

WEST JOINT COMMITTEE

18 September 2008

*Held at Ullenhall Village Hall, Henley Road, Ullenhall
Meeting commenced: 6.00 pm Meeting ended: 9.25 pm*

Present: Councillor Sir William Lawrence Bt (Chair); Councillors G Atkinson, S Adams, P Barnes, L Bowring, T Dixon, R Hobbs, J Horner, K James, S Juned, N Knapman, L Marshall, E Payne, D Pemberton and M Weddell

Apologies: Councillor P Beaman, V Hobbs, H McCarthy, B Slaughter, S Thirlwell, L Topham and H Wright

Officers in

Attendance: **Representing Warwickshire County Council**

Steve Smith (Head of Property)

Martin Gibbons (Stratford-on-Avon Area Manager)

Representing Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Trevor Askew (Strategic Director)

NOTE: Other officers were also in attendance to present reports, details of which are given under the respective Minutes.

25. Disclosure of Interests

Councillor Hobbs disclosed a general Personal Interest as a member of Warwickshire Police Authority.

26. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2008 were confirmed and signed.

27. References, if any, from Community Forum

There were no references to the Committee from the Community Forum.

28. Public Question Time (30 Minutes)

Under this heading, the following items were presented:

1. Mr. Chris Clewes had submitted a question in connection with a worrying situation that existed for the residents of Sambourne. In accordance with the Committees Standing Orders, a copy of the question, together with the response given by Richard Elbourne (Project Leader – Village Speed Limit Review Team) is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes;
2. Mr. Roger Fairclough had submitted the following statement in respect of item 35 below (Stoat Lane, Great Alne) which was taken into account when that item was discussed:

'My name is Roger Fairclough and I am the Warwickshire representative of the Green Lane Association. The aim of the association is to promote the legal and enjoyable recreation of driving unsurfaced rights of way throughout the UK. We believe that the closure of these routes to satisfy the demands of some to the exclusion of others is fundamentally biased and

undemocratic. If there are problems then deal with them but do so armed with facts not hearsay, truth not rumour. When members of the committee visited the site in early spring they found nothing to substantiate the stories of 2ft deep ruts and 70mph speeds. They saw a lane that after a very wet winter and no maintenance for a year was in perfect condition. I was the co-ordinator for the group of GLASS members who repaired a section of the lane toward its Western end. During the day a number of the local people complimented us on the work we were doing. At no time did they complain about the use of motorised vehicles either here or at other rights of way in the area.

GLASS stands for the legitimate use of unsurfaced rights of way and further whittling down of the network will only promote higher usage of the lanes that are left which will further the aims of the groups who want to see all lanes closed to us.

These are the facts:

Within Warwickshire there are

- 2911 footpaths totalling 1442 miles for the use of walkers only*
- 393 bridleways totalling 303 miles for the use of walkers, mountain bikes and horses*
- 112 unclassified county roads for all users*

So walkers have 1710 miles of routes and vehicles (4x4 and M/bikes) have 65 miles of which approx 20% are unusable as they dead end.

The group of people who have put this bill before you are local to the area and as such they present it based purely on their own needs. I feel sure that if the people who live in our National Parks demanded that they alone had the right to use them, then national feelings would condemn them as I trust you will with this bill.'

In addition to the foregoing, other persons had indicated a wish to address the Committee on items on the Agenda, references to which are contained within the individual Minutes.

29. Alcester : Consumption of Alcohol Restriction Order

Robert Walsh (Head of Community Services) attended the meeting for this item and answered members questions raised on the report.

The Committee was asked to make an Order under Section 13 (2) of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 in respect of a defined area of the centre of Alcester in which the police would have the power to restrict the consumption of alcohol.

In considering the report, the Committee noted that responses to the consultation had been overwhelmingly in favour of the Order with the Police confirming that they viewed the additional powers available as essential in addressing alcohol related incidents.

Having regard to the above, it was

RESOLVED:

That an Order be made under Section 13 (2) of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 in respect of an area of the centre of Alcester, as defined on the map attached as an appendix to the report, to become effective as soon as possible.

30. Stratford Joint Local Area Scrutiny Panel

Michelle McHugh (Interim Overview and Scrutiny Manager) attended the meeting for this item and answered members questions raised on the report.

Consideration was given to a report from the Stratford Joint Local Area Scrutiny Panel, established by Warwickshire County Council and Stratford on Avon District Council to scrutinise parking in Stratford upon Avon town centre and the financial viability of the Stratford Park and Ride with the following objectives:

- a) To ensure that parking arrangements within the District were fair, fit for purpose for users and the local economy, and had minimal adverse impact upon users, businesses, residents and public services; and
- b) To improve the financial viability of Stratford Park and Ride by:
 - examining service provision of the Park and Ride, on-street parking and off-street parking within the district; and
 - reviewing performance and financial information relating to the Park and Ride, on-street parking and off-street parking.

