

Minutes of the meeting of the **RUGBY AREA COMMITTEE** held at the **TOWN HALL, RUGBY** on the **24 May 2007**

Present: -

Councillor John Vereker (Chair)
“ Gordon Collett
“ Richard Dodd
“ Katherine King
“ Brian Levy
“ Phillip Morris-Jones
“ Jerry Roodhouse
“ Ian Smith
“ Heather Timms (Vice Chair)
“ John Wells

Also present: -

Councillor John Burton
“ Alan Farnell
“ Izzy Seccombe

Officers:

Roger Bennett, Traffic Projects Group
Hannah Cramp, Community Partnership Officer
Nick Darwen, Rugby Area Manager
Grace Elford, Community Partnership Officer
Peter Endall, Senior Solicitor
Mark Gore, Head of Service - Education Partnerships & School Development Division
Phil Maull, Senior Committee Administrator
Roger Newham, Head of Transport Planning
Peter Samwell - Policy Manager, E&E
Peter Thompson - Senior Area Schools & Communities Officer

Also Attended:-

6 Members of the public (approx).

1. Election of Chair

Councillor Gordon Collett, seconded by Councillor Ian Smith, moved and it was Resolved:-

That Councillor John Vereker be elected Chair of the Rugby Area Committee until the election of his successor in accordance with Standing Order 2.8.

Councillor John Vereker thanked members for re-electing him.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

The Chair, seconded by Councillor Ian Smith, moved and it was Resolved:-

That Councillor Heather Timms be appointed Vice Chair of the Rugby Area Committee until the appointment of her successor in accordance with Standing Order 2.8.

The Chair then congratulated Councillor John Wells on his election to the office of Chair of the County Council.

3. General

(1) Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Tom Cavanagh.

(2) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Members declared personal interests as follows –

- (1) Councillors Richard Dodd, Jerry Roodhouse and Heather Timms - by virtue of them serving as Rugby Borough Councillors.
- (2) Councillor Katherine King declared a prejudicial interest as a Governor of Bishop Wulstan Catholic School (agenda item 4 – question 6 – and agenda item 5) and a personal interest as a member of the Rugby BID Board (agenda item 11).
- (3) Councillor John Vereker declared a personal interest as a member of the Rugby BID Board (agenda item 11).

(3) Minutes of the Meetings held on the 22 March 2007 and Matters Arising

(i) Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Rugby Area Committee held on the 22 March 2007 be approved and signed by the Chair.

(ii) Matters Arising

Nil.

The Chair proposed that the order of the agenda should be changed to take agenda item 11 together with the fourth question under agenda item 4 next to accommodate members of public who had attended to present a petition in connection with modifying parking arrangements in certain streets in Rugby to permit parking for two hours. Members supported this proposal.

The minutes of this meeting have been set out in accordance with the order of the agenda.

4. Public Question Time

(1) Question 1 – Councillor Claire Edwards (not in attendance)

Will WCC be consulting with Aqua Place residents over possible solutions to the increasingly difficult problem of commuters (using the rail station) parking all day (and avoiding the pay and display car parks) and causing an obstruction when parking badly?

Response from Roger Newnham, Environment and Economy Directorate: *We are aware of the situation in Aqua Place and confirm that we are investigating the possibility of some form of parking restriction. We will be consulting with residents on any proposals which emerge.*

He added that the road was not yet adopted as a public highway and that nothing could actually be done until it had been adopted.

Councillors Katherine King and John Wells asked that officers look into the parking situation and the adoption of the road as soon as possible.

(2) Question 2 – Sue Rosser (not in attendance)

With reference to the footpaths across the Jubilee Rec, I feel that they are still not suitable for buggies or wheelchairs.

Having spoken to the residents of Bridle Road, may I put a request to the Council with regard to the whole road being re-surfaced, this is from the entry from Jubilee Street, behind the houses on Jubilee Street and Lawford Road up to the turning area by No. 10 Bridle Road.

In the past various areas have been patched and once we get heavy rain it starts to wear very quickly, with all the added traffic both to Bell House and residents in the area this road is in desperate need of re-surfacing.

Response from Paul Cowley, Environment and Economy Directorate: *The footpaths across the Jubilee Recreation have been constructed by Rugby Borough Council after consultation with Local Resident Groups. The works are not yet completed and the Contractor has still to carry out further remedial work. Any*

further queries concerning this matter should be directed to Steve Beasley, Rugby Borough Council, Parks & Cemeteries Manager Telephone 01788 533533.

Bridle Road is not in any programme for complete resurfacing. In the past temporary repairs have been carried out to keep the surface safe. Permanent patching will be carried out to the areas of the worst surface deterioration in Bridle Road by the end of the summer.

Further Response from the questioner, Sue Rosser: *I would like to communicate that the stretch of Bridle Road located immediately behind Jubilee Street has now been patched, although no measures were put in place to allow the tarmac to settle, consequently cars have been permitted to drive over it whilst still wet, reducing the effect. Bridle Road also extends further round the corner from the stretch which has been worked on, could I therefore reiterate my request for the whole to be treated?*

(3) Question 3 – Janet Carter (not in attendance)

I wish to ask why the County Council appears so intent on furthering the plight of their disabled residents by still not providing disabled parking bays? The tax paying disabled residents of Rugby deserve to have their quality of life improved and I would like to enquire when the bays will be put back, and, when this happens, how they will be enforced? I would also like to know whether, following the meeting in November 2006, the Council took my advice and sought consultation with other councils in London regarding how their parking permits and disabled bays run alongside one another?

Response: *The current policy prevents us from providing formal or informal disabled persons parking places in residential streets where there are parking restrictions. If the policy is eventually changed it will mean that we will be able to consider formal parking places provided that the applicant is prepared to meet the costs involved. The parking place could be used by any blue badge holder but it would be enforceable by the parking attendants.*

The Chair said that this issue was to be dealt with under agenda item 10.

(4) Question 4 – Mike O'Connor

We the traders in what has become known as the Independent Quarter of Rugby Town centre would like to ask our Councillors to support us as we attempt to work through difficult times. Since the introduction of the decriminalisation of parking back at the beginning of October last year, both footfall and sales have declined on average by 10%. Our BID Company is in the process of investing nearly £40,000 in an attempt to rejuvenate the area. A lot of businesses are just clinging on, 3 have lost the battle since Christmas.

Most of our customers are nervous about leaving their cars for just half an hour or an hour on the street, it just isn't long enough. A recent survey of 200 customers has shown that 91% are very keen on increasing the parking time on the street from 1 hour to 2 hours. We also have a petition signed by over 180 businesses in the decrim. Area supporting an increase to 2 hours. I would like to present these two documents to you on the 24th May 2007. I hope this is ok. [The Chair accepted the documents].

Again we ask for our Councillors' support and hope that they will vote in favour of increasing the parking time on street to 2 hours.

Response from Roger Newnham, Environment and Economy Directorate: *This will be put to Members at the time they consider the report that is before them. [Agenda item 11]*

(5) Question 5 – Mrs. Barbara Dent – Monks Kirby – late submission received 23 May 2007 (not in attendance)

In 1995 a decision was made to close St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Infants School and amalgamate this School with the Brockhurst Church of England Primary School in Monks Kirby. This created the Revel School catering for Infants and Primary children. At the time of the closure of St. Joseph's concern was expressed here in Monks Kirby about the increased number of children coming to the new School and the effect this would have on roads, traffic, parking. The County Authority maintained throughout the discussions that the children's education was of paramount importance (to which everyone would agree) and all the issues of infrastructure would be addressed.

Monks Kirby Parish Councillors would like to know – some twelve years on – why no attempt has been made to improve the infrastructure. There are now considerably more children at the Revel School and therefore greater numbers of vehicles bringing children into the village to School. Brockhurst Lane is too narrow for anything but two cars to pass and now that one side of the Lane is taken up with School parking at peak times the School coaches and any other sizeable vehicles have to mount the kerb in order to pass. This has taken its toll on the highway, kerbs and footways in the village as well as inconvenience to villagers.

Response from Roger Newnham, Environment and Economy Directorate: *A written answer will be produced when the matter has been investigated.*

Councillor Phillip Morris-Jones confirmed that there was widespread concern over the issue in Monks Kirby. Brockhurst Lane was too narrow for a fleet of buses to use. There had been heated public meetings over this. Similar problems existed with Clifton and Wolvey schools. There was a need for a person with specialised knowledge of traffic management to speak to local residents.

Councillor Katherine King left the room while the following question and agenda item 5 was discussed in line with her earlier disclosure of a prejudicial interest.

(6) Question 6 – Ian Slater – late submission received 24 May 2007

1) *Would the County Council state whether full written details of next year's arrangements for the current Y10 at Bishop Wulstan Catholic School will be available to parents? Other schools have written prospectuses and there is public knowledge about how these schools operate whereas I believe this detail is even more necessary in the case of Y10/Y11 transitional arrangements.*

2) *Furthermore, would the County Council give an assurance that parents will be consulted and their views taken into account as previous promises have not materialised?*

3) *Finally, would the County Council confirm that they will not prevent parents from contacting other schools in the Rugby area to seek alternative arrangements for Y10 pupils at Bishop Wulstan Catholic School should they not be happy with the arrangements being made?*

This question was sent Mark Gore, Children Young People and Families Directorate, who was present to deal with issues concerning Bishop Wulstan School under the following agenda item.

5. Bishop Wulstan School

The Committee received an update report on plans to provide alternative schools for the pupils currently at Bishop Wulstan School as a consequence of the decision to close that school with effect from the 1 September 2007 with arrangements to protect the curriculum for the current Y10 moving into Y11.

The Chair welcomed Councillors Alan Farnell, John Burton and Izzy Seccombe who were attending for this item.

Mark Gore said that the decision of the Schools Organisation Committee was binding on the County Council. Contingency plans were being put into place and the vast majority of first preferences by parents/carers for schools had been met. He then addressed the questions raised by Mr. Slater:-

- (1) Further information would be made available for parents about alternative schools and a set of frequently asked questions has been placed on the websites.
- (2) Induction and information meetings were being arranged for students. A meeting had been arranged for 6.30 p.m. on the 5 June 2007 involving the Project Manager, the Head-teacher of Ashlawn School and parents.

- (3) At the time that consideration was being given to the future of Bishop Wulstan School, other schools had been asked not to accept children from the School. If parents now decided that they were not happy with the alternative arrangements for schools, there was no problem with them approaching any schools.

Mr. Slater said that parents had hoped for a meeting before now. With no firm information, rumours were circulating. The only information they had received was in response to questions they had asked.

The following comments arose during Members discussion:-

- (i) Not all parents would have access to the website and it was important for information to be provided in paper form.
- (ii) There should also be more face-to-face talks and there should be commitment to making available the necessary additional officer time.
- (iii) It was noted that it was proposed to provide transport to the alternative schools but there was no indication how long this would last. It was important that this should be for as long as necessary. Care needed to be taken also to ensure that pupils were not on the buses too long travelling to and from their new schools.
- (iv) In addition to parents and pupils being kept informed about arrangements, it was important for members to be kept up to date so that they could respond to questions from the people they represented.
- (v) The proposal that transport would be provided for Roman Catholic pupils who wished to attend a faith school of their choice. Clarification was needed about the position of non-faith pupils.
- (vi) The transport arranged for taking the pupils to school should be by means of County Council contracted coaches that were only for that purpose.
- (vii) The Area Committee had supported the School but the decision had now been made and it was now important to support parents and children.
- (viii) The cost of transporting children around the county must make it more expensive than keeping Bishop Wulstan open.

