

The Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee met at Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon on the 27 July, 2005.

Present:-

Councillors George Atkinson (Chair)
“ Richard Hyde (Vice Chair)
“ John Appleton
“ Peter Barnes
“ David Booth
“ Jill Dill-Russell
“ Richard Hobbs
“ Nina Knapman
“ Anita Macaulay
“ Helen McCarthy
“ Anita Macaulay
“ Mike Perry
“ Chris Saint
“ Bob Stevens

Officers:-

Roger Bennett, Traffic Project Group, PTES
William Brown, County Fire Officer.
Julie Crawshaw, Environmental Engineer, PTES.
David Curle, Project Manager Capital and Buildings, Social Services Dept.
Marion Davis, Director of Social Care and Health.
Sarah Duxbury, Principal Solicitor, Chief Executive's Dept.
Don Foster, Head of Community Services, PTES.
Graeme Fitton, Head of Transport and Planning Unit, PTES
Martin Gibbins, Area Manager, Chief Executive's Dept.
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator.
Martin Jones, Head of Resource Management, Social Services Dept.
Helen Topwood, Community Partnership Officer
Amanda Wilson Patterson – Area Administrative Officer, Chief Executive's Dept.

40 members of the public attended and two representatives of the press.

1. General

(1) Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Izzi Seccombe.

(2) Members' Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Nina Knapman declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6 – Parish Appraisals and Parish Plans as a member of the Town Council for Alcester

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on the 22 June 2005 and Matters Arising

(i) Minutes

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee's 22 June 2005 meeting be approved and be signed by the Chair.

(ii) Matters Arising

(a) Minute 1 (2) (ii) (b) – Provisional Items – Affordable Housing

In response to comments made by Councillor Peter Barnes at the last meeting concerning affordable housing, Don Foster reported that a report had been presented to Cabinet on 30th June 2005. A further report would be presented to Cabinet on 9th September 2005 dealing with the impact at local level. He would be reporting on this issue to a future meeting of Committee.

(b) Minute 1 (5) (i) – Public Question from Tony Rogers relating to Congestion in Stratford upon Avon.

Councillor Richard Hyde reported that he had spoken to Tony Rogers and that he and the Chair were pursuing this issue with officers.

(c) Minute 1 (5) (iv) – Public Question from Mrs Taylor of Bishopton Community Nursery

Councillor Mike Perry reported that this issue had been satisfactorily resolved.

(d) Minute 2 – Road Casualties in Stratford-on-Avon

Councillor Richard Hobbs reported that he and the portfolio holder were currently in discussions regarding the use of funding from the Speed Camera Partnership to help address this issue.

(4) Public Questions and Answers

(i) Question from Rosalind Bolton relating to the road surface of Chapel Street, Wellesbourne and other matters.

Mrs. Bolton, Chairman of Wellesbourne Parish Council Highway Committee, expressed concern that Chapel Street was not included in the five-year list of structural maintenance schemes, agenda item 4. The surface of Chapel Street was very uneven and a problem for pushchairs and wheelchairs. In 2001 a concerned resident had been told by an officer of the County Council that reconstruction was needed and would be included in the 2002-03 programme and since then the Parish Council had regularly pressed for this work to be done.

Mrs. Bolton also expressed concern and regret that only one of the four Willow Drive side-roads appeared in the programme. Residents had been given assurances and had been waiting for many years for the reconstruction work to be carried out and had not anticipated it taking so long.

Mrs. Bolton raised a further enquiry relating to the failure to receive replies to letters sent to the County Council about whether the creation of a footpath linking the village with Wellesbourne Mill had been included in this year's programme. She asked for clarification about the situation.

In reply Don Foster undertook to write to the Parish Council within 14 days clarifying the position on the issues raised.

(ii) Question from Paul Instone relating to Highway Maintenance in Tanworth-in-Arden.

Paul Instone, representing Tanworth-in-Arden Parish Council, expressed two concerns around highway maintenance and suggested that work specifications and monitoring should be tightened up. The issues of concern were as follows –

- Delay in getting work started resulting in growing problems and more cost;
- Poor quality work to repair road surfaces.

The Chair said these concerns would be considered during discussion of Agenda item 4, Highways Maintenance Plan.

(iii) Question from Mrs Findley relating to the Toucan Crossing on Shipston Road and speed limit.

Mrs Findley supported the proposed Toucan Crossing and asked for a 30 m.p.h speed limit along Shipston Road. Mrs. Findley expressed concern that the design for the scheme had been amended to accommodate a tree and felt that people's lives were more important than a tree.