In receiving the report, the Committee noted that it was the Panel's view that

- ❖ both authorities needed to develop a joint parking strategy to ensure parking services were effective and appropriate to the needs of Stratford-upon-Avon;
- ❖ current parking arrangements in Stratford-upon-Avon did not effectively target the different segments of the market and this needed to be addressed; and
- ❖ on-street parking and short stay parking should be targeted towards shoppers, whilst long stay parking and the Park and Ride should be targeted towards tourists and commuters.

The Committee found difficulty in commenting upon the report in that whilst some of the recommendations could be supported, there were some that could not. Accordingly, it was considered that the way forward would be for the respective Councils to discuss the recommendations within the Overview and Scrutiny roles and at full Council meetings in conjunction with the respective Cabinet comments.

In line with the above, it was

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Stratford Joint Local Area Scrutiny Panel be noted with some agreement and concerns that would be addressed when the recommendations were considered by the respective Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

31. Off-Street Parking Charges

Robert Walsh (Head of Community Services) attended the meeting for this item and answered members questions raised on the report.

Consideration was given to a report on the proposed charging levels for off-street parking operated by the District Council that had been developed by a Group comprising representatives from both the County and District Councils having:

- a) benchmarked the service against similar areas where civil enforcement arrangements were in place;
- b) consulted with key stakeholders on their preferences;
- c) consulted with residents and organisations on proposed policy objectives; and
- d) sought to integrate existing objectives adopted by the Council..

The Committee was asked to forward its views and preferences on the options contained within the report to the District Councils Cabinet when it considered car parking charges at its October 2008 meeting.

During the ensuing discussion, some Members were unwilling to consider the report without the knowledge of comments from the relevant Town/Parish Councils. However, it was emphasised that the Committee were an important consultee in developing the proposed charging levels for off-street parking and it was essential that their comments were submitted.

Having regard to the above, the Committee acknowledged that it would be difficult to reach universal agreement on the options contained within the report and considered that a way forward was for individual views to be aired and a summary of the views recorded. In this context, the following key points were made:

- it was felt that local traders would not want car parking charges to be implemented as it could negatively impact their businesses;
- however, it was acknowledged that charges could be an effective way of ensuring a productive use of limited parking within towns as it deters people from parking all day and blocking the limited resources. In support of this, the positive impact that off street car park charging had had upon Shipston-on-Stour Town, was highlighted;
- it was suggested that through car park charges, Stratford-upon-Avon traders were subsidising all other car parks in the District;
- there was a view expressed that parking charging needed to be considered on a district wide level to ensure effective use of spaces and access to facilities within the respective car parks; and
- on-street parking was identified as an active problem and it was feared that charging for off-street parking would intensify the problem.

During the discussions, the Committee voiced interest in further details regarding the cleaning, maintenance and enforcement within the District's car-parks, and requested that a follow up report be submitted to a future meeting.

Having regard to the above, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's views on the off-street car parking charges, as summarised in the preamble to this Minute, be forwarded to the Cabinet of the District Council for consideration.

32. Alcester Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Colin Staves (Policy, Heritage and Design Manager) attended the meeting for this item and answered members questions raised on the report.

Consideration was given to the representations that had been received on the Alcester Conservation Area Draft Character Appraisal document and the proposed boundary extension with a review of adopting the revised version.

The options open to the Committee were to adopt the Alcester Conservation Area Character Appraisal

1. without any changes;
2. with changes made in response to the representations received as summarised in the report, but with no change to the conservation area boundary; or
3. with changes made in response to the representations received as summarised in the report approve the proposed conservation area boundary extension.

In considering the options, the Committee expressed concern over the exclusion of the Alcester Grammar School site from the boundary extension. However, in light of the extensive area of modern buildings within the site, the Committee accepted the practicality in its exclusion.

Following the above discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Alcester Conservation Area Draft Character Appraisal be amended in accordance with the report;
- (2) That the Draft Character Appraisal, as amended, and boundary extension be adopted and published as soon as possible; and,
- (3) That the Head of Planning for the District Council be authorised to make changes of a minor editorial nature that may be required as a result of (1) above.

33. Speed Limit Review

Jo Edwards (Senior Roads Safety Engineer) attended the meeting for this item and answered members questions raised on the report.

Consideration was given to a report detailing objections that had been received to new speed restrictions within the Committee's area.

On the invitation of the Chair, the following persons addressed the Committee in respect of the proposed speed restriction for the road indicated:

- a) Ray Thorpe – B439 Evesham Road, Stratford – Bidford; and
- b) Kath Lloyd on behalf of Clifford Chambers and Milcote Parish Council – B4632 Campden Road.

