

The **NUNEATON & BEDWORTH AREA COMMITTEE** met in the **CONFERENCE ROOM, ELIOT PARK INNOVATION CENTRE, 4 BARLING WAY, NUNEATON** on 26 July 2006

Present:

Councillor Barry Longden (Chair)
“ Kam Singh (Vice Chair)
“ John Burton
“ Richard Chattaway
“ Alan Farnell
“ John Haynes
“ Pat Henry
“ Bob Hicks
“ Mick Jones
“ Frank McCarney
“ John Ross
“ June Tandy
“ Sid Tooth

Officers:

Inspector Peter Blackburn, Warwickshire Police.
Andrea Buckley, Performance and Development Directorate.
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate.
Alison Hallworth, Adult and Community Team Leader, Performance and Development Directorate.
Heather Shearer, Area Manager, Performance and Development Directorate.
John Scouller, Head of Skills, Tourism and Economy, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Pam Williams, Area Administrative Officer, Performance and Development Directorate.

Also in attendance: Ann Heckels and Simon Crews (Acute Services Review Board), Mr. Alan Breed, Mr. Davies (Sustrans) and **Councillor** Michael McMahon (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council).

1. General

(1) Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Martin Healy.

(2) Declarations of interest

Declarations of interest were recorded as follows -

- (a) Councillor Mick Jones – Prejudicial interest in item 2, Acute Services Review, because he was employed by UC24 on behalf of the Primary Care Trust. Councillor Jones left the room during discussion of this item.
- (b) Councillor Bob Hicks – Prejudicial interest in item 2, Acute Services Review, because his wife was employed at the George Eliot Hospital. Councillor Hicks left the room during discussion of this item.
- (c) Councillor John Ross – Personal interest in item 2, Acute Services Trust as Member of Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (d) Councillor Frank McCarney – Personal interest as former Chair of the PCT and Chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (e) Councillors Pat Henry and John Ross declared personal interests relating to any item on the agenda by virtue of them serving as Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Councillors.

2. A Summary of the Coventry and Warwickshire Acute Services Review Consultation Proposals.

(Councillors Mick Jones and Bob Hicks left the room during discussion of this item.)

(Ann Heckles and Simon Crews, Acute Services Review Board attended for this item).

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development.

The report provided a summary of the key proposals from the Acute Services Review Consultation Document, which went out to public consultation on the 15th June 2006 for 14 weeks and finished on the 21st September 2006. The Health OSC was asking the Committee to consider the benefits and drawbacks of the proposals being made for their local area looking specifically at access to services and transport.

Following a question and answer session (see Appendix A below) the following concerns were highlighted -

- (1) Public Transport - The Review had not taken into account the need to provide transport for people who did not have their own transport. Concern that access from many areas in Nuneaton and Bedworth required several bus changes on route to the UHCW.
- (2) 24 hour Emergency Service - What would happen to patients who required emergency treatment during the night at George Eliot Hospital? Concern for patients if an emergency occurred and they needed to be transferred to UHCW during the night.
- (3) Use of Specialist Clinicians at UHCW – Concern that reduction of specialist staff at George Eliot Hospital was a prior indication of hospital closures.
- (4) Area of Deprivation – The Review had not considered the high level of deprivation in Nuneaton and Bedworth, which required high-level services to reduce health inequalities.
- (5) Funding procedures – Payment by Results (PbR) - if services were reduced this would lead to a downward spiral in the number of procedures and a consequent reduction in income generated preventing George Eliot from addressing its funding shortfall.
- (6) Good work of George Eliot - the good work carried out by the George Eliot Hospital was not publicised and clouded by funding shortfalls.

Resolved that the Committee –

- (1) Asks that its comments and concerns on the benefits and drawbacks of the proposals being made by the Acute Services Review for their local area looking specifically at access to services and transport be referred to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (2) Asks that its comments be fed into the formal consultation process
- (3) States that, in response to public concern, it does not accept the Acute Services Review proposals and wishes to retain the George Eliot Hospital as a 24-hour facility and without any reduction in other services.

3. (1) Minutes of the Meeting of 24 June 2006 and Matters Arising

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Funding of Projects to address the Nuneaton and Bedworth Community Plan - Minute 10 Any Other Business

The Chair reported that the deficit agreed at the last meeting had been reduced to £1,025 from £2,040, agreed at the previous meeting.

The Committee noted the reduced allocation of funding to the Community Panel from the Nuneaton and Bedworth Well-Being Fund (£1,025 instead of £2,040).

(2) Chair's correspondence and announcements

None

4. Public Question Time

PART A Non-Executive Functions

None

PART B Executive Functions

5. Weddington Road Cycle Scheme

John Scouller presented the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy. The report outlined a proposal to develop a new cycle route to link the Weddington area of Nuneaton to the town centre. The proposed scheme included widening a section of footway in the vicinity of the Leicester Road bridge and on the south of the Weddington Road to allow conversion to a shared use footway/cycleway. Early approval of this conversion by Area Committee was sought to allow co-ordination of the scheme with the programmed works on the Regent Street/Leicester Road junction as part of the Nuneaton Development Project.

John Scouller then invited comments on a proposal to widen the footpath to 3.0m over the Leicester Road Bridge to accommodate an unsegregated cycle/footway, which included re-alignment of the kerblines at the junctions, both ends of the bridge and circulated a map to illustrate the scheme. He advised Members that, if they approved the scheme, this could be carried out immediately, as part of the improvements that were currently being undertaken.

