

The **NUNEATON & BEDWORTH AREA COMMITTEE** met in the **CONFERENCE ROOM, ELIOT PARK INNOVATION CENTRE, 4 BARLING WAY, NUNEATON** on 20 September 2006

Present:

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

Officers:

Bill Basra, Corporate Partnership Officer, Performance and Development Directorate.
Andrea Buckley, Performance and Development Directorate.
Acting Inspector Steve Hall, Warwickshire Police.
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate.
Alison Hallworth, Adult and Community Team Leader, Performance and Development Directorate.
Adrian Litvinof, Area Manager North, Warwickshire Library and Information Service.
Ade Mallaban, Area Risk Manager, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service.
Nigel Mills, Area Schools and Community Officer, Nuneaton and Bedworth.
Kathy Robison, Area Community Safety Manager North, Community Protection Directorate.

Heather Shearer, Area Manager,
Performance and Development
Directorate.

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

Lee White, Special Transport Projects
Sponsor, Environment and Economy
Directorate.

Chief Superintendent Inspector David
Whitehouse, Warwickshire Police

Pam Williams, Area Administrative
Officer, Performance and Development
Directorate.

Also in attendance: Mr. Alan Breed.

1. General

(1) Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mick Jones.

(2) Declarations of interest

Declarations of interest were recorded as follows -

- (a) Councillors Bob Hicks and John Haynes – Personal interests in 7, “Scenes Revisited” – Celebration of George Eliot in 2007 as members of the George Eliot Partnership.
- (b) 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. (1) Minutes of the Meeting of 26 July 2006 and Matters Arising

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee meeting held on 26 July 2006 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Matters Arising

None

(2) Chair’s correspondence and announcements

None

3. Public Question Time

None

PART A Non-Executive Functions

None

PART B Executive Functions

4. Safer Neighbourhoods Policing.

Chief Superintendent David Whitehouse outlined the Government's timescale for bringing in Safer Neighbourhoods Policing, which he said had been brought forward from April 2008 to April 2007. To enable this the Government had allocated additional funding. The reason for bringing this initiative forward to 2006 for Warwickshire was regardless of the Police reform agenda and the proposed merger with the West Midlands Police Force not now happening the proposals for Warwickshire were considered to be so embedded that the initiative should continue to be progressed with a launch in November 2006, with a view to being fully operational by 2008.

CS David Whitehouse then gave a presentation on the proposals for safer neighbourhood policing (presentation material attached). He explained that there would be a total of 31 Safer Neighbourhood areas and teams primarily based on Warwickshire Wards, 8 teams being shared by Nuneaton and Bedworth with the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) for the county being increased from 63 (currently) to 124 for which additional Government funding has been made available. He had made initial contact with the Head Teachers of Camphill and Manor Park Schools with a view to piloting the first scheme from their schools and this had been well received.

In reply to questions CS Whitehouse said that -

- 2 yr tenure contracts for Police Officer would be introduced to combat criticism about frequent turnover of Police Officers.
- In the event of a serious incident occurring Police Officers could be pulled off and sent to another force. There would, however be an abstraction level that could be scrutinised.
- There was no expectation that PCSOs would be provided with cycles because it was considered that it was better for them to walk round the area.
- Concerns about individual areas not being compatible with adjacent areas and not being joined together could be

accommodated and a similar situation was currently being looked at in Warwick.

- Concerns about raising expectations in the community were also shared by the Police and acknowledged and these would need to recognise as issues to be addressed as a part of partnership working.

During further discussion the following comments were noted –

- (1) The location of a Police base in the local community was welcomed;
- (2) Partnership working needed to be improved in order to address issues that impacted on the wide range of services that existed in the community;
- (3) The concerns expressed at the previous meeting should be taken on board in progressing the policing areas;
- (4) The launch should be followed by a timetable setting out how it would be spread out through the county.
- (5) The CPSO were considered to be doing an excellent job but if they did not received adequate backup from the police the scheme would fail.
- (6) The setting up of website and information sharing for each area was welcomed.

The Chair thanked Chief Superintendent Whitehouse and Acting Inspector Steve Hall for their attendance and presentation.

5. Bus Rapid Transit Project “Sprint” – Outcome of Public Consultation and Next Steps.

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy. The report detailed the outcome of the public consultation on the Bus Rapid Transit “Sprint” proposals for Nuneaton and Bedworth and recommends the next steps to be taken.

