

Minutes of a Meeting of the North Warwickshire Area Committee held on 21 November 2007 at the Magistrates Court Building, Sheepy Road, Atherstone

Present: -

Members of the Committee

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

Officers Bill Basra, Area Manager
Chris Burrows, Minor Works Programme Manager
Malcolm Graham, Senior Engineer
Ann Mawdsley, Principal Committee Administrator
Roger Newham, Chief Transport Planner
Alistair Rigby, Localities and Communities Officer North Warwickshire
Sian Stroud, Senior Solicitor

There were 2 members of the public in attendance.

1. General

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

(1) Apologies

An apology for absence were received on behalf of Dave Clarke.

(2) Members' Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Richard Grant declared a personal interest in Item 6 as a member of the Management Committee of the Hartshill Youth Project.

Councillor Colin Hayfield declared a personal interest in the minutes of the previous meeting as a Non Executive Director of Warwickshire PCT.

Councillor Ray Sweet declared a personal interest in Item 6 as a local allotment holder at Baddesley.

(3) Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 October 2007 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the North Warwickshire Area Committee meeting held on 10 October 2007 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

Page 5 – 5. Proposed Extension to Traffic Calming, Church Road, Hartshill

In response to a query from Councillor Richard Grant regarding the timetable for the work agreed in the report, Chris Burrows reported that work on site was scheduled to begin in early December 2007.

2. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

3. Locality Proposals for the North Warwickshire Area

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development following on from the decision of the Cabinet on 18 October 2007 and seeking the views of the Area Committee on the current position relating to the development of locality proposals for North Warwickshire.

During the ensuing discussion the following was noted:

- i. Members agreed that it was important for Parish Councils and members of the public to be involved, consulted with and encouraged to participate in Locality Fora meetings. Parish Councillors did operate on a different, more parochial level than the strategic level of County and Borough Councillors, who should continue to hold the voting rights on any decisions taken.
- ii. Government policy on locality working made it clear this was part of the Local Government agenda, to be developed at a local level. Members broadly agreed that there was a continuing strategic role for Area Committees, which was different to the role of Locality Fora and there was a need to clearly define the separate roles. Councillor Peter Fowler, as Portfolio Holder responsible for Localities asked that his position be noted, that Area Committees should continue to run in parallel with Locality Fora for 12 months, at which time a review would be carried out.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the Report are noted.
2. That the views of the Area Committee are related to the Cabinet when it next considers the proposals at its meeting on 6 December 2007.
3. That, taking note of Councillor Peter Fowler's comments set out above, the Committee reiterate the support for the continuance of Area Committees.

4. Highway Maintenance and Safety Budget 2008-09 – Outline Capital Allocations

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy following the approval at the County Council meeting on 6 February 2007 of a £2 million 2008-09 capital allocation to Highway Maintenance and Safety, £400,000 for each of the County's five areas. Roger Newham added that the technical side of the speed review required by Government would be complete by the end of the year and the Directorate would be in a position to implement the recommended changes in 2008/09. He asked that Members note that in making their decisions for the allocation of the £400,000, the speed review was not included, that there was no other budget set aside to implement this.

Members agreed that there should be some provision in setting the budget for 2008/09 to make a statement of intentions in terms of the speed review and the split of the £400,000 allocation between the eight areas to deal with outstanding issues important to locals should remain.

Resolved:

1. That Area Committee approves split of the £400,000 allocation on an equal basis between the eight areas in North Warwickshire for local determination.
2. A detailed programme of capital projects based on an area basis be prepared for discussion at a seminar early in 2008.

5. Speed Limit Review of A and B Roads

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy giving an update on the technical review of existing speed limits on A and B roads and recommending a procedure whereby Area Committees can take into account any community concerns when prioritising schemes to alter any speed limits. Malcolm Graham informed Members of the procedure that would be followed, culminating in a seminar for the Area Committee in March to look at the method and priorities for implementation locally.

Roger Newham added that the current year allocation of £400,000 had not included the speed review as this was not yet complete, but one of the uses for the original bid of £2m had been to implement the outcomes of the speed review.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

1. Members noted that each area had unique problems, and while there was a need for the Road Safety Engineer to work with Chris Lambert to identify problems in each area to improve roads and make them safer, Councillors would select issues that emerged following consultation with local people on specific issues.

2. Following a request about publishing the report on the review and the timescales involved, it was noted that the technical review would be published on the web, with links sent to all relevant parties, including all Parish Councils. It was thought that there would be enough time for wide consultation before the seminar in March.
3. Members agreed that in order to raise awareness, it would be useful to produce a standard, clear precise of the review for publication in local press, parish leaflets etc.
4. Members highlighted the point that the £400,000 would still be spend on road maintenance, including speed related issues, but in line with local choice.

Resolved:

That a list of problems with A and B roads in each division be produced for consideration by Members.

6. Report of the Funding Sub-Group

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development reporting on the progress of projects funded by the Area Committee and to consider applications relating to the Community Development Fund, the Wellbeing Fund, Social Inclusion and Small Grants.

During discussion the following points were noted:

1. The Community Development Fund application for funding to provide access to Gun Hill Community Wildlife Garden and Gun Hill Allotments had been rejected as it was felt that access should have been included as part of the original funding. The Area Office team had signposted the Gun Hill Allotments Association to other potential funding including from "Breathing Spaces" .
2. Councillor Hayfield noted his gratitude for the work done by the "HOMESHOP" project in terms of the ability to take services to people in their homes, increasing their independence. He suggested that the project be monitored and if successful, could be used as a template in other areas.
3. Councillor Grant noted the success of the Local Skills for Local Need project and suggested a note be sent to the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust congratulating them on the scheme. He added that it would be useful if a similar course could be developed using Hartshill County Park.

Resolved:

Community Development Fund

1. That the CDF Summary End of Year Projects (Appendix A) be noted.
2. That the applications (Appendix B) for CDF funding in 2007/08 be approved.

Community Computers

3. That the applications for Community Computers (Appendix C) be approved.

Arts for Health

4. That the Dance4 Health Project be approved.

Social Inclusion Fund

5. That the Responsible Drinking Education programme be approved.

Well-Being Fund

6. That the applications for the Well Being Fund in relation to 'Retail Support and Business Development in Polesworth' and the 'Development of the Atherstone Booktown Project' be approved.
7. That the End of Year Project reports for Local Skills for Local Needs, Alcohol Awareness Training and Healthy Living amongst NEETS be noted.

Youth Development Grant

8. That Councillors Fowler, Grant and Sweet be noted as the Area Committee's representatives for liaising with the Youth Forum in the identification of projects.

7. Provisional Items for Future Meetings

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

16 January 2008

Transport Seminar

16 January 2008 (normal scheduled meeting)

Budget Presentation from Dave Clarke

Flood Minimisation (including cleaning of gulleys and with invited representatives from Environment Agency and Severn Trent)

26 March 2008 (normal scheduled meeting)

Warwickshire Police presentation (moved from 16 January 2008)

Dates to be agreed

Area Committee seminar to look at Extra Care Housing Provision in North Warwickshire, including the local virtual service.

Area Committee seminar to look at allocation of £400,000 and recommendations from the Speed Review of A and B roads.

Members agreed the need for a review of the emergency planning in place to deal with flooding and agreed that this could be considered by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

8. Any Other Items

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items.

Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday 16 January 2008 at a venue to be confirmed.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 7.10 p.m.