

The Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee met at Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon on the 23rd November, 2005.

Present:-

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

Officers:-

William Brown, County Fire Officer
Peter Endall, Principal Solicitor, Chief Executive's Dept.
Don Foster, Head of Community Services, PTES.
Martin Gibbins, Area Manager, Chief Executive's Dept.
Pete Keeley, Principal Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Dept.
Roger Newham, Head of Transport Planning. PTES

Doug Henderson, Community Partnership Officer
Lee White, Project Manager, PTES.
Amanda Wilson-Patterson – Area Administrative Officer,
Chief Executive's Dept.
Lindsay Wright, Area Education Officer.
Rob McCluskey, Youth & Community Service
Peter Sutton, Adult & Continuing Learning

10 members of the public attended.

1. General

(1) Apologies

for absence was received from Councillors John Appleton and Mike Perry.

(2) Members' Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Agenda Item 3 – Draft School Organisation Plan

Councillors Richard Hyde, Peter Barnes, David Booth, Jill Dill-Russell, Richard Hobbs, Helen McCarthy, Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe and Bob Stevens declared personal interests as School Governors.

Agenda Item 4 - Warwickshire Provisional Local Transport Plan Councillor David Booth and Nina Knapman declared personal interests as an employee of the Ministry of Defence and a Council representative on Advantage Alcester, respectively.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on the 21st September 2005 and Matters Arising

(i) Minutes

Councillor Chris Saint reported that he did not attend the last meeting and the minutes should reflect this and the fact that he had submitted his apologies. Also Councillor Helen McCarthy's apologies for absence had not been recorded.

With regard to Minute 1(4)(ii) Councillor Michael Crutchley was a Town Councillor not a District Councillor.

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee's 21st September, 2005 meeting be approved as amended and be signed by the Chair.

(ii) Matters Arising

(a) Minute 1 (3) (c) – Question from Mr Marsh – Dodwell Park and speed limit on the B439.

Members were advised that Councillors Peter Barnes and Richard Hobbs had met with various parties to discuss the matter and a report would be submitted to a future meeting.

(b) Minute 1(3)(e) - Question from Eric Vickers about the proposal for double yellow lines in Saxon Close.

The Chair requested confirmation that the parking restrictions issues in Saxon Close were being addressed, should be confirmed at the next meeting.

(c) Minute 1(4)(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.

The Chair requested confirmation that the possibility of contractors working in the Town being able to purchase parking discs were being addressed, should be confirmed at the next meeting.

(d) Minute 2 – Provision of School Places – Stratford upon Avon Town

In response to comments from Councillor Peter Barnes about the allocation of developer contributions for school provision, including the amounts that have not yet been spent, the meeting was advised that the Education Officer would submit a report to the next meeting.

(4) Questions from the public

(i) Question from Mrs S Akerman on behalf of Clifford Pounders Requesting a Safe Off-Carriageway Cyclepath Connecting Clifford Chambers to Stratford.

Mrs S. Akerman presented a report to the Committee on behalf of the Clifford Pounders, setting out the reasons for requesting a safe off-carriageway cyclepath connecting Clifford Chambers to Stratford-upon-Avon.

She requested that bearing in mind the short distance of required path, the projected level of use, the current state of the road, the dangerous traffic, the number of children and the needs of the disabled, the council provide an off-carriageway path that is suitable for cyclists and pedestrians, and before another person is seriously injured (or even killed).

Members discussed several aspects of the request and made the following points:-

- There was a need for the proposals to be considered along with other similar cases.
- The development at Long Marston was likely to increase traffic on the road which would increase the potential dangers to cyclists.
- A route linked to the Greenway would provide a safer and more pleasant route but the owner of the land that would be crossed by a link path was opposed to such a link.
- Consideration should be given to the use of developer contributions under Section 106 Agreements relating to the development at Long Marston.

Don Foster indicated that the proposal from the Clifford Pounders needed a comprehensive response. He suggested that, in the meantime, members might wish to consider the issues when discussing the Local Transport Plan Report later on the agenda.

The Chair suggested that the officers should liaise with the District Council regarding possible funding from Section 106 monies relating to the development at Long Marston.