Councillor Hyde asked that these comments be considered during consideration of agenda item 5 – Toucan Crossing on Shipston Road

(iv) Question from Mr Marsh – Dodwell Park and speed limit on the B439.

Mr. Marsh asked about the review of speed limits on B roads and whether they would be included on the B439 adjacent to Dodwell Park.

Both Councillors Peter Barnes and Richard Hobbs supported this proposal and had asked that traffic speed be monitored.

Don Foster said he was aware of the problem and that a speed survey had been carried out on the B roads leading into Bidford-on-Avon but not on the B439. He would report back before the September meeting of this Committee to Councillors Barnes and Hobbs.

(v) Question from Alan Bridgeman relating to Albany Road, Wellesbourne – Permit Parking Scheme

Mr. Bridgeman said that residents of Albany Road had appreciated being consulted on this scheme and supported most of the proposals, agenda item 2. There were some issues which needed to be addressed, however, relating to –

- traffic wardens being overzealous in issuing tickets in respect of cars being incorrectly parked. He asked for residents to receive advice on this issue;
- abuse of the use of annual visitor permits and the need for control over their use and issue. He had also heard a rumour that day permits were to be issued at a cost of £3 each, which residents considered to be expensive, and asked for clarification on this issue.

Mr. Bridgeman then raised concern about the Bureau junction trial and traffic travelling in the wrong direction along Albany Road at speed.

The Chair advised Mr Bridgeman that the first two items were district council functions and should be raised with them.

Don Foster, referring to the latter issue, said that the Bureau junction trial scheme would be concluded at the end of the year and would be re-assessed then with a report back to this Committee.

Roger Bennett said that the abuse of the one-way system had been referred to the police and that the Traffic Projects Group would investigate the layout of the Albany Road/Wellesbourne Grove junction to see if it would be possible to prevent illegal manoeuvres.

(vi) Question from Eric Vickers about the proposal for double yellow lines in Saxon Close.

Mr. Vickers, referring to the report on agenda item 2, Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement, expressed concern about the proposal for double yellow lines along both sides of the Close and suggested that double yellow lines be restricted to the right hand side only. He supported double yellow lines at both sides of the entry to the close and for them to be extended.

Councillor Richard Hyde said that he had asked the officers to revisit the proposals for Saxon Close following residents' concerns.

(vii) Question from Richard Thompson, MD, RJ Thompson Building Contractor, relating to annual parking permit for carrying out work to businesses in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Mr Thompson expressed concern about the difficulty contractors had experienced in carrying out work to businesses in Stratford-upon-Avon and complying with the traffic regulations. He said that he had written to the County Council suggesting that he pay a £250 annual fee for two parking discs to allow his workmen to park whilst carrying out repair works.

Roger Bennett undertook to discuss further the proposal put forward by Mr. Thompson.

(viii) Question from Colin Hewitt, Retailer relating to Agenda item No 2 Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement.

Colin Hewitt said that he had no objection to the scheme, in principle, but said that there had been an effect on trade. He had hoped that the 20 minute period in Bridge Street would be extended to 1 hour to encourage local people back into the town. He supported the proposal for free parking for the whole

of Sundays but would like to see this extended to the whole of Sunday not just the period up to 12 noon.

(ix) Question from Andrew Cooper, representing the Town Management Partnership, relating to Agenda item No 2 Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement.

Andrew Cooper said that the Partnership –

- Supported extending the 20 minutes waiting to 30 minutes and the payment of a nominal 20p;
- Considered that the move to simplify the scheme to 1 hour in the town centre was welcomed except if it was applied to Bridge Street and High Street because this would likely encourage shoppers to return to the old way of cars waiting for spaces and less through flow of traffic;
- Considered that the Sunday charging at 12:00 noon did not go far enough and parking should be free for the whole day otherwise people would be confused.
- Considered that there was a lack of publicity about the scheme. He had surveyed 62 shopkeepers and they were unaware of the loading arrangements.
- Considered that there was a lack of signing;
- Considered that enforcement was too heavy handed in particular in connection with deliveries from their own lorries;
- Hoped that the revisions would be implemented before Christmas and the busy trading period.

In reply Roger Bennett said that he would do what he could to implement some of the revisions before Christmas. However, the proposals with financial implications would need to be reported to Cabinet in September and they then needed to be advertised. It might not be possible to achieve implementation of all the revisions before next year particularly if objections were received.

The Chair asked that the Stratford Partnership be kept informed about the programme of implementation.

2. Review of Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement in Stratford-on-Avon District

Roger Bennett presented the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy outlining the new parking management scheme involving decriminalised parking enforcement arrangements, which were introduced in Stratford-on-Avon District in October 2004. The report set out the results of a review of the arrangements now that they had been in place for six months.

