Parish Councils and the community.

## **8. Provisional Items for Future Meetings**

The Committee agreed the provisional items identified for future meeting, as follows -

10 October 2007 (formerly 3 October 2007) (Venue - Kingsbury Youth Centre)

PCT changes and their implications for North Warwickshire

3 November 2007 (Venue – Dordon Village Hall)

Changes to schools' priority areas (Nathaniel Newton Infant School, Galley Common Primary School, Camp Hill Primary School and Michael Drayton Junior School).

## **9. Any Other Business**

The Chair agreed to the consideration of the following item as urgent business because of the need to consider the request for funding before the next meeting of the Committee in October 2007..

## **10. Funding Sub-Group**

The Committee considered a request for a grant of £500 from Mancetter Sports Football Club and a briefing note was circulated outlining the request. Davina Key spoke in support of the application and answered Members' questions on aspect of the Club's finance and management.

Resolved that the Area Committee approves a grant of £500 being made to the Mancetter Sports Football Club.

## **11. Exempt Item**

Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for item 12 below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **12. The Provision of a Household Waste Recycling Centre to Serve North Warwickshire**

Resolved, the Area Committee having considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy relating to the provision of a Household Waste Recycling Centre to Serve North Warwickshire, that the Area Committee approves the way forward as detailed.

.....  
Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 8:10 p.m.