

The **RUGBY AREA COMMITTEE** met at the **TOWN HALL, RUGBY** on the **14th SEPTEMBER 2005**.

Present:-

Councillor John Vereker (Chair)

“ Heather Timms (Vice Chair)

“ Tom Cavanagh

“ Richard Dodd

“ Katherine King

“ Brian Levy

“ Philip Morris-Jones

“ Jerry Roodhouse

“ Ian Smith

“ John Wells

Officers:-

Bill Basra, Corporate Review Officer, Chief Executive's Dept

Peter Endall, Principal Solicitor

Neil Gulliver, Principal Committee Administrator

Tom Hook, Community Partnership Officer

Steve Hussey, Rugby Community Safety Manager

Kit Leck, DAT Commissioning Manager

David Lynn, Head of Warwickshire Engineering

Spencer Payne, Community Safety Information Analyst

Claire Wildsmith, Area Administrative Officer

Paul Williams, Area Support Co-Ordinator

6 members of the public.

1. **General**

1. Apologies

An apology was received from Councillor Gordon Collett.

2. Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillors Tom Cavanagh, Richard Dodd, Heather Timms, Jerry Roodhouse, Ian Smith and Heather Timms declared personal interests in any issue raised at the meeting affecting Rugby Borough Council of which they were Members.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on the 28th July 2005 and Matters Arising

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting of the Rugby Area Committee held on the 28th July 2005 be approved and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

2. Public Question Time

1. Question from Lillian Pallikaropoulos

It would appear from the WCC planning files, and the Environment Agency Public Register, that WCC has given permission for a 6,000 tonne daily production in the cement plant in Rugby, which requires a total of about 1,200 heavy Lorries through the town and along Lawford Road each and every day. That equates to about one a minute, but there are more in the daytime hours, and less at night. Rugby Borough Council has written to say that the plant has nothing to do with them, and that the County Council has permitted it here, and thus is the responsible body. WCC has presumably considered all the issues carefully before granting permission for this, and I would like to ask by what exact process you arrived at this "unacceptable" decision, and how you think the total overall pollution, and 1,200 HGVs and the loss of amenity, serves to enhance the environment, air quality and health of Rugby residents?

In 2003 the WCC also gave the plant permission to become a CO-INCINERATOR by the grant of a planning permission for the equipment necessary to feed wastes into the plant, and now we have a cement plant whose main purpose is to make cement (6,000 tonnes a day of it) and the other purpose is to "dispose of waste". The WCC now has a pre-application in for the fitting of bag filters to allow, according to the application, "to meet the Waste Incinerator Directive emission limits for the the increased use of various types and quantities of wastes and to allow for the increased production" caused by the new pipeline that RBC says is the County's problem. What environmental impact assessment and measures are you going to take to protect the people of Rugby before you allow the plant to increase the use of all wastes, and to increase the production up to the annual design capacity of 2 million tonnes, up from what it is currently about 105,000 tonne a month, to the permitted 180,000 tonne a month?

this proposal as a possible solution to the problems highlighted.

Response from Ian Marriot, Principal Solicitor, Warwickshire County Council for County Solicitor & Assistant Chief Executive provided at a later date:

I have been asked to reply to the questions which you put to the Rugby Area Committee on 14th September because they are similar to questions put in a recent letter from Richard Buxton in the context of ongoing and prospective legal proceedings.

In response to your first question:

The process is set out in the planning files that you have inspected on several occasions and particularly in the committee reports and minutes for the decisions in 1996. I am aware (e.g. from your e mail to various officers and councillors on 24th August this year) that you have a detailed knowledge of these records and I am not sure what we can add about the decision-making process.

We do not think that pollution and heavy goods vehicles add to the quality of residential life and your suggestion that we do caricatures the reasoning behind planning decisions. As a planning authority, we have to consider the nature and extent of environmental impacts, in the context of mitigating and offsetting measures, and balance that against all other material considerations.

In response to your second question:

We have issued a "screening opinion" requiring submission of an environmental statement and I know from your correspondence with Mrs. Kaur that you are in the process of examining the submitted statement. With the application only recently validated and registered, it would be premature to attempt to identify what other measures might be taken at this stage.

For the record, we did not issue a permission for the plant to become a co-incinerator. As you know, it was our view that the co-incineration proposed did not amount to a change of use requiring planning permission. I appreciate that you regard granting permission for the conveyor and hopper as tantamount to permitting co-incineration but it is important to be precise on this point.

I should say that we do not recognise the specific figures that you quote about vehicle movements and production capacity and this response should not be taken as confirming those figures.