Members' were asked to note amendments to the recommendations contained in page 3 of the report as follows –

- Recommendation 5 to be amended to read “That a variation to the Consolidation Order be advertised allowing the imposition of charges for the use of parking bays in pay and display areas which are withdrawn from general use as proposed in Appendix E to the report.” Reference to “skips” be deleted from Appendix E.
- Recommendation 10 be amended by the deletion of the word “listed” and insertion of the word “recommended”.

Members were advised that the general consensus was that the scheme was a success and had brought benefits to the District. This was confirmed at the stakeholder workshop held in February when there was a clear message that these benefits should not be lost in any changes introduced. There had been three significant areas considered in the review as follows –

- Simplification of the charging arrangements. The proposal for this was the creation of a one-hour maximum parking zone in the town centre. This included Bridge Street, High Street and Union Street although it was accepted that there was a further option for these streets to be a maximum of 30 minutes.
- The free parking period. The proposal was for the 50p charge for 40 minutes and the free 20-minute period to be abolished in favour of a 30-minute period charged at 20p.
- The impact of abolishing charges on a Sunday. There was a concern that abolishing charges on a Sunday would result in traffic management problems arising but the impact of this would be less if the charges were abolished up to 12 noon.

During discussion the following points were made –

- The report was extremely comprehensive but lacked sufficient financial information for Members to make better judgements on charges and free periods;
- The results of the six months post implementation review had been delayed for three months because of the election;
- Residents' main concerns related to the improved circulation of traffic in Stratford.
- The 20 minutes free time was not sufficient and should be extended to 30 minutes. Some Members expressed the view that this should remain free of charge whilst other Members supported a 20 p charge to avoid confusion. A suggestion was put forward that income received from this source should be ring fenced for Stratford;

- That if there was support for the 30 minute free period that assurances could be given that this could be accommodated within budget;
- The maximum waiting time in Bridge Street, High Street and Union Street should be 30 minutes rather than the 1 hour proposed but that the 1 hour parking proposal for Chapel Lane should remain.
- That it might be appropriate to defer a decision to enable further financial information to be provided.
- That none of the other authorities consulted operated a free parking period during the week (Appendix C).

In reply to Members' concerns about financial information and questions from the Chair Roger Bennett advised that the financial predictions had been based on actual income rather than the business models. On this basis the predicted operating surplus in the first year would be about £220k. This income would be needed to provide revenue funding for the Park and Ride Scheme and to fund the borrowing requirements to extend the scheme elsewhere in the county. Allowing a free 30 minutes period would mean a loss of income of about £43,000. Abolishing on-street charges on a Sunday would result in a loss of income of about £50k. Any further reduction in the operating surplus would seriously affect the financial viability of the scheme. The introduction of a nominal charge of 20p for 30 minutes would compensate for the losses.

In addition the policy of Warwickshire County Council in the repayment of capital of the type involved was 10 years whereas in the financial models cost recovery was approximately 4 years.

The Chair said he understood Members' concerns regarding the financial position but suggested that they should not defer the report and to make a decision based on the information before them.

Following further discussion it was resolved -

- (1) 6 Members voting in favour and 5 against, that Cabinet be recommended to approve that, in those streets in Stratford-upon-Avon with pay and display, the 50 pence for 40 minutes charge and the free 20 minute period be abolished and replaced with a free 30 minute period, and that on-street charges on a Sunday in Stratford-upon-Avon be abolished before 12 noon.
- (2) a majority of Members voting in favour, that proposals for waiting limited to 30 minutes, no return for 1 hour, 8.00am to 6.00pm, daily in Bridge Street, High Street and Union Street, Stratford-upon-Avon and waiting limited to 1 hour, no return for 2 hours from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in Chapel Lane, Stratford-upon-Avon be advertised.
- (3) That proposals for waiting limited to one hour, no return for two hours, 8.00am to 10.00pm, daily, except for permit holders in

Great William Street, John Street, Mansell Street, Mulberry Street, Payton Street, Scholars Lane, Shakespeare Street, and Tyler Street, Stratford-upon-Avon be advertised.