(ii) Question from District Councillor Nigel Rock on behalf of Napton Parish Council concerning road alterations in the village where Howcombe Lane joins Poplar Road / Brickyard Road.

Councillor Rock advised members that road alterations were due to start at this site on the 28/11/05. The scheme for these alterations had been drawn up by Design Services of Warwickshire County Council.

The Parish Council was not happy with the proposed scheme. It removed part of a village feature, which it did not wish to lose and it changed the shape of a road junction, which would make it impossible for both agricultural and large vehicles to negotiate.

The Parish Council had been told the work had to be done to deal with issues raised in a safety report which the Parish Council had not seen and did not know who produced it.

The Parish Council voiced its concerns at a site meeting with Ian Capewell of Design Services, WCC and Steve Bromley, Planning Officer, SDC but alleged their concerns were dismissed.

Obviously the Parish Council was disappointed that local opinion and knowledge had been ignored but even more concerned that Ian Capewell who had drawn up the scheme acted as "judge and jury". Surely this was a conflict of interest?

Therefore the Parish Council asks for the Area Committee to urge WCC Highways to re-consider this scheme before work commenced on the 28/11/05

Don Foster advised the Committee that :-

- the development concerned had received planning approval on appeal.
- there had been disruption to the local community during development of the site.
- The staggered junction had been included in the planning permission because it would be safer than a normal crossroads junction.
- Similar styles of junction were being used successfully in other parts of the county.
- A consultation meeting had been held with the Parish Council which resulted in the protection of a tree on the site and agreement not to use concrete kerbing.

The Chair concluded that the proposal had been well considered and consultations undertaken before a contract had been awarded.

(iii) Question from District Councillor Nigel Rock.

At the meeting of the County Council's Regulatory Committee on 27 September permission was given for the extraction of clay from my ward to be used in the rugby cement plant. The application had been under consideration for two years. One million tonnes of clay a year was to be moved by a fleet of lorries from the quarry to Rugby. Mindful of this, the committee decided that the reopening of the rail route between sites be regularly considered, as quarrying is set to last 40 years.

At the beginning of the two years the application took to determine, the route was virtually intact throughout its 18km length. However, the Area Committee gave permission to demolish a bridge at Bascote last year and fill in the cutting. I found out about this after the decision was taken.

It would clearly be more environmentally friendly to move the clay by rail. The economics of reopening should be considered sensibly in the future against not only local considerations but also climate change and CO2 emissions. One million tonnes a year is 180 lorries a day, but only one train. Further degradation of the route would make an already difficult struggle toward reopening more difficult.

My question is this. How does WCC propose to protect the route from more actions such as the Bascote Bridge issue? How can we ensure that this is flagged by all those considering these sort of decisions? The route appears to run through Rugby, Warwick and Stratford Districts. Have these authorities been notified of the County's decision, so that this may be considered as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Districts? I ask that this committee ensures some joined up government to ensure the possibility of reopening the rail route is not further compromised.

During the discussion the following points were raised:-

- The sustainability argument had been taken on board by the County Council in the preparation of transport policies.
- The Bascote bridge repair work had been undertaken having regard to the possible reopening of the railway line.
- Formal protection of the line was not contemplated as it had been protected by the Secretary of State when it had been transferred to Sustrans by covenant.

2. Crime Statistics and Crime Hot Spots Stratford

The report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive provided the committee with an overview of crime statistics in Stratford and provide performance information for 2004/5.

It was agreed that this matter would be considered at the next meeting.

3. Draft School Organisation Frame- work 2005/10

The Committee considered the report of the County Education Officer which sought comments on the draft School Organisation Framework.

Following introductory comments from Phil Astle Education Officer (School Organisation) members discussed several aspects of the report. The following points were made:-

- There was no guidance on the percentage of places for primary and secondary schools and the target of 7% surplus places by the end of the planning period 2010 was a compromise figure.
- There were no primary schools in the southern area with under 30 pupils although 2 were near to the figure.
- There was a need for sufficient provision for secondary places in Alcester
- Projections relating to school places should be prepared over as long a period as possible having regard to the budget preparation difficulties of some rural schools who have falling roles.
- Need for future forecasts to be made under a process that was shared with the schools.
- Wellesbourne School had increasing roles and the headmaster intended to reclaim accommodation used by the nursery. This would compromise nursery provision in the village and could have a negative impact at other schools in the area with falling roles. Consultations would be undertaken regarding the situation at Wellesbourne and the Education Department was working with the school to prepare a plan for the future.

