

The **RUGBY AREA COMMITTEE** met at the **TOWN HALL, RUGBY** on the **11 JANUARY 2006**.

Present:-

Councillor Heather Timms (Vice Chair)(In the Chair)

“ Tom Cavanagh

“ Gordon Collett

“ Richard Dodd

“ Katherine King

“ Brian Levy

“ Philip Morris-Jones

“ Jerry Roodhouse

“ Ian Smith

“ John Wells

Officers:-

Jo Cooper, Principal Access Officer, Dept of Planning, Transport & Economic Strategy

Nick Darwen, Area Manager

Peter Endall, Senior Solicitor

Brian Follett, Group Engineer, Dept of Planning, Transport & Economic Strategy

Mark Gore, Assistant County Education Officer

Neil Gulliver, Principal Committee Administrator

Alwin McGibbon, Health Scrutiny Officer

Roger Newham, Acting Head of Transport Planning Unit, Dept of Planning, Transport & Economic Strategy

Peter Thompson, Senior Area Education Officer

Claire Wildsmith, Area Administrative Officer

Oliver Winters, Head of Financial Planning & Pensions

6 members of the public.

1. **Budget 2006/07**

Oliver Winters gave a briefing on the County Council's budget prospects and responded to a number of questions from members of the public and elected members.

2. **General**

1. **Apologies**

were received from Councillor John Vereker and Ian Davis, Rugby Borough Council.

2. Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

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

Councillors Richard Dodd and John Wells declared prejudicial interest in Agenda item 5.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on the 9 November 2005 and Matters Arising

Councillor Morris-Jones pointed out that under Question 2 on page 3 of the minutes that Mrs Hunter was a resident of Harborough Magna and not Market Harborough.

It was Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting of the Rugby Area Committee held on the 9 November 2005 as amended be approved and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

3. Public Question Time

Question from Councillor Bill Shields, Rugby Borough Council

In the week of 5 December 2005 an 18 year old man was involved in an accident on the A45 at Willoughby and he died in hospital a short time later. Some time ago I attended a site visit with a Parish Councillor and the speeding traffic struck me as very dangerous. There are several issues regarding the dangers of turning into / out of the villages of Flecknoe and Sawbridge, the visibility of traffic approaching from the Daventry direction and the fact that bus users are required to cross the A45. These issues and others have been previously raised with Warwickshire County Council by the Parish Council but to no avail.

I would therefore like to know what can be done to alleviate the problem of speeding traffic on the A45 Willoughby.

Response from Roger Newham, Department of Planning, Transport & Economic Strategy

We take all road fatalities seriously and the circumstances of this accident have been investigated to determine if the road environment was a contributory factor. The initial view is that it was not. However, when priorities for next year's programme of work for investment in casualty reduction schemes are considered we will review the position of the A45 at Willoughby to determine if investment here is justified and a priority for funding.

We plan to carry out a speed survey as requested by the Parish Council to see if enforcement through the Casualty Reduction Partnership is justified. If it is this may help to reduce speeds.

Councillor Collett added that the white lines need replacing at the Tollgate Junction with the A45 at Grandborough. The addition of rumble strips would also be beneficial. Roger Newham agreed to look into this.

Roger Newham also agreed to inform Members when the speed survey referred to above would take place.

Question from Councillor Ron Ravenhall

Taking into account the very severe parking problems in Dunchurch and the possible future redundancy of the WCC Depot in Southam Road, Dunchurch for Highway purposes, would Area Committee consider recommending to its parent Council that it make provision, either by gift, conveyance, or section 106 planning agreement, for Dunchurch Parish Council, a portion of the depot site for the establishment of desperately needed car parking.

Response from Roger Newham, Department of Planning, Transport & Economic Strategy

If we reach the stage whereby the most appropriate disposal of the site is being considered then this suggestion can certainly be taken into account.

Roger Newham added that it was likely to be some years before the Depot became surplus to requirements and the future of the site would be a matter for the County Councillors to decide upon taking into account all the circumstances, including the aspirations of the locality and also the extent to which use as a car park might detract from the proceeds realised on sale.