Each of the speed restriction were considered by the Committee in the knowledge that

- the Police only had very limited resources for enforcing existing or new speed limits; and
- any amendments to the proposed speed limit changes would need to meet the criteria of the Speed Management Strategy adopted by the County Council's Cabinet in September 2007.

Having regard to the above, it was

RESOLVED:

That the proposed speed limits reviews for the following be supported:

1. S/1 A3400 Shipston Road (drawing no. SLR/S/1/J) – proposed speed limit: 50mph;
2. S/3 A4189 Gannaway Road, nr Claverdon (drawing no. SLR/S/3/A) - proposed speed limit: 50mph;
3. S/3 A4189 Blackford Hill, Henley-in-Arden (drawing no. SLR/S/3/E) - proposed speed limit: 40mph;
4. S/8a A435 Alcester Road (formerly known as Birmingham-Evesham Road) Studley (drawing no. SLR/S/8a/D) - proposed speed limit: 30mph;
5. S/17 B4088 Evesham Road (drawing no. SLR/S/17/AB) - proposed speed limit: 50mph;
6. S/18 B4089 Alcester Road, Great Alne (drawing no. SLR/S18/C) - proposed speed limit: 50mph;
7. S/19 B4090 Alcester Heath, Alcester (drawing no. SLR/S/19/A) - proposed speed limit: 50mph;
8. S/20 B4092 Jill Lane, Sambourne (drawing no. SLR/S/20/A) - proposed speed limit: 50mph;
9. S/24 B4102 Earlswood Common, Tanworth-in-Arden (drawing no. SLR/S/24/B) - proposed speed limit: 40mph;

10. S/25 B439 Evesham Road, Stratford/Bidford (drawing no. SLR/S/25/C) - proposed speed limit: 50mph;
11. S/30 B4632 Campden Road (drawing no. SLR/S/30/A) - proposed speed limit: 50mph; and
12. A4189 Station Road/Henley Road, Claverdon – no change from existing 40mph.

NOTE: In response to a question concerning accident hot spots, Jo Edwards informed the Committee that the relevant information was publicly available on the County Council's website.

34. Changes to Waiting Restrictions

Martin Gibbins (Stratford-on-Avon Area Manager) on behalf of Christopher Latham (Traffic Engineer) presented the report for this item and answered members questions raised upon it.

Consideration was given to a report on the following proposed waiting restrictions within the Committees area:

1. School Road Henley-in-Arden – No waiting at any Time; and
2. Marble Alley, Studley – Limited waiting 2 hours no return 2 hours Monday-Saturday 8am-6pm.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

That the proposed waiting restrictions as summarised in the preamble to this Minute be made as advertised.

35. Stroat Lane, Great Alne

Annmarie Grace (Access Project Co-ordinator) attended the meeting for this item and answered members questions raised on the report.

A report was presented to the Committee on a petition signed by local residents seeking the County Council to take appropriate action to prevent mechanically propelled vehicles (except farm traffic) from using Stroat Lane, Great Alne. The Committee was informed that this matter had been considered by the County Council's former Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee and deferred pending the outcome of a member site visit.

The Committee received a detailed presentation on the condition of the Lane and provisions that had been put in place to further protect the Lane.

On the invitation of the Chair, Peter Bostock (Chairman of Great Alne Parish Council) addressed the Committee in support of the petition and referred to a letter the Parish Council had e mailed to District and County Council officers on the subject matter. However, there was no recorded receipt of the letter by those officers in attendance at the meeting.

In view of the complex nature of this matter and the potential evidence included within the latest communication from the Parish Council, it was

RESOLVED:

That consideration of this matter be deferred for further clarification of the legal status for vehicle usage of Stroat lane, Great Alne and to allow for consideration of the Parish Councils' letter.

36. Community Grants

Rebecca Goodman (Community Grants Officer) attended the meeting for this item and answered members questions raised on the report.

Consideration was given to one revenue grant application and two capital grant applications as follows:

(1) Revenue Grant:

Application 782 - Young Enterprise South Warwickshire (YES)

On the invitation of the Chair, Trevor East (Grants Co-ordinator for YES) addressed the Committee in support of the application for grant aid of £1,360 towards the total cost of £21,250 for providing educational programmes in primary and secondary schools to help young people understand and give them personal experience of how business works.