Mark Gore responded:-

- (a) He accepted that it was important to meet with parents. Four meetings had been arranged with parents, one for each year, but only half of parents had attended and that was why frequently asked questions and the newsheet had been put on the website. Newsletter had been sent by post to all parents and carers. The Project Manager had been involved in a hundred individual consultations.

- (b) Transport would be free for pupils having to travel over three miles. This would be restricted to practising Roman Catholics wishing to go to another faith school and talks were going ahead with the churches to determine criteria for this. This was in accordance with existing County Council policy. He could give no guarantee about future County Council policy in this area. This was a matter for elected members. Transport time would be kept to a minimum.
- (c) Parents of twenty-five pupils had so far opted to send their children to other Roman Catholic schools and most of them opted for Trinity School in Leamington Spa. The vast majority of children would attend other schools in Rugby.
- (d) The proposal for the closure of the school had never been a resource driven exercise but was concerned with ensuring high standards of education.
- (e) He was fully committed to providing meetings on a school-by-school, year-by-year basis for parents, pupils and head teachers.
- (f) There was no guarantee that teachers from Bishop Wulstan School would transfer with the children.

The Chair said that there was a need for the points raised during the debate to be clearly addressed. The issue would be reviewed at future meetings.

6. Brownsover to The Avon Valley School – Cycle Route

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy outlining proposals for constructing a cycle route to link Brownsover to The Avon Valley School, including the conversion of various lengths of footway into shared use footway/cycleways and upgrading puffin crossings to toucan crossings as part of the Safer Routes to Schools initiative.

Resolved:

- (a) That the proposed variation to the Warwickshire County Council (Borough of Rugby) (Permitted Parking Area and Specialised Parking Area) (Waiting Restrictions, On-Street Parking Places and Residents Parking) (Consolidation) Order 2006, be implemented as advertised.
- (b) That the proposals shown on the plans in Appendix E to the report be advertised.

7. Quality Bus Corridor Scheme: Lower Hillmorton – Rugby Town Centre

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy inviting the Committee to express its views on whether the Lower Hillmorton –Rugby Town Centre Urban Quality Bus Corridor Scheme bus stop infrastructure enhancement works should be implemented, in view of the lack of reciprocal improvements by the bus operator on the route.

Roger Newnham said that as a result of continuing discussions with Stagecoach, the Company had agreed to increase the number and frequency of services.

Resolved:

That Rugby Area Committee support the bus stop infrastructure elements of the Lower Hillmorton – Rugby Town Centre Quality Bus Corridor scheme being implemented.

8. Proposed Abandonment of the Boughton Road Relief Road

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy seeking its approval to recommending Cabinet to abandon the Boughton Road Relief Road once detailed planning permission had been granted by Rugby Borough Council for the redevelopment of the former Alstom/GEC site and a S106 agreement had been signed to secure the delivery of a link road that would obviate the need for the relief road.

Resolved:

That the Area Committee:-

- (1) Recommends Cabinet that the Boughton Road Relief Road scheme be formally abandoned once detailed planning permission for the site had been granted by the Rugby Borough Council and a S106 agreement had been signed to secure the delivery of the Link Road.
- (2) Endorses investigation of the opportunities for reducing the impact of traffic on Boughton Road, following the redevelopment of the former Alstom/GEC site.

9. Temporary Arrangements for Public Recycling Facilities in Rugby

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy arising from its request for additional information on the proposed temporary arrangements while the Hunters Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre was closed for refurbishment.

The Committee made the following comments:

- (1) The safety concern expressed by Members had not been addressed by the proposal to provide additional signage.
- (2) There would be queuing on this most dangerous section of the A426 as vehicles tried to access the Stockton site, which were capable of only taking two vehicles at a time. It was essential for the officers to bring a report to

the next meeting informing members exactly what measures were being proposed to ensure that it was safe for vehicles to access and exit the site.