Question from Mark Davison

As the western relief road now looks likely to go ahead. Can I and the other residents of Lawford Heath be assured that the plan to impose a 7.5 tonne weight limit on the section of Heath Lane between Lawford Heath Industrial Estate and the junction at Long Lawford on completion of the relief road is still in place?

Can I also ask for myself and every one who uses lane, will the sunken drains, pot holes, bad surface and all the other problems that may cause accidents on this lane be sorted out at the completion of the relief road if not before?

Response from Roger Newham, Department of Planning, Transport & Economic Strategy

1. Weight Limit – We are committed to considering a weight limit on part of Lawford Heath Lane once an alternative route is available. With the recent decision from the Secretary of State in support of the Western Relief Road it appears likely now that it will be opened during the second half of 2008 (subject to full funding being secured). Once the relief road is secured introduction of a weight limit will be considered.
2. Maintenance - The maintenance issues on Lawford Heath Lane are known to us. Several maintenance and safety schemes have been carried out on Lawford Heath Lane in recent years. However, the section between the A428 and the first double bend is in poor condition and is one of our top priorities for maintenance in 2006-07 if funding is forthcoming. In the meantime we will endeavour to keep the road as safe as possible and it is likely we will need to attend the road at regular intervals over the coming months. Once the Relief Road is opened, the use of the Lane by heavy traffic will diminish dramatically reducing the maintenance burden in the long term.

4. Rokeby Primary Schools

The report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families was considered.

Resolved:-

That a special meeting of the Area Committee be held on the 30 January 2006 to discuss the proposal to amalgamate Rokeby Infant and Junior Schools and to submit their recommendations to Cabinet on the 23 February 2006.

Councillor Roodhouse requested that, the meeting on the 30 January, the Committee should have the opportunity to consider all possible options for the future of these schools rather than just the options put forward as part of the consultation process. Mark Gore undertook to see that this information was provided to members.

Councillors Dodd and Wells left the room prior to the consideration of Agenda item 5.

5. Consultation & Appraisal of Proposed Reconfiguration of Coventry and Warwickshire Ambulance NHS Trust

The report by the Strategic Director of Performance and Development was considered.

After Alwin McGibbon had introduced the report, several Members expressed their strong opposition to the proposed reconfiguration of the Ambulance Trust, in particular, with regard to the need to protect the lives of the local community and to retain the three star service which already serves the Rugby area. The Committee requested that their views should be drawn to the attention of the Health O&S Committee and to the Strategic Health Authority.

6. Draft Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Warwickshire

The report by the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy was considered.

Resolved:-

That the Area Committee endorse the draft Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan for submission to Cabinet for formal adoption.

7. Update on Rugby Area Business Plan

The report by the Strategic Director of Performance and Development was considered.

It was agreed that the workshop on crime and disorder scheduled for the 25 January should be postponed until March to enable key individuals from the Police and the Borough Council to attend.

8. Update on Electoral Divisional Panels

The report by the Strategic Director of Performance and Development was noted.

9. Rugby Western Relief Road

The report by the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy was considered.

Councillor Cavanagh, seconded by Councillor Smith, moved and it was Resolved:-

That the Area Committee supports the following proposed amendments to the Rugby Western Relief Road scheme, and authorises any public consultation judged desirable, in

order that the views of Committee and local residents can be reported to Cabinet for a final decision:

1. The provision of a roundabout on the A4071 at the Potford's Dam junction, as set out in Section 3.2 and 4.2 of the report.
2. The potential closure of Bilton Lane to vehicular traffic to the west side of the relief road, as set out in Sections 3.3 and 4.3 of the report.
3. The removal of the pedestrian underpass north of Bilton Lane and alternatively the provision of a Pegasus crossing at Bilton Lane for equestrian users, as set out in Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the report.

Councillor Cavanagh urged the officers in particular to undertake a public consultation on the closure of Bilton Lane as it was important to seek the views of local residents bearing in mind that this would have effect on the overall timescale for the project.

10. Any Other Items

Dates of Future Meetings

In view of the local elections taking place on the 4 May 2006, it was agreed that that meeting should be put back to Wednesday 10 May 2006 at 6.30pm.

11. Future Business Items

At the request of Councillor Morris-Jones, the Chair agreed to ensure that reports on the future of GEC Alstom and Peugeot would be included in the list of future business items.

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Chair of Committee

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm