

The Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee met at Town Hall Sheep Street, Stratford upon-Avon on the 21 March 2007.

Present:-

Councillors George Atkinson (Chair)

“Richard Hyde (Vice Chair)

“John Appleton

“Peter Barnes

“David Booth

“Richard Hobbs

“Nina Knapman

“Helen McCarthy

“Sue Main

“Chris Saint

“Izzi Seccombe

“Bob Stevens

Officers:-

Environment and Economy Directorate

Graeme Fitton, Head of Transport and Highways.

Nicholas Dauncy, Transport Planner.

Malcolm Graham, Senior Engineer.

Peter Samwell, County Highways Project Manager.

Children, Young People and Families Directorate

Ally Lynch, Extended Services Development Officer.

Performance and Development Directorate

Sarah Duxbury, Corporate Legal Services Manager.

Martin Gibbins, Stratford Area Manager.

Nick Gower-Johnson, County Partnerships Manager.

Pete Keeley, Member Services.

Michelle McHugh, Scrutiny Officer.

Helene Toogood, Community Partnership Officer.

Amanda Wilson-Patterson – Area Administrative Officer.

8 members of the public attended.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Members' Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

(1) Joint Membership Declarations

The following members who were also members of the Stratford on Avon District Council and, where indicated, also members of the Warwickshire Police Authority, declared personal interests in any item on the agenda affecting the District Council or the Police Authority.

Councillors John Appleton, Peter Barnes, Richard Hobbs (also member of the Warwickshire Police Authority), Sue Main, Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe (also member of the Warwickshire Police Authority) and Bob Stevens.

Councillor Bob Stevens declared a personal interest in **Agenda Item 5 - Progress of the Customer Service & Access** in view of his involvement with VISION Southam.

Councillor Richard Hyde declared a personal interest in **Agenda Item 5 - Progress of the Customer Service & Access** in view of his involvement with Advantage West Midlands.

Councillor Chris Saint declared a personal interest in **Agenda Item 11 - Extended Services Update Report** as a School Governor.

Councillor Richard Hobbs declared a prejudicial interest in **Agenda Item 13 - Stratford on Avon Well being Fund Potential Commission** in view of his involvement in Victim Support and left the room when the matter was discussed.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on the 24 January 2007 and Matters Arising

Minutes

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee's 24 January 2007 meeting be approved as amended and be signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

Minute 11 – Consultations on Local Area Scrutiny

Michelle McHugh, Scrutiny Officer, reported that in respect to the suggestions made for local scrutiny, it had been agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group that parking, including verge parking within Stratford District (not simply the town of Stratford-upon-Avon) should be a review undertaken jointly with Stratford on Avon

District Council.

Following comments from Councillor David Booth regarding the actual decision of the Co ordinating Group it was agreed that consideration of the matter, including any nominations, should be deferred until the next meeting.

4. Public Questions and Answers

(1) Question From Mr R.E. Howe, Chairman of the Whitchurch Parish Meeting re surface water on the C48 and work programmed for the road.

Mr Howe informed the Committee of surface water problems on the C48 particularly between Wimpstone Bridge and the Leys which he considered was due to the incorrect haunching of the surface. He outlined several points in support of his request for the problem to be resolved. He had written to the Divisional Surveyor but was dissatisfied with the response received.

Peter Samwell, County Highways Project Manager, outlined the history of works to the road and confirmed that the only practical option to resolve matters would be to resurface the road. He outlined the reasons why the works had not been given a high priority.

He apologised for the delay that had occurred in responding to Mr Howe.

Work had been undertaken to overcome the flooding difficulties and this would be monitored. He added that the amount of rain in recent months had resulted in water on many roads in the area.

(2) Question from J Haytor regarding an extension of the 30 mph speed limit at Great Alne.

Mr Haytor circulated several photographs supporting his request for an extension of the 30 mph speed limit to include sharp corners leading into the village from Alcester.

He drew attention to the narrowness of the road at the location concerned and expressed concern at the location of the school crossing patrol. There had been several accidents and speed reduction would reduce the likelihood of further accidents.

