

Minutes of a Meeting of the North Warwickshire Area Committee held on 26 March 2008 at the Council Chamber, North Warwickshire Borough Council Offices, Atherstone

Present: -

Members of the Committee

Councillors

Peter Fowler
Richard Grant (Vice Chair)
Joan Lea
Brian Moss
Mick Stanley
Ray Sweet (Chair)

Officers

Phil Astle, Education Officer, School Organisation
Julia Brook, Head of Rural and Management Services
Chris Burrows, Minor Works Programme Manager
Nick Gower-Johnson, County Partnerships Manager
Christine Lambert, Village Traffic Plans Officer
Tony Maione, Employment, Company & Commercial Team Leader
Ann Mawdsley, Principal Committee Administrator
Alistair Rigby, Localities and Communities Officer North Warwickshire
Jo Roberts, Administrative Officer North Warwickshire

There were 4 members of the public in attendance.

1. General

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Anne Forwood, Councillor Colin Hayfield and Dave Clarke.

(2) Members' Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 January 2008 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the North Warwickshire Area Committee meeting held on 16 January 2008 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

Page 3 – 4. d Flood Minimalisation

Alistair Rigby tabled an e-mail from Bryn Patefield giving information and costings on Aqua Sacs (an alternative to the traditional sand bag). Members agreed to look over the information before consideration at their next meeting.

2. Public Question Time

Question from Councillor R V Payne, Water Orton Ward, North Warwickshire Borough Council relating to Water Orton traffic concerns

The Village of Water Orton is suffering from traffic gridlock. The congestion at the Vesey Bridge, Water Orton is contributing to the problem. The time has come for Birmingham City Council and Warwickshire County Council to install traffic lights at the Vesey Bridge to control the flow of Traffic in both directions.

Minworth Lane, Water Orton already has three companies operating very close to the Vesey Bridge (Smiths Halo, W H Smith and Kingsbury Pallet Co) which add a large amount of traffic and we now have Mid Point One in Minworth which is another large development which will create 2000 jobs which means more traffic.

Response to Public Question – Vesey Bridge, Water Orton

Comments from Cllr Mrs Joan Lea:

By virtue of its location Water Orton experiences large volumes of traffic passing through the village including over the Vesey Bridge.

In the last couple of years, Severn Trent in Minworth Lane has built a huge logistics site (Prologis), which has contributed to an increase in traffic flow through Water Orton as it comes from east Birmingham and Coleshill etc.

The Traffic Development group, WCC have been in discussion with Birmingham City Council about traffic improvements to the bridge lead by Jasbir Kaur, Group Manager – Development Group, WCC

Comments from Neil Benison, Senior Highway Control Engineer:

Signalising the Bishops Vesey Bridge has been looked at in the past. The bridge is under the control of Birmingham City Council. The City Council does aspire to provide traffic signals at the bridge, however this could be technically difficult. It is unclear whether

there are any Section 106 monies available to Birmingham to carry out these improvements.

The last correspondence on this subject with the City Council was in August 2004. Correspondence to Mike O'Brien MP is attached; the last paragraph of the letter from Birmingham City Council suggests they are trying to build a pot to provide signals.

As well as the contact in the letter below our Transport Planners have also been in contact with a Brett Dennett from Birmingham City Council, regarding schemes in this area. Mr Dennett's number is 01213036862, and it is likely that Birmingham City Council will be able to give you the most up to date information with regards to this bridge.

Christine Lambert reported that she had had discussions with officers from the Traffic Control and Information Systems section in the Environment and Economy Directorate who were currently in discussions with Birmingham City Council about this issue. She added that there would be a Control Team investigating the site, as well as the traffic flow in the wider area, and looking to identify funding before returning to a future meeting with a detailed report.

Members agreed that this issue needed to be properly researched and discussed by officers from Birmingham City Council and Warwickshire County Council, with Member involvement if necessary, and once engineering solutions had been identified, funding could be considered.

3. Changes to primary school priority areas in North Nuneaton

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families seeking to inform Members of the response to the consultation with stakeholders on proposals to change the priority areas of some primary schools in North Nuneaton. It also asks for any comments that the Area Committee wishes to make to Cabinet.

Phil Astle noted the following points:

- a. In addition to the responses outlined in the report, a response had been received from Michael Drayton Junior School Council noting their support for the proposal and asking if there would be any transition arrangements during the changes proposed, particularly in terms of siblings. Phil Astle noted that the Directorate did not believe there would be a requirement for any transition arrangements and no priority claim would be lost through the proposed changes.
- b. Responses received had been generally positive.
- c. As schools in North Warwickshire as well as north Nuneaton were affected, legal advice was for the decision to be made by Cabinet.