During discussion Members welcomed the Weddington Road cycle scheme but expressed concern about the location of the Toucan Crossing because of

its proximity to the access to Do-it-All premises. It was considered that a safer and more appropriate location was nearer to Old Hinckley Road.

Further discussion followed on the Leicester Road Bridge_(segregated cycle/footway scheme) and the following comments were noted –

(i) concern was expressed:

- (a) That widening the footway to 3.0m to accommodate an unsegregated cycle/footway was an insufficient width for the purpose proposed and unsafe taking account of the volume of traffic over the bridge.
- (b) About the steep slopes and tightness of the junctions either side of the bridge.

(ii) Comments from –

- (a) Mr. Davis (Sustrans) suggested that the Committee approve the scheme subject to a satisfactory safety audit being carried out.
- (b) Mr. Alan Breed suggested utilising the pedestrian underpass (if it was still in use).

The Chair reported comments he had received from Councillor Tom Wilson who was opposed to the dual-use footway, because it would be dangerous for pedestrians and especially hazardous for those disabled people in wheelchairs/mobility carriages and pupils of Etone and Higham Lane Schools. Councillor Wilson was concerned about cyclists not being visible to other footway users and not using a bell to indicate their presence. Additionally, discussions were currently taking place between the Borough Council, County Council and Police regarding the need for a taxi rank in this area to try and relieve problems associated with the nightclub.

John Scouller reported that Warwickshire Road Safety Audit was happy with the scheme and the 3.0m width for the dual-use footway. He accepted that the tightness of the junctions was a safety issue. He undertook to report Members' comments back to the scheme designer

Resolved, 5 Members voting in favour and 6 against (on the casting vote of the Chair) that the Area Committee approves the conversion of sections of footway on Leicester Road and Weddington Road, which are highlighted on the plan in Appendix B to a shared use footway/cycleway.

6. Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Business Plan 2006-07

Heather Shearer presented the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development and introduced the Area Business Plan for 2006/07. She reminded the Committee of the request made at the previous meeting for a progress report on targets that had not been achieved and said that this would be brought to the Committee's September meeting.

Councillor John Haynes, referring to page 3 of Appendix A, said that the feasibility study for identifying site for the development of a Children's Centre was well ahead. Councillor Frank McCarney reported on the success of the Children's Centre at Bedworth, which was a welcomed addition to that area.

Resolved that the Area Committee –

- (1) approves the Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Business Plan 2006/07;
- (2) records its concern that Members do not understand Local Area Agreements.

7. Safer Neighbourhood Policing Areas

Heather Shearer presented the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development. The Committee was asked to note the recommendations to Cabinet regarding Warwickshire Police proposals for operational deployment of their resources on a neighbourhood area basis.

During discussion the following comments were noted:

- (1) That Members should have been better informed about the Safe Neighbourhood Policing Area proposals and concern was expressed about the lack of consultation. (Councillor June Tandy reported that her area had been chosen as a "pilot scheme" and that immediately prior to the meeting she had invited to the first PACT public meeting the following week).
- (2) That the proposals would raise expectations in the community that could not be met because of budgetary constraints and because community priorities might cut across, or conflict with, County Council policy. Members were concerned that they would be placed in a difficult position if they were unable to deliver because of budgetary and policy constraints.
- (3) The impact the proposal would have on Members' time and add to their already heavy workload.
- (4) That the proposal might have a detrimental effect on the current satisfactory relationship, which existed in some communities between, elected Members, residents and the Police.
- (5) That the timescale for implementation of the Partners and Communities Together process (PACT) was tight it being noted that Members had been informed that the first scheme in Nuneaton was a "pilot scheme".
- (6) How would this initiative be affected by the Government's change of direction of the Police Reform Bill?

In response Inspector Peter Blackburn advised that the “pilot” scheme referred to by Councillor Tandy was the start of the process of rolling out the Safer Neighbourhoods initiative. The first PACT area be introduced in the Abbey and Wem Brook area, followed by the Weddington/St. Nicolas/Whitestone area and the new arrangements would be in place for a November 2006 launch. This timescale had been agreed, in consultation with County Council officers, the previous year. The halt of the Police Reform Bill would not affect this initiative.

Kathy Robinson offered her assistance and invited Members to contact her with their views on the Safer Neighbourhood Area.

Resolved that the Area Committee:

- (1) Notes the proposals put forward by Warwickshire Police for operational deployment of their resources on a neighbourhood area basis.
- (2) Notes the resolution of Cabinet that whilst these are not appropriate structures for locality working for the County Council, we will continue dialogue with the Police and the Police Authority as to how we can make our locality approaches effective together.
- (3) Makes such comment as it thinks appropriate on the contents of this report.
- (4) Notes that a further report will be brought to the Committee in due course to ensure its active engagement regarding the definition of the Council’s structures for locality working.

8. Future Agenda Items

Resolved, having considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development, that the Committee agrees the schedule of reports at future meeting as indicated subject to the inclusion of the following items –

- (1) Bus Rapid Transport.
- (2) Local Area Agreements

9. Any Other Business

The Chair agreed to the following items of urgent business.

10. Phase 3 Nuneaton Ring Road Development

The Chair reported that there would be an informal meeting of the Committee immediately before the next formal meeting to discuss Phase 3 of the Nuneaton Ring Road Development.

Resolved to hold this informal meeting at 4:45 pm. on Wednesday 20

September, 2006 (before the formal meeting at 6:00 p.m.)

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Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 8:50 p.m.