Graeme Fitton, Head of Transport and Highways, indicated that the Directorate was aware of the dangers at the location and outlined action that had been taken such as chevrons and road markings. He advised the Committee that drivers of vehicles tended to drive according to the characteristics of the road and that it would be inappropriate to impose a 30 mph speed limit at this point. He added that the Council had a record of only one accident in the past 5 years at this location.

Councillor Nina Knapman indicated that she was liaising with the Parish Council over the issues and suggested that more speed limit repeater signs and other measures should be examined.

It was agreed that the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy should prepare a report to a future meeting of the Committee dealing with the issues.

(3) Question from Mr Stammer on behalf of the Snitterfield Parish Council relating to Parking at Highfield Close, Snitterfield.

Mr Stammer reported that the Parish Council would like to see the grassed area concerned reinstated as green open space and the damage caused by people parking on the area repaired. It had been suggested in the past that this area could be used for parking but this had not been supported. He indicated that the Parish Council were not necessarily asking for the area to be laid out for parking. It was suggested that cars could be prevented from being parked on the area by the installation of wooden bollards.

The Committee was informed of a future decision to be taken by the Cabinet and possible joint working with the District Council concerning parking, including parking on verges.

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of any action until after that decision

(4) Question from Town Councillor Crutchley relating to a cycleway along the Birmingham Road, Stratford upon Avon.

Councillor Crutchley requested the Committee to support the creation of a cycleway along the Birmingham Road at Stratford upon Avon to link with the Park and Ride

station. He outlined several reasons why he considered this should be undertaken including the need to encourage cycle use.

Councillor Jill Dill-Russell outlined dangers for cyclists travelling along the Birmingham Road which needed to be resolved particularly between the Wilson Homes development and the Park and Ride. She urged the Committee to support the requested a cycleway/footpath. She understood that funding had been made available and that work would be undertaken at some point later this year.

5. Progress of the Customer Service & Access agenda

The Committee received a verbal presentation on progress of the Customer Service & Access agenda from Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Services

She outlined the history of the Council's decision to proceed with a strategy and the customer services that were being provided in the district and countywide.

The following points were made during the discussion:

Discussions were being held with the District Council about a site at Elizabeth House.

The possibility of an internal phone to link with the Shire Hall should be investigated.

Limited facilities existed at Winton House.

The District Council intended to submit a bid to AWM following the unsuccessful Digital Challenge Bid.

Use of Post Offices would make Offices more viable.

With regard to the Dr Bus mobile advice service, it was possible that other agencies would join the venture. Councillors and Parishes would be informed of the buses route.

Members noted the progress being made.

6. Stratford Park and Ride – Performance Report 2006/07

The Committee considered the report and supplementary report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy.

Stratford Park and Ride opened in November 2005. Sufficient operational experience and patronage and financial data was now available to provide an assessment of the performance of the scheme to date and to enable a detailed consideration of proposals for more cost effective operation in the future.

In order to reduce the amount of subsidy required to cover the deficit in 2007/08 the proposal is to undertake a package of alterations to the Park and Ride service with the object of reducing the projected subsidy requirement by approximately £80,000 to approximately £213,000 in 2007/08.

The Area Committee was invited to express its views on the proposals so that they can be included in a future report to Cabinet.

The Committee also considered the Strategic Directors supplementary report relating to a proposal to introduce free bus travel for passengers boarding at the Stratford Park and Ride site before 9 a.m.

The following points were made during the discussion:

Use of the site would be encouraged by proposed improved signage and additional publicity.

Town Centre car parks should be closed by the District Council as part of joint working.

The proposed improved signage should include signs on the A46 before Marraway Island when travelling towards Startford, giving drivers adequate warning of the possible need to change lanes.

A review should be undertaken of the hours of operation of lighting on site during the evening.

It was possible that reducing services by closure on certain days would introduce uncertainty amongst users.

Consideration should be given to increased discount for season tickets.

A review of any changes would be undertaken in 12 months.

It was suggested that the site should not be closed on Sundays during summer months or on public holidays or other major events that occur during the winter months.