Members thanked Phil Astle and his team for the work that had been done in reaching the proposal, noting that while there would be some challenges, responses received to date had been generally positive and the proposal offered the best solution possible. The County Council would do as much as it could to alleviate any problems that arose.

Resolved that the Area Committee:

- (1) endorses the proposal to change the priority areas of primary schools in North Nuneaton and the responses to the consultation received from stakeholders, and
- (2) requests that the comments above be forwarded to the Cabinet.

4. Capital Programme for Transport 2008-09

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy setting out the proposed 2008-09 Capital Programmes for Integrated Transport for the North Warwickshire Area. Julia Brook noted that the information provided in the report had been discussed by Members at the Transport Seminar held in January.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

1. Councillor Mick Stanley, local Member for Newton Regis, welcomed the provision of a pedestrian link to the rear of Newton Regis Primary School. He asked for the details to be provided to him of how the buses would park under the new arrangements.
2. Councillor Richard Grant, local Member for Hartshill, was pleased to note that the problems in Woodlands had been resolved
3. Members requested a report to the next meeting of the Area Committee giving full details following the review of the A and B Roads.
4. Councillor Peter Fowler requested a general update on projects in his area.

Resolved that Members:

1. Support the Capital Programme for Integrated Transport for North Warwickshire area given in Table 1.
2. Agree that the schemes listed in Table 2 be progressed and that the decision regarding the remainder of the LTP Integrated Transport Delegated Budget be deferred until the actions detailed in Table 3 have been completed.
3. Agreed that the scheme in Table 5 be removed from the list of requests.

5. C7/01 Station Road Rail Bridge Polesworth – Road Over Rail Safety Scheme

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy relating to the proposed introduction of permanent traffic signals and road restraint barriers on the bridge

approaches together with measures to protect the weak bridge deck edges and parapets. The measures would mitigate the risk of errant vehicles reaching the railway. The proposed changes would permit wide farm vehicles to continue to use the bridge.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

1. Members welcomed the report and positive outcome, which demonstrated that the Area Committee had listened to and taken into account the farmers' points of view.
2. Members thanked officers for their contribution to finding a better solution and a good result.
3. Christine Lambert advised Members that there had been an article in the Tamworth Herald about a new gantry at Polesworth Bridge. This had nothing to do with Warwickshire County Council and any complaints received should be directed to Network Rail.

Resolved:

That Members approve the proposal for a modified scheme to limit incursion onto the railway. The original scheme has been modified to address the concerns raised by users of the bridge.

6. Report of the Funding Sub-Group

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development informing the Area Committee of papers submitted to the Funding Sub-Group in relation to new applications and reports relating to previous allocations of grants.

Members thanked Alistair for the work he had done over the year, which had successfully funded many small groups across the Borough.

Resolved:

Social Inclusion Fund

1. That the applications from Hartshill Rugby Club and Shustoke Allotments (Appendix A and B) be approved.

Well-Being Fund

2. That the application for the Well Being Fund in relation to 'Helping Communities through Voluntary Action' (Appendix C) be approved for a period of three years, with funding for year 2 and 3 to be subject to reporting on an annual basis and early enough for consideration for the following financial year.
3. That the End of Year Project report in relation to Healthier Lifestyles (Appendix D) be noted.

End of Year Position

4. That the end of year position (Appendix E) in relation to the administration of grants in North Warwickshire be noted.

7. Use of the Area Committee Grants Funds 2008-09

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development asking for the Committee's views on the use of Area Committee Grants Funds in 2008-09.

Nick Gower-Johnson noted that the County Council's recent Value for Money Review of Community Development had highlighted a number of areas where improvements could be made in terms of Area Committee Funds. An Area Committee Chairs' Briefing had been held, where it was agreed that the way funding was organised should be simplified, possibly through the merging of the Social Inclusion and Well-Being Funds.

Resolved:

That all Members supported the proposals to preserve the Community Development Fund and to merge the Social Inclusion and Well-Being Funds on condition that each Area Committee be given their own flexibilities to determine how funding was allocated.

8. Provisional Items for Future Meetings

The Committee agreed the provisional items identified for the meeting scheduled for 21 May 2008 with the inclusion of the following report:-
Report on the Outcomes of the Review of A and B Roads.

9. Any Other Items

It was agreed that the meeting scheduled for 9 July 2008 would be moved to Wednesday 16 July 2008.

Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday 21 May 2008 at the Council Chamber, North Warwickshire Borough Council offices.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 6.50 p.m.