2. Question from Councillor Claire Watson

Could this committee please inform me when the new road signs will be erected along the Lawford Heath Lane? Members will maybe recall that in the minutes of the meeting of 16th June 2005 it was stated that the signs were scheduled for installation in July. It is now September and there is still no 'sign' of them.

Response provided by David Lynn, Department of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy

Mrs. Watson is quite correct, in June the works were scheduled for July. Unfortunately, due to other pressing work and staff turnover in Design Services, this was not possible.

Our apologies for this. Discussions with Carillion indicate that we should now be on site by the end of October.

(2B) Question from Councillor Pat Wyatt

I would like to support the above question and would also like to draw member's attention to the following resolution agreed by Rugby Borough Full Council in February 2005, I proposed the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Wright and it was resolved that –

Due to the long and fatal accident history on the C87 Lawford Heath Lane this Council:

1. Express its support for the actions of Warwickshire County Council to introduce accident reduction measures along the entirety of this road;
2. Urge Warwickshire Police to install static speed cameras at accident blackspots along the route; and
3. Ask Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Police to introduce a speed limit without delay.

Response provided by David Lynn, Department of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy

1. The scheme is being constructed this year;
 2. Although there have been a number of injury accidents on this road (which is why the Casualty Reduction scheme is to go in) there are no specific 'black spot' locations. The road would not satisfy the very onerous requirements required to justify a fixed speed camera
 3. The question of a lower speed limit was investigated. However, Lawford Heath Lane is essentially a rural road with a small number of frontage properties. In line with current County Council policy, it was not considered that a lower speed limit would be appropriate, an assessment in which we were supported by the police.
3. **Question from Councillor Tony Gillias**

I would like to thank Paul Cowley for organising various drainage jobs in and around the village of Pailton.

However, since becoming one of the members for the Fosse Ward on the Rugby Borough Council, I am becoming increasingly concerned about the acute issue surrounding blocked drains, gullies etc. Some the drains highlighted to David Lynn back in 2002 still remain blocked and overgrown.

I was assured that all gullies are emptied every 12months, this is certainly not the case. There seems to be a trend for heavy short showers which create some flooding, where sections of roadway are left with dangerous pools of water remaining long after it has stopped raining. The drains need to be clear in order to get water away as quickly as

possible. It seems that current procedures are by no means adequate to maintain the drains and deal effectively with this increasing problem. It should not be necessary to have to highlight these issues on such a regular basis.

Please let our communities know how this is going to improve in the future before major flooding takes place and accidents occur.

Response provided by David Lynn, Department of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy

In accordance with Highway Maintenance Policy, all gulleys in the County should be emptied once a year. Last year Carillion did not complete the programme with approximately 6,000 out of 90,000 not emptied this financial year. The remaining gulleys have now been emptied. We do have problems with some gulleys, which are blocked and the procedure is that a particular site is reported back to our area team for action. We also have some problems with old narrow gulleys, which are difficult to clean.

The questioner makes a fair point about the affect of blocked drains and gulleys and the affect it has on the road network. We have noticed particularly in the last few years that we are experiencing torrential downpours which cause difficulties on the network. As a consequence this year we have allocated two dedicated area response teams to cover the County and they are working their way clearing backlogs of drainage work.

4. Questions from Mrs Carter

A. Road and Footpath Conditions

Following my question submitted to the July Area Committee the vegetation on the footpath from the Wharf to Revel Prison College has been cut back. The path is not 12" wide in places and has disintegrated towards the ditch. What are Mr Cowley's intentions to do about this please?

Also, nothing has been done to stop the flooding in Smeaton Lane near the B4455 junction happening. Tree routes, dirt and rubbish are blocking it, there is also potholes and roadside disintegration in Smeaton Lane.

Response from David Lynn (PTES)

With regards to a footway near Revel Prison College the Area Surveyor has recently inspected the work and reported to Paul Cowley last week that the siding out work is now complete (Work completed on August 31st). However, he reported that the condition of the footway where vegetation has been removed will probably need some attention in the near future.

With regards to Smeaton Lane the Area Surveyor has raised an order on 19 August 2005 for the jetting crew to clean out and unblock the gullies. He was informed that they will be coming into our area on September 19th. The state of the road is acceptable and Smeaton Lane has been listed for next year's possible Surface Dressing Programme.

B. Speeding and Signage

At last Area Committee we re-iterated a request for signs for the B4455 to the junction with the B4027. We have not seen anyone looking into the problem. All we are asking for is for extra signs down the Fosse Way (B4455). If something is not done, we feel that someone will die.