Councillor Richard Hyde, seconded by Councillor Mike Perry, moved and it was Resolved by 8 votes to 2.

That the Cabinet be advised that the Stratford on Avon Area Committee supports:

- (1) Proposals A, C, D and E detailed in the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy's report
- (2) That the Stratford Park and Ride remain open on Sundays in the spring/summer months (April – September) and closed only in the autumn/winter months (October to March), with the condition that the services be operated on any public holidays or other major event that occur during that period, as considered appropriate.

It was also Resolved:

- (3) The Committee support the proposal to introduce free bus travel including the return journey, for passengers boarding at the Stratford Park and Ride site before 9 a.m.

7. Speed Management Strategy

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy.

At its meeting on 18th January, the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft report of a Speed Management Strategy for the County. After consideration, the Committee requested that the views of Area Committees should be invited on the draft report and Speed Management Strategy and related matters.

The report invited such views.

During the discussion following points were made:

There were considerable benefits in educating drivers who had committed a speeding offence about the dangers of speed.

Although the Police do not have the power to veto speed limit proposals by the Council, it would be against the Council's policy to ignore any objection from the Police.

Care should be taken not to raise expectations of residents about the introduction of speed reduction schemes.

Speed limits have to have regard to national criteria, including street lighting, otherwise would not be legally enforceable.

The Strategy should provide for the introduction of a tick box criteria for determining whether speed limits were appropriate in a particular area so that the policy could be applied countywide.

It was essential to provide adequate signage and publicity, including advise to the parish councils, relating to speed limit proposals.

Consideration should be given to introducing 20 mph speed limits outside all schools.

The policy for the use of speed cameras has been relaxed but for the time being, the current criteria based on accident levels was still used. Guidance was being sought on the criteria to be used for locating cameras following which a priority list of locations on A and B Roads would be prepared.

Care must be given to making traffic calming engineering measures as environmentally acceptable as could be.

Regard must be had to the likely reduction in speed to be achieved following the introduction of a speed reduction scheme,

Resolved:

That the comments made by the Stratford on Avon Area Committee on the draft Speed Management Strategy be submitted to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

8. Capital Programme for Transport 2007-8

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy which set out the draft 2007-8 Capital Programme for Integrated Transport for the Stratford on Avon area.

Resolved:

That Members:-

- (1) Support the Capital Programme for Integrated Transport for Stratford on Avon Area given in Table 1 of the report.
- (2) Support the schemes identified in Table 3 for the delegated budget and the policy of removal of schemes from the list of requests if not selected after three years.

9. Highway Maintenance Plan 2007/8 and Five year list of Structural Maintenance Schemes

The considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy which provided information about highway maintenance work proposed in 2007/2008

and lists other sites where maintenance work will be required in the future.

Following introductory comments from Peter Samwell, County Highways Project Manager members discussed several aspects of the report. The following points were made.

Concern was expressed about the frequency of footway surfacing. The cost of reconstructing a footway was approximately 20 times more expensive than slurry sealing.

Slurry lasted for between 5 and 10 years and had to be done when conditions are right.

Further information would be obtained relating to the oily substance that often appeared on footway surfaces after slurry work had been undertaken

A further examination would be undertaken of the Bridgefoot Gyratory surface.

Concern was expressed about delays in schemes, in particular works to the canal bridge on the Fenny Compton Road

The impact of drainage from fields would be need discussed with the NFU.

The frequency of road inspections was agreed with the Council's insurers.

Consideration should be given to giving feedback on action taken to repair faults including potholes, possibly through the website/call centre

Resolved:

That the Cabinet be informed of Members views on the Highway Maintenance Plan 2007/2008 and the Five Year List of Maintenance Schemes.

10. Response to Request for Clarification on Local Transport Plan Policy

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy.

The report recommended that the safeguarded transport corridor which runs from Stratford Rail Station frontage (following the railway line north through the 'NC Joseph' development site) to Birmingham Road is protected only for use as a pedestrian and cycle route, and that Western Road is identified as the preferred access route for buses between the Birmingham Road and a possible new bus/rail interchange at the station.