Mr. Alan Breed said that his comments related to within the Borough only. Mr. Breed said that he approved of a direct public transport route between Nuneaton and Leamington and of the two alternatives he expressed support for option B1. He then put forward proposals for improving the scheme at Coton Arches and College Street and relating to the provision of access to Nuneaton Bus Station from Bond Street.

During discussion the following points were highlighted –

- (1) That the buses that would be used for the “Sprint” service would be “normal” size and run on the existing road.

- (2) The possible benefit of achieving the Bedworth “Diamond” was welcomed.
- (3) The possibility of extending the service into the Bermuda Business Park should be investigated.
- (4) The scheme was welcomed, but the environmental effect on residents living close to the A44 should be addressed.

Resolved that the Area Committee supports the principle of –

- (1) Running “Sprint” to Nuneaton and Bedworth on existing roads and requests that Officers investigate in detail the costs and benefits of “Sprint” running on public roads to Nuneaton and Bedworth.
- (2) Completing the Bedworth “Diamond” road junction as part of the “Sprint” scheme.

6. Proposed Event Day Residents Parking Scheme in Ash Green.

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy outlining the proposal to introduce a Residents Parking Scheme to operate on days when events occur at the Ricoh Arena. Two amendments to the scheme were proposed in response to objections.

Resolved that the Ash Green Event Day Residents Parking Scheme be implemented as advertised, with the amendments as detailed.

7. “Scenes Revisited” – Celebration of George Eliot in 2007

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Adult Health and Community Services. The report outlined that the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, the George Eliot Fellowship and Warwickshire County Council were working together to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of George Eliot’s first public work of fiction ‘Scenes of Clerical Life’. The three short novellas were closely set in Nuneaton and provided a unique opportunity to promote interest in the history of the community in the early 19th Century. The partners sought the support of the Area Committee for the initiative.

Resolved that the Area Committee –

- (1) Send a letter to the Heritage Lottery Fund in support of the application.

- (2) Nominate Councillor Bob Hicks to represent the Area Committee as a Stakeholder.

8. Review of Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Business Plan 2005-06.

Heather Shearer presented the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development.

The report reviewed the actions from the Area Business Plan 2005/06 that Members requested a report on at their meeting on 24 May. Also reports on the performances indicators for 2005/06.

During discussion and in reply to concerns expressed about disappointing results under the School Improvement Strategy Nigel Mills explained that the figures shown were for the Academic Year 2004/05 and results for some schools for 2005/06 had shown a greater rate of improvement than the rest of the county.

Members commented further as follows –

- That some schools in the Borough had excellent Ofsted Inspections and other showed continuous improvement.
- The hard work and dedication of the teaching staff should be commended.
- A decrease in the number of children travelling to school by car would be welcomed.
- That the good work highlighted in blue and green in the report should also recognised.

Resolved that the Area Committee notes the comments from Directorates and the Performance Indicators for 2005/06.

9. Development of the Warwickshire Local Area Agreement (LAA)

Bill Basra presented the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development and invited views on how Members could be engaged in the process.

The report summarised progress made to date in relation to the development of the Warwickshire LAA. A first draft LAA had been distributed to Committee Members for comment before the meeting.

During discussion Members commented –

- That there were still aspects of the LAA that were not understood particularly relating to the practicalities of how they would operate and be managed.
- On whether the targets and outcomes would be legally binding and whether partners could be held to account, or their contribution scrutinised, if they did not deliver.
- The Government had stated that there had been no partnership working over the years and that the County Council should take the lead in engaging partners at executive level, which was essential in the provision of good services.
- That partner organisations would lose funding if they did not commit to partnership working.

In reply to Members' concerns about lack of understanding about LAA Heather Shearer offered to arrange a workshop to help better understanding about governance and sharing resources.

Resolved that Committee -

- (1) Notes the current position in relation to the development of the Warwickshire LAA.
- (2) Makes such comments as it considers appropriate in relation to the first draft LAA (to be distributed on or about 8 September 2006).

10. Future Agenda Items

Resolved, having considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development, that the Area Committee agrees the schedule of reports at future meeting as indicated.

11. Any Other Business

There were no items of urgent business.

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Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 7:50 p.m.