Response from David Lynn (PTES):

At the Area Committee meeting on 27 July 2005, members were not entirely satisfied with the responses given to Mrs Carter, of Stretton under Fosse Parish Council in respect of road safety at this junction.

The section of road in question is the southbound approach on the B4455 to the junction with the B4027. It has therefore been carefully re-examined by an experienced safety engineer.

The B4455 approach is straight and downhill, before it turns sharply left up to the Give Way line. There is excellent visibility in both directions at the junction with the B4027. In sequence, the signing on the B4455 approach is as follows:

1. A large map type direction sign about half a mile from the junction. This clearly shows that the B4455 turns left as it reaches the junction.
2. A warning sign of the Give Way sign with a '140 yds' plate.
3. A SLOW marking on the road by sign 2.

4. A left-indicating chevron board in direct line of sight of drivers approaching the turn to the left.

5. The usual Give Way sign at the junction.

This level of signing is considered to be quite adequate in comparison with other similar junctions in the County.

Additional signing would have been considered before now by the Safety Engineering team if the junction had a significant accident problem. However, an examination of the accident records shows that in the three years up to June 2005, there has been only 1 injury accident at or near this junction. Furthermore, this particular accident did not involve any vehicles approaching the junction on the B4455. Indeed, it is necessary to go back to April 2000 to find the last injury accident which involved a vehicle approaching the junction on the B4455. With limited funding for Casualty Reduction, it is therefore not considered that there is any justification for using any of the budget on works at this location. To do so would deflect funding from carrying out works at locations which already have significant accident problems.

However, our records do show that following earlier correspondence with the Chair of the Parish Council, it was agreed that 'sign 2' above, the Give Way warning sign, would be replaced with a similar sign with a yellow backing board. Due to an oversight, this

has not yet been done, for which we apologise. It will be put in hand as soon as possible.

C. Robberies

We have still not heard anything about the robberies, which happened in the village of Stretton under Fosse this year and last year. Has anything happened since the last meeting?

Also, following the murder in Withybrook, only 2 miles way, what do Police intend to do? We are vulnerable out in the countryside.

Response from CI Diane Vicary:

We have researched the above question and found that there have been no incidents classified as 'robberies' in Stretton recently. The incidents we have recorded are classified as 'burglary other', for example sheds, outhouses and similar. If there are no witnesses or other information to follow up then the crimes are reported to the Crime Desk and no Officer will attend.

The murder at Withybrook was a tragic incident and the investigation is ongoing with one person, quickly identified and charged with the offence. This was due to the dedication of the specialist team (which were abstracted from normal frontline duties) as well as the co-operation and information received from the community. I am very aware of the concerns of the rural community, who feel very vulnerable. This type of violent incident is rare and resulted from person/s entering property with the intention to steal from the property. All rural areas are patrolled regularly by Police and PCSO's although there is a perception that this is not the case. Police rely on information from the community in order to anticipate growing trends in crime or hot-spot areas. The reality is it is impossible to resource vast areas of countryside at any one time. I wish to reassure the rural/farming community that a great deal of work is done by intelligence officers to pre-empt strikes by 'roving' criminals and resources are deployed to target the areas of concern. The investigation will highlight areas that can be addressed by the rural community and other agencies, in partnership with the police, to address community concerns.

3. Addressing Crime and Disorder in Rugby

The report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive was considered.

After Steve Hussey had introduced the key elements of the report, a number of members expressed the view that this issue was of such high significance that it merited being discussed at a special meeting of the Committee and that all agencies involved should be invited to attend that meeting.

It was agreed that the officers should make the necessary arrangements for a special meeting of the Committee to consider the report as soon as possible.

4. Final Report of the Drugs, Substance and Alcohol Abuse in Rugby Panel

The report by the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive was considered.

After Bill Basra introduced the report, several members commented on a range of issues highlighted in the report, particularly with regard to the Borough Council's role as licensing authority and the need for the Housing Department of the Borough Council and the Supporting People Team of the County Council to improve the quality of housing support services as part of the rehabilitation programme for people with drugs and alcohol misuse.

It was then Resolved:-

That the Area Committee notes the final report of the Drugs, Substance and Alcohol Misuse in Rugby Panel and that progress against the Action Plan be monitored on a regular basis.

5. Any Other Items

David Lynn - Head of Warwickshire Engineering

The Chair reminded Members that this was David Lynn's last meeting and thanked him on their behalf for all valuable support and work and wished him a long and happy retirement.

6. Future Business Items

were noted.

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Chair of Committee

The meeting closed at 8.10pm