In response to comments from Councillor Richard Hyde, Phil Astle agreed to provide details of the numbers of children that had been turned away from the Bridgetown School for all classes.

The Chair stressed that:-

- Every effort should be made to protect rural schools.
- Initiatives for the development of pre-school provision were welcomed.
- Housing in Stratford-on-Avon imposed pressures on the education system both in the Town and the surrounding rural area.

- There was a need for consideration to be given to green transport initiatives.

Resolved:-

- (1) That the Area Committee consider and comment on the draft School Organisation Framework 2005/10.
- (2) That the Area Committee's comments be forwarded to the Cabinet at its meeting on 8th December.

4. Warwickshire Provisional Local Transport Plan 2005

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

The County Council has a statutory responsibility to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP). The LTP sets out the County's Transport Strategy, and provides the framework for how transport and accessibility will be improved across Warwickshire over the next five years. The Area Committee was invited to comment on the proposals contained in the Plan for the Southern and Western Warwickshire Areas, and the Provisional allocation of resources set out in the LTP Delivery Strategy.

Following introductory comments from Don Foster, Roger Newham and Lee White indicated their availability to respond to members detailed comments.

Members discussed several aspects of the Plan and made the following points:-

Improvements for Walking and Cycling

- The reference to improved cycling provision on the Tiddington Road, Stratford-upon-Avon should be more positive than being kept under review.
- With regard to the construction of cycle ways, limited funding was available countywide and was allocated on the basis of greatest need.
- Members considered that there was not enough emphasis in the plan for cycle ways particularly having regard to future potential developments in cycling technology such as electro assisted cycles.
- The use of the Greenway as an alternative to the Clifford Chambers road which was referred to in public question time, had been considered but the landowner was opposed to any link to the Greenway over his land. A cycleway along the Clifford Chambers road appeared to be the only option and information should be obtained relating to the increased road usage generated by the Long Marston development.

Public Transport

- More flexibility was required in public transport and there were several ideas to be considered including the integration of school transport with public transport and affordability under the community transport strategy.
- With regard to railways, comments in the Plan could be considered to be contradictory because the issues related to the whole District not to the western area and the southern area
- Clarification should be given on the Council's attitude towards linking rail lines.
- Parkway Station at Bishopton

The suggested Parkway Station at Bishopton would be popular for a lot of people living in the rural area and the suggested increase in the train journey time would not be that great.

The Parkway Station would serve different customers and with regard to the timing of trains, signalling improvements would reduce journey times.

- Rail Link to Honeybourne

The rail link to Honeybourne would cost £6m per mile to reinstate or £1m to upgrade and that the Governments present attitude to subsidising rail links was to reduce subsidy.

There was no business case for this particular rail line.

Campaigners to preserve the rail route had indicated that the reinstatement was an engineering possibility.

The Worcestershire Local Transport Plan referred to the line as a bypass strategy in their plan.

The forthcoming Olympics could benefit from the construction of the line

The Local Transport Plan was based on a 5 year period and reinstatement of the railway line would not be undertaken during that time.

Other Issues

- The Long Marston development would impact on the village and investment should be sought to introduce measures to avoid through traffic.

- Consideration should be given to the signs advertising the cost of park and ride travel also indicating that children travelled free.
- Traffic growth indicated for Stratford-upon-Avon of 13% was confirmed.
- The officers advised that the western relief road proposal was still supported and had not been taken of the agenda. There were funding difficulties and that the identification of the land previously allocated for housing, as “strategic housing reserve land” affected the funding possibilities. In general a ring road around the town should be considered under a review of the transport strategy in a further round of consultation meetings. There was a problem of the project never being viable for public funding and the alternative was through developer funding. A further report would be submitted to the Committee.
- Proposals needed to be included in the Plan to assist in the attraction of funding from various Section 106 Agreements in an accumulative manner, which would not be possible if the Plan did not contain the proposals.
- There was a need for the A435 to be detrunked to enable speed reducing measures to be undertaken by the County Council.