Having considered the application and by 10 votes to 2 it was

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a grant of £1,360 be awarded as the application was considered to be a high priority and the scheme supported objectives in the District Council's Grants scheme, the District Council's Corporate Aims and for the criteria for a County Council grant

(2) Capital Grant

The Committee was asked to consider two applications previously considered by the South Joint Committee as they had been deemed as being 'district-wide'. Accordingly, the Committee considered the application on the basis of a proportional contribution being made to the cost of the project. On the invitation of the Chair Councillor Maureen Beckett, on behalf of South Joint Committee, addressed the Committee to request their support in dividing these applications amongst the Joint Committees so as to most effectively support the organisations and the community.

(a) Application 807- Shakespeare Hospice

On the invitation of the Chair, Clare Bowry (Senior Trustee Fundraiser for Shakespeare Hospice) addressed the Committee in support of the application for grant aid of £2,885 towards the total cost of £101,103 for creating a drop in centre in Stratford Upon Avon (the Life Well centre) for patients, carers and family members affected by terminal illness

Having considered the application, by 10 votes to nil with 1 abstention it was

RESOLVED:

- (2) That a grant of £2,885 be awarded as the application was considered to be a high priority and the scheme supported objectives in the District Council's Grants scheme, the District Council's Corporate Aims and for the criteria for a County Council grant

- (b) Application 804- Stratford and District Citizens Advice Bureau

On the invitation of the Chair, Sarah Cole (Deputy Manager of Stratford-on-Avon District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)) addressed the Committee in support of the application answered members questions raised in connection with the application for grant aid of £2,550 towards the total cost of £41,397 for moving the entire CAB operation to different premises so as to provide easier access for clients and provide an opportunity to extend the range of services being offered.

Having considered the application, it was unanimously

RESOLVED:

- (3) That a grant of £2,550 be awarded as the application was considered to be a medium priority and the scheme supported objectives in the District Council's Grants scheme, the District Council's Corporate Aims and for the criteria for a County Council grant.

As the Committee had been in session for over 3 hours and in accordance with the Standing Orders a vote was taken as to whether the Committee should continue with its business. The Committee unanimously agreed to continue.

37. Flood Risk Management

Trevor Askew (Strategic Director) presented the report for this item and answered members questions raised upon it.

Consideration was given to an update on the work being undertaken by the Environment Agency and other agencies following the July 2007 floods to determine whether there were any specific aspects of flood risk management the Committee would like to be subject to a future report.

In receiving the report, the Committee expressed its concern that aspects of the report, particularly that provided by the Environment Agency was inaccurate and lacked reference to more recent areas of flooding within the Committee's area.

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Michael Gittus of Alcester Town Council addressed the Committee during which he

- highlighted areas of the report that were inaccurate, specifically
 - in relation to the number of properties in Alcester that had be subject to flooding; and

- that the flooding had been caused by breaches of flood defence and not from surface water as suggested; and
- detailed the exceptional community effort that had united Alcester in their aim to tackle the causes and effects of flooding.

During the ensuing discussion the following key areas were highlighted that would be useful to be further examined:

- a) the environment agency to be informed of the inaccuracies within the current report;
- b) both the County and District Councils should be requested to include additional funding for further flood prevention and support;
- c) to educate the public about the additional damage cars produce when driving through flooding;
- d) partnership working between the County and District Councils and Severn Trent to find innovative solutions to local area flooding problems and coordinate every effort to make the necessary amendments;
- e) to feedback to the Committee on the Government's response to the Pitt report; and
- f) to ensure that flooding aid grants were paid in the near future.

In respect of (f), it was reported that action was shortly to be taken by the Environment and Community Services Portfolio Holders that would allow the flood grants to be paid.

In light of these comments and after further discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- 1) That both the County and District Council's Cabinets be requested to make available additional budgetary provision for flood alleviation plans;
- 2) That regular updates be given to the Committee on flood risk management issues with an update being given to the next meeting on flood alleviation schemes that had been supported by the District Council.

38. Items for Future meetings

Under this heading the following items had been identified:

- 1. An examination of E roads;
- 2. A further update on flooding in response to the issues highlighted in Minute 37 above.

39. Urgent Business - Studley High School

With the permission of the Chair, Councillor Weddell raised an urgent item in respect of the possibility of Studley High School applying for Trust Status.

Under the procedure adopted by the County Council for such applications, the Area Committee would need to respond to any advertisement from the school within a 28 day period.

As the next meeting of the Committee was not scheduled until 11 December 2008 the Committee was asked to identify its preferred option for dealing with any subsequent advertisement for the School applying for Trust Status if a response was required before that date, as follows:

1. Option 1 – to convene a Special Meeting of the Committee; or
2. Option 2 – to delegate authority to a Sub-Group comprising the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee together with the District Council Ward and County Council Division Members, subject to the decision being reported to the next available meeting of the Committee.

Following a discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

That Option 2 be supported by the Joint Committee.

CHAIR