- (4) That proposals for waiting limited to one hour, no return for two hours, 8.00am to 10.00pm Monday to Saturday, except for permit holders in Albany Road, Brewery Street, Maidenhead Road, Mayfield Avenue, Mayfield Court and Wellesbourne Grove, Stratford-upon-Avon be advertised.
- (5) That a variation to the Consolidation Order be advertised allowing the imposition of charges for the use of parking bays in pay and display areas which are withdrawn from general use as proposed in Appendix E.
- (6) That Stratford on Avon District Council be formally requested to consider the removal of the free 20-minute period and introduce a free 30-minute period in off-street car parks and the removal of charges on a Sunday before 12 noon.
- (7) That proposals for changes to the Residents Parking Scheme (RPS) in Stratford-upon-Avon be advertised to provide for the creation of 4 Zones as described in the report with the hours of operation (except in those streets mentioned in 3 above, which are daily) being 8.00am to 10.00pm, Monday to Saturday and for guest house permits to be valid in any zone.
- (8) That further consideration be given to the system for the issue of visitors permits.
- (9) That proposals be advertised for the introduction of a 50% reduction in the cost of either the first residents parking permit or visitors permit issued to persons of pensionable age in receipt of housing or council tax benefits in Stratford-on-Avon District.
- (10) That the proposals for changes to the County Council's Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places Consolidation Order for Stratford-on-Avon District recommended in Table 3 in Appendix B to the report be advertised.
- (11) That adequate arrangements are made for the scheme to be publicised to the public and shopkeepers/businesses to include a review of signage;
- (12) That reports on the operation of the scheme be presented in 6 and 12 months after implementation with the 12 monthly report containing any proposals for amending the scheme.

3. Options for the Future of the Minor Injuries Unit at Stratford-upon-Avon Hospital

Martin Gibbins presented the report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive.

South Warwickshire General Hospital Trust was embarking on a consultation process that would consider options for the future of the Minor Injuries Unit at Stratford-upon-Avon Hospital. The Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, at their meeting on 27 July 2005, considered the issue and would consider it further at the September meeting. The discussions of this Committee would be reported to that meeting.

During discussion –

- Support was expressed for continuation of the Minor Injuries Unit, which Members considered provided an excellent service.
- Some members expressed the view that it would be appropriate for patients to be dealt with by nurse practitioners, whilst other Members considered that a General Practitioner should lead the Unit.
- Members considered that the Unit would be utilised more if there were better direction signs and its services were more widely publicised.

Resolved -

- (1) To note the options for the future of the Minor Injuries Unit at Stratford-upon-Avon;
- (2) Inform the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee that this Committee supports the continuation of the Minor Injuries Unit, which they consider provides a valuable service to the area and that it should have improved direction signs and its facilities be better publicised.

4. Highway Maintenance Plan 2005/06 and Five Year List of Structural Maintenance Schemes

Members considered the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy.

The report provided information about the highway maintenance work proposed in 2005/06 and listed other sites where maintenance work would be required in the future.

During discussion Members –

- Suggested that they should discuss their local scheme individually with the officers;
- Expressed concern about the lack of information on the timetabling of the proposed schemes;
- Expressed concern about performance under the contractual arrangement and the condition of the road surfaces in rural areas.

In reply to Members' questions Peter Samwell explained the difficulty of prioritising schemes and setting a timescale. He explained that, because of more urgent work that might arise unexpectedly, it was more appropriate to prioritise schemes annually. He also explained that the Environment and Rural Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2005 scrutinised the work of the contractor carrying out the maintenance work. An internal audit was also currently being carried out.

Referring to paragraph (iv) of page 6 of the report the Chair suggested that, where there was a proposal for tree planting that had a highway impact, a control mechanism needed to be introduced to determine if the trees were appropriate in the circumstances of future highway maintenance costs.

Resolved that the –

- (1) Cabinet be informed of the comments made by the Area Committee;
- (2) Area Committee requests that the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee instigate an audit of the contractual arrangements and management controls for the County Council's maintenance contract particularly in relation to basic maintenance needs in Divisions which do not seem to be receiving a satisfactory service.

5. Toucan Crossing on Shipston Road and Pedestrian and Cycleway Link, Stratford-upon-Avon

Members considered the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy outlining the proposal to install a Toucan crossing on Shipston Road, Stratford and improve the pedestrian and cycleway link from the Bridgetown development to the town centre. The report detailed the consultation undertaken into the location of the Toucan crossing and presented the results of the consultation.

Following discussion it was resolved that -

- (1) approval be given to the proposed Toucan Crossing and pedestrian and cycleway link;
- (2) work should start, unless there are exceptional circumstances, prior to the start of the new school year in September 2005;

- (3) the process to consider reducing the speed limit on the Shipston Road to 30 mph is started once the crossing is installed.
- (4) work to eradicate the “ponding” that occurs on the Shipston/Kipling Road path occurs at the same time as the crossing is installed.

6. Parish Appraisals and Parish Plans

Martin Gibbins presented the report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive and explained that the purpose of this report was to outline the importance of the Parish Appraisal / Parish Plan process to rural communities. The report then proposed guidelines for the engagement of County Councillors and County Council departments in the production of appraisals and plans, and identified how the County Council should respond to plans and appraisals once produced.