- (3) It was important that when the Hunters Lane Recycling Centre was closed notices should be provided clearly showing what alternative arrangements had been made.
- (4) Members were concerned whether people using the Lutterworth site would have to prove that they were from Rugby. Although Roger Newham believed that there would be no such requirement, he undertook to check this with Leicestershire County Council.
- (5) There was still concern that the temporary arrangements would lead to an increase in fly tipping.
- (6) Members agreed that they should receive full answers to their concerns before the Hunters Lane Recycling Centre was closed.

10. Review of Parking Policies

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy relating to a request from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Area Committee to comment on draft policies arising from a review of the County Council's parking policies.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- (1) Members were concerned about the arrangements for disabled persons parking and the cost of the provision of disabled people parking bays falling on disabled people. It was noted that there was reference to the Warwickshire Disability Forum providing grants for this purpose but there were no details given of this. As decriminalisation was already in place in Rugby Area, there was no set up budget that could be used to cover the cost of providing the bays. However, if all the bays that had existed prior to decriminalisation were reintroduced at the same time, the cost of producing the necessary road traffic order and advertising costs could be shared, significantly reducing the individual cost.
- (2) During the discussion on footway parking, it became clear that the challenge was in balancing the need to park off the road where the carriageway was narrow and the need to keep paths free for prams, pushchairs and wheelchairs. The proposal that the kerbs would have to be below 80mm in height for footway parking to be allowed did not mean that it would not ever be allowed if the existing kerb was higher but that the kerb would need to be lowered first. Members gave examples of footways where the proposed policy would not permit parking on them while there was a need for this to happen. The proposed policy would be countywide if approved and it was not possible to write a general policy with exemption for certain pathways. However, there was provision to treat particular cases as exceptions according to the particular circumstances that existed. In those

circumstances the Area Committee, with the exception of Councillor Ian Smith agreed to support the proposal.

Resolved:

That the comments made by Rugby Area Committee on the draft policies be submitted to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

11. Rugby Town Centre – Time Limited Parking Restrictions

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy proposing the advertisement of proposals for increasing the one-hour parking restriction in Rugby Town Centre to two hours.

Members considered that it was important to listen to the shopkeepers and persons who used the shops in the town centre so that the scheme could be adapted to be sensitive to Rugby's needs. For this reason the scheme should be monitored and updated when necessary on a fairly regular basis.

Resolved:

That a proposal for waiting limited to 2 hours, no return for 4 hours, 8am to 6 pm, Monday to Saturday, with the charges being 20p for half an hour, £1 for an hour and £1.50 for 2 hours, in Albert Street, Bank Street, Henry Street, Railway Terrace, Regent Place and Regent Street, Rugby be advertised.

12. Area Community Learning Partnership (ACLP) for Rugby Borough, Progress Report 2006/07 and Action Plan for 2007/08

The Committee considered the report of the Area Community Learning Partnership summarising progress made by ACLP during 2006/07 and giving an outline for proposed partnership activity for 2007/08.

Resolved:

- (1) That the progress made in the development of the Community Learning Strategy and the multi-agency Community Learning Plan for Rugby Borough is noted.
- (2) That the detailed progress report against 2006/07 actions be endorsed.
- (3) That a finalised Area Community Learning Plan for 2007/08 is made available to the Area Committee for information in late summer/early autumn.

13. Electoral Divisional Panels

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development providing an update on actions agreed at recent Electoral Divisional Panels, and introducing a timetable of future meetings.

It was noted that the Cabinet had agreed to start discussions with partners around developing locality arrangements and that Rugby Area Committee were well advanced on this issue.

14. Any Other Items

There were no urgent items

15. Future Business Items

The Committee noted the future business items.

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Chair of Committee.

The Committee rose at 8.20 p.m.