

The **RUGBY AREA COMMITTEE** met at the **TOWN HALL, RUGBY** on the **13 July 2006**.

Present:-

Councillor John Vereker (Chair)

- “ Tom Cavanagh
- “ Richard Dodd
- “ Katherine King
- “ Brian Levy
- “ Philip Morris-Jones
- “ Ian Smith
- “ John Wells

Officers:-

Nick Darwen, Area Manager, Performance and Development Directorate
Peter Endall, Senior Solicitor, Performance and Development Directorate
Neil Gulliver , Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate
Alwin McGibbon, Health Scrutiny Officer, Performance and Development Directorate
Roger Newham, Chief Transport Planner, Engineering, Environment and Economy Directorate.

Mike Attwood, Chief Executive of the Coventry Primary Care Trust attended for Agenda item 3.

4 Members of the public attended.

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gordon Collett, Jerry Roodhouse and Heather Timms.

(2) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Declarations of interest were recorded as follows –

1. Councillors Tom Cavanagh and Richard Dodd declared personal interests as Members of Rugby Borough Council.
2. Councillor Richard Dodd declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 3 as an employee of the Coventry and Warwickshire Ambulance Trust.

3. Councillors Katherine King, Philip Morris-Jones and John Vereker declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as members of Warwickshire Police Authority.

4. Councillor John Wells declared a personal interest in agenda item 3.

(3) Minutes of the Meeting held on the 10 May 2006 and Matters Arising

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Rugby Area Committee held on the 10 May 2006 be approved and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

Minute 6 – Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement

Ian Smith referred to the proposals for Elsee Road and asked for some assurances that the issues relating to the review of parking restrictions would be reviewed before the new scheme was introduced in October 2006. Councillor King confirmed that as one of the local members for the area, she would monitor the situation.

2. Public Question Time

Question 1 – Ron Ravenhall:

With regard to traffic danger, in general at ‘gateways’ to villages, where they are approached from main roads with 50-60mph speed limits, but Leamington Road Princethorpe in particular, where there are two schools, can some provision be made for additional warning signs, or other traffic calming measures, at an early date?

Response from Roger Newham, Directorate of Environment and Economy

Warwickshire County Council has been carrying out a systematic review of village speed limits, considering each road in alpha-numeric order. The Village Speed Limit Review seeks to introduce sustainable speed limits and considers all villages throughout Warwickshire that do not have a 30mph speed limit. The review of A class roads is completed and consultation and works to villages on ‘B’ class roads is underway.

The village of Princethorpe, including the B4453 Leamington Road is included in the current Village Speed Limit Review programme. A review of the speed limits, new village gateway signs, improvements to warning signs, road markings etc. would all be proposed for the consideration of the Parish Council and residents. A letter was sent to the Parish Council on 20th June 2006 requesting a meeting to discuss the options and way forward for the village.

Question 2 – Anthony Gillias

Can the WCC reassure parents who are sending their young children on a school bus for the first time in September that all buses and coaches will have seatbelts fitted for the children's safety and parents peace of mind. In view that all proactive schools are now promoting less car use? This is particularly the case at The Revel School Monks Kirby.

Response from Nick Williams, Education Partnerships & School Development

The Authority's policy is that we provide home to school transport in the most efficient mode possible. This can be a combination of buses, coaches, minibuses and sometimes taxis. Legislation requires coaches, minibuses and taxis to be fitted with seatbelts but there is no such requirement for buses - defined as vehicles not permitted to exceed 60mph. Although more and more vehicles are fitted with seatbelts there are a significant number of buses operating on County contracts where seatbelts are not fitted. Members have discussed the policy with regard to whether seat belts should be required on all vehicles but as yet the policy stands.

Several Members of the Committee expressed their concerns that the County Council's current policy with regard the fitting of seatbelts on buses used to transport schoolchildren was inadequate in protecting their safety.

The Committee therefore Resolved:-

That the Cabinet be urged as a matter of urgency to review the County Council's policy regarding the use of buses for school transport which were not fitted with seatbelts and, if they felt appropriate, to the Government to amend the legislation in this area.

Question 3 – Neil Campbell

1. The residents of many of our small villages and settlements have suffered for years from the aggravation of heavy lorries pounding through Warwickshire's minor roads and in recent times many questions have been asked why it is not possible to introduce weight limits on such roads. Always the answer has been the same. Our neighbouring County of Leicestershire has now taken the bull by the horns and done exactly that. An article (copies available for members), taken from the newsletter entitled **Leicestershire Matters**, shows that in that County a programme of blanket weight restrictions has been introduced on minor rural roads - so that lorries can only use A and B roads, unless they are making a delivery. Will WCC please urgently consider following suit as such a move would considerably improve the quality of life for so many of our residents?

2. In the same newsletter **Leicestershire Matters** there is an article concerning a speed reduction programme which I believe would be much

more productive than the Warwickshire programme called 'speed aware'. This article proposes that local volunteers will be trained to use and issued with hand-held speed guns, together with stickers, posters and vehicle-activated roadside signs. Will WCC discuss this extension to the current programme with the police to obtain their support and then provide our neighbourhoods with this opportunity as urgently as possible?

Response from Roger Newham, Directorate of Environment and Economy

1. Our policy is to seek to control HGV movements by systematic intelligence gathering through Parish Councils and contact with operators. Through a Freight Quality Partnership a lorry route map has been agreed which shows recommended routes for HGVs. A and B class roads are expected to carry their share of all types of traffic, including, HGV's and weight limits on other roads are considered, as a last resort measure, where it can be demonstrated that a significant problem is still being caused by HGV's unnecessarily travelling through an area. The police in Warwickshire would not support a blanket weight limit such as that in Leicestershire.