Following discussion it was Resolved –

6 Members voting in favour and 4 against, that the Area Committee endorses paragraph 3.4 of the report as guidelines for the County Council responding to Parish Plans and Appraisals.

7. Asset Management Plan for Social Services

Martin Jones presented the report of the Director of Social Care and Health, which set out the Asset Management Plan for Social Services.

David Curle circulated supplementary information on the premises visited by Members following discussion of the previous' years plan and explained the progress and improvements that had been made since then.

Following discussion and questions it was Resolved -

That the Area Committee notes the contents of the Social Services Asset Management Plan.

8. Stratford-on-Avon Area Performance 2004/05

Martin Gibbins presented the report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive outlining the key performance indicators that were monitored and reported at the area as a well as the county level. The report presented the 2004/05 data for Stratford-on-Avon and highlighted some aspects that Members might wish to explore further.

During discussion Members commented –

- On their concern with performance on satisfaction with highway road maintenance;
- With reference to Appendix C, that less indicators were appropriate.

Resolved that the Area Committee:

- (1) Notes the 2004/05 area performance data;
- (2) Notes the County and Area Performance Targets for 2005/06

9. Appointment of Councillors to External Organisations

Members considered the report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive, in connection with the appointment of councillors/representatives to those external organisations for which the Committee was responsible. The Chair confirmed that the nominations to fill the appointments were as set out in the electronic mail communication to Members of 26 July 2005.

Resolved that the Committee –

- (1) nominates representatives to the organisations listed as follows -

Alcester Heritage Trust (1) - Councillor Knapman

South Warwickshire Area Community Education Council (3) –
Councillors Chris Saint, Helen McCarthy and David Booth

Brailes Free School Foundation (1) (non councillor) – T Wilde

Cotswold Area of Outstanding Beauty Partnership (1) – Councillor
Anita Macaulay

Friends of Stratford upon Avon Music Centre Committee (1) –
Councillor Peter Barnes

Hampton Lucy Grammar School Foundation (1) – Councillor Anita
Macaulay

Henley In Arden United Charities (1) – Councillor George Atkinson

John Coopers Foundation (1) (non councillor) – J Lockart

Long Itchington Educational Foundation (1) (non councillor) – A Bailey

Stratford-on-Avon District Council – Market Town Working Groups (4):-

Advantage Alcester – Councillor Nina Knapman

Stour Power – Councillor Chris Saint

Stratford Strategy Group – Councillor Mike Perry

Vision4Southam – Councillor Bob Stevens

Perkins Educational Foundation (2) – Councillor Bob Stevens and M J Davies (non-cllr)

RSC – Community Forum (2) – Councillors Mike Perry and Anita Macaulay

Salford Priors Marsh Farm Extraction of sand and gravel liaison group (1) – Councillor Peter Barnes

Shipston on Stour Age Concern (1) – Councillor Chris Saint

Southam Age Concern (1) – Councillor John Appleton

Stratford-upon-Avon and District Mental Health Association Springfield MIND Management Board (1) – Councillor Izzi Seccombe

Stratford-upon-Avon Association for the Residential Care of Handicapped (1) – Councillor Jill Dill-Russell

Stratford-upon-Avon Bishopton Community Nursey (1) – Councillor Mike Perry

World Class Stratford (2) Cabinet portfolio plus 1 – Councillor Chris Saint and George Atkinson

Stratford-upon-Avon College Corporation (1) – Councillor Helen McCarthy

Stratford-upon Avon Community Safety Partnership (1) – Councillor Jill Dill-Russell

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Management Partnership (1) – Councillor George Atkinson

Studley Leisure Centre User Forum (1) Councillor Helen McCarthy

King Edward V1 Grammar School (1) – D L Fox (non-councillor)

The Shakespeare Birthplace Theatre Trust (1) – Councillor Richard Hyde

Upton Fields Nature Reserve Management Committee (1) – Councillor Stevens

Wellesbourne Reverend Richard Boyse's Foundation (1) – G. Freeman
(non-councillor)

- (2) note that Stratford Citizens Advice Bureau and the Studley Family and Intermediate Treatment Centre have been deleted from the list of organisations.

10. Provisional Items for Future Meetings

21st September 2005 meeting

- (1) School numbers in South Warwickshire
- (3) B4451/07 Harbury Station Bridge

Future Meetings

- (1) Speed Limits on non A roads
- (2) Area Community Education Development

9. Any Other Business

None

The Committee rose at 7.20 p.m.

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Chair