Conclusion

The Chair requested that a forum relating to the Provisional Local Transport Plan should be arranged in the Spring to which a wide range of organisations should be invited with as wide a representation as possible. The forum should not be part of an actual committee meeting. He suggested that the officers prepare a structured programme for such a forum for the Committee’s consideration at its January meeting.

5. Trial Traffic Management Scheme at the Alcester Road/Grove Road and Alcester Road/Albany Road Junctions, Stratford-upon-Avon

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy relating to an experimental Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting the right turns from Alcester Road, Stratford-upon-Avon into Grove Road and Albany Road. Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders lapse after six months unless extended or made permanent.

The Order was extended to 29th December 2005 by the Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee at its meeting on 17th November 2004.

In response to comments from Councillor Anita Macaulay relating to the impact of the proposal on a dental practice in Albany Road, Don Foster indicated that the

recommendation to proceed with the proposal was made after wide consultations and was based on the overall improvements in traffic movement in the area.

Resolved:-

That the experimental Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting right turns from Alcester Road, Stratford-upon-Avon into Grove Road and Albany Road is made permanent.

6. B4451/07 Harbury Station Bridge

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy which outlined proposals for protecting the weak edges of the road bridge over the rail bridge.

Resolved:-

That the Committee approves the proposed measures to protect the weak edges of Harbury Station Bridge by the provision of high kerbs and traffic signals.

7. Community Development Fund 2005/6

The Committee considered the report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive which gave details of the applications received for the Area for this year's (2005/6) Community Development Fund. It described the processes followed in evaluating the applications and makes recommendations as to which applications should receive a grant.

Following introductory comments from Doug Henderson, Community Partnership Officer, members noted that the references to the Wards/Divisions in Appendix B needed to be amended to reflect the current names of Divisions.

It was then Resolved:-

That the Area Committee confirms:

- (1) The eligibility of applications as detailed in Appendix A to the report.
- (2) That those eligible applications in Appendix A should receive a grant
- (3) The level of funding to be received by each application should be as shown in Appendix A.

8. South Warwickshire Area Community Education Annual Report – October 2005

The Committee considered the report of the County Education Officer, which related to progress upon the work of the South Warwickshire Community Education services that include the Area Community Education Council (ACEC), the Adult Service and work of the Youth Service.

Following introductory comments from Rob McCluskey, South Warwickshire Area Community Education Office members thanked the officers for the work undertaken in relation to South Warwickshire Community Education services.

During the discussion concern was expressed about the future administrative arrangements and the need to retain local knowledge.

Resolved:-

That the Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee endorses the progress report of Youth & Community and Adult Community Learning Services in South Warwickshire.

9. Stratford-on-Avon Area Business Plan - Half-year Report

The Committee considered the report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive which outlined the performance of County Council services against the Stratford-on-Avon Area Business Plan. Performance was recorded against milestone targets and key performance indicators. Members were asked to comment on the performance information held in the report

- A further report would be submitted indicating whether the details under Health and Welfare of the number of households receiving more than 10 hours etc, was staffing or population based.
- Members were advised of a recent death caused by a house fire.
- It was not appropriate for detailed targets such as the number of minor repairs to roads, to be included in this Business Plan.

Resolved:-

That the Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee notes the contents of the report.

10. Provisional Items for Future Meetings

18th January, 2006

- (1) Affordable Housing
- (2) Area Community Learning Plan
- (3) Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Future Meeting

- (1) Speed Limits on non A roads
- (2) Education – pupil numbers
- (3) Amalgamation of Police Forces which should involve someone who could respond to the Area Committee to enable a Stratford view to be prepared.

Members noted that it was possible that the next meeting would have a public presentation relating to the preparation of the budget.

11. Any Other Business

There were no urgent items to consider.

The Committee rose at 6.45 p.m.