2. Warwickshire County Council has introduced a Speed Aware programme which will increase the opportunity for communities to seek introduction of temporary speed advisory signs to indicate to drivers when they are exceeding the speed limit. We believe that this programme is valuable and valued by communities. By good fortune senior officers of WCC met with senior police officers on 14th July so it was opportune to raise the question of use of speed guns by volunteers at that meeting. The response from the police was that they are willing in principle to consider this proposal if Parish Councils or other provide the funding for equipment purchase etc. From 1st November 2006 Safer Neighbourhoods will be launched with 31 Neighbourhood areas across Warwickshire. Meetings for each Neighbourhood will be held every 1 to 3 months and may be led by the local councillor and will include police membership. The police suggest that proposals for introducing use of speed guns by volunteers in any particular local area be raised through this forum.

3. Summary of the Coventry & Warwickshire Acute Services Review Consultation Proposals

Councillor Dodd left the room whilst this item was considered.

The Committee considered the joint report of the Strategic Directors of Children, Young People and Families and Performance and Development.

The Committee received a short presentation by Mike Attwood on the Review of Acute Services, which had been commissioned by the West Midlands Regional Health Trust. The review was needed to try and maximise the level of services within the hospitals in the area. He took the Committee through the main recommendations highlighted in the joint report before responding to Members' questions.

During the question and answer session, the following issues were highlighted:-

- Current car park charges are too high. Mike Attwood accepted that this was an issue of concern which would be addressed along with related transport issues.
- Image of Walsgrave Hospital is poor particularly with regard to cleanliness which makes it unattractive to the public. Mike Attwood recognised that this was an issue which that hospital would need to address.
- Rugby St Cross Hospital has a very good reputation with the people in the Rugby area. Mike Attwood recognised that this hospital was emerging as an excellent community hospital and would continue to do so under the new proposals. With the development of community medicine, he did not see any conflict between the work of the hospital and that which local GPs would be asked to carry out.
- There was a lot of concern about the consultation meeting taking place on the 15th August during school holiday time. Alwin McGibbon assured members that an additional meeting could be arranged for early September to offset this problem. Mike Attwood added that there would be no difficulty in arranging such a meeting.

4. Safer Neighbourhoods Policing Areas

The Committee considered the joint report of the Strategic Directors of Performance and Development and Community Protection and, whilst supporting the principles behind the Safer Neighbourhoods project, felt that it was important that they were given the opportunity to look in detail at how the proposals affect the Rugby area and how it will be delivered.

It was then 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 recommendation in the Report to 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. 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

5. Rugby Area Performance 2005/06 and Business Plan for 2006/07

Nick Darwen presented the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development.

The following comments by members were recorded:-

Performance Report 2005/06

- Councillor King expressed her preference for the previous performance management system which used greens, ambers and reds.
- Under 1.4.1, Councillor King expressed her concern that the action to Target Youth Work Programmes to support the transition from childhood to adulthood had not been very successful. She felt that it would be appropriate for Ian McLean, Area Community Education Officer, to attend the Committee's next meeting to answer any queries regarding targets to these services.
- Anti Bullying Strategy – needs to be given a higher profile and part of the County Council's Best Practice.
- Under 5.2.1, Councillor King questioned why the consumer education events had not taken place in Benn Ward and asked for further information on why this had not been achieved.
- Under the Integrated Transport Review, Members questioned why the Ashlawn Road scheme had been included as a scheme which could not be met from the delegated budget. Roger Newham understood that that project had been earmarked for completion but would report back on the situation.

Business Plan 2006/07

- The Chair suggested that the issue of dealing with excluded pupils should be considered as a matter of urgency and asked that a report be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.
- Councillor King commented that she thought that a dedicated Extended Schools Development Officer had been appointed for the Rugby area. She asked for this to be checked and for more details about the development of extended schools and Childrens' Centres to be brought to the Committee.
- Councillor King stated that she would like to see a Community Development Officer for Benn and Newbold Wards.
- Councillor Morris-Jones questioned the validity of the key targets referred to on page 10 of the Plan and asked if the definitions used could be amended to be more meaningful.

It was then Resolved:

- (1) That approval be given to the Rugby Area Business Plan for 2006/07 subject to the final version being amended in the light of Members' comments recorded above.
- (2) That the following areas identified in the Performance Report for 2005/06 and the Rugby Area Business Plan for 2006/07 be considered in more detail by the Committee:-

Exclusion of pupils from school
Youth Services

6. Appointment to the Rugby Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Board

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

In considering the report, the Committee were unanimously of the view that the Area Committee should be represented on the Board by 1 elected member from each of the political parties and that their views should be conveyed to the Board at the earliest opportunity. The Committee were not prepared to support a single nomination.

Councillor Dodd, seconded by Councillor King, moved and it was Resolved:-

That the Rugby Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Board be informed that the Rugby Area Committee wished to appoint 3 representatives to serve on the Board (1 from each political group) rather than the single nomination they had been offered.

7. Update on Electoral Divisional Panels

Resolved, having considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development, that the Committee notes the update on the issues discussed recently at Rugby Electoral Divisional Panels.

8. Any Other Items

None

9. Future Business Items

Resolved to note the inclusion of the following items in the future work programme –

The future of GEC Alstom and Peugeot.
Revision of Provision at Catholic Schools in Rugby

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Chair of Committee

The meeting closed at 8:25 pm