Following introductory comments from Nicholas Dauncy, Transport Planner, members discussed several aspects of the report and made the following points:

World Class Stratford was likely to result in benefits for transport in the Town.

The proposed bridge and link road would provide a useful short cut for school children

The retention of the proposed link road PR 10.7 would prevent the Steam Centre expanding.

It was suggested that PR10.7 should be protected until work on the Urban Design Framework had been completed.

There were currently several traffic problems in Western Road such as parking and heavy vehicles that would need resolving if Western Road was to be the preferred route for buses.

Also the Western Road/Birmingham Road junction would need improving.

Resolved:

That the Committee endorses and recommends to Cabinet that:-

- (1) The section of the currently safeguarded transport corridor which runs from Stratford Rail Station frontage (following the railway line north through the NC Joseph

development site) to Birmingham Road is protected only for use as a pedestrian and cycle route.

(2) Western Road is identified as the preferred access route for buses between the Birmingham Road and a possible new bus/rail interchange at the station although the

Committee believes that traffic logistics will be a problem.

11. Extended Services update report

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families which summarised developments in the extended services strategy for Warwickshire and a specific update upon activity in the Stratford area.

Following introductory comments from Ally Lynch, Extended Services Development Officer, members discussed the report and made the following points:

The importance of sustainability in the Strategy.

The need for members to have information on the performances of schools in their respective Divisions.

The proposed three days training possibly required too great a commitment.

Literature about funding was being distributed.

Should not be a burden on head teachers because of the proposed clusters of schools.

Resolved:

That the Area Committee endorses the progress to date of the Extended Services strategy in the Stratford area.

12. Implications of the Childcare Act 2006 and development of Children's Centres

Consideration of this report was deferred.

13. Stratford on Avon Well being Fund Potential Commission

The report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development.

The Area Committee was asked to consider whether to approve four Well being Fund projects - the preparation of a Play Strategy for Stratford on Avon, potential Stour Valley Development Trust, Community Buildings Energy Efficiency Project and Rural Cinema Scheme

Councillor Richard Hobbs Declared a prejudicial interest in this item and left the room when it became apparent that the Committee would consider issues relating to Victim Support.

During the discussion the following points were raised

Victim support would not be receiving grant from the District Council and it was suggested that this would be a good cause for Well being funding.

The condition of some village Halls could be improved and there needed to be an DDA assessment and an energy audit.

Councillor Nina Knapman, seconded by Councillor Izzi Seccombe, moved and it was Resolved:

That the Area Committee :

- (1) approves the Well being Fund projects set out as Appendix A to the report.
- (2) is willing to consider an application from Victim Support for funding from the Wellbeing Fund.

14. Stratford on Avon Social Inclusion Fund

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

The Area Committee was asked to consider the award of a Social Inclusion Fund grant to engage a Community Development Worker for the District.

During his introduction of the item Martin Gibbins, the Area Manager, stressed the post would greatly assist in communication and would help in avoiding duplication amongst organisations.

During the discussion some members expressed reservations about approving the proposal because of the funding implications for other bids and continuity issues when the three year period ends. It was also suggested that there was a need for a business case.

Members were advised that local organisations needed the assistance that would be given by the appointment proposed.

Resolved by 4 votes to 7:

That the Area Committee does not approve funding for the engagement of a Community Development Worker from the Social Inclusion Fund

15. Appointment of a County Council Representative on the Board of the Trustees of the King Edward VI Grammar School, Stratford-upon-Avon

The report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development.

The Committee need to consider the appointment of the Council's representative on the Board of Trustees.

Resolved:

That the Area Committee nominates Councillor Mike Perry as the County Council's representative on the Board of the Trustees of the King Edward VI Grammar School, Stratford-upon-Avon.

16. Provisional Items for Future Meetings

16 May 2007 Meeting

Urban Development Framework - County Council's response on the Urban Development Framework for Stratford

Area Community Learning Partnership (ACLP) for Stratford District, Progress Report 2006/07 and Action Plan for 2007/08. Report summarising progress made by the ACLP during 2006/07 and giving an outline for proposed partnership activity for 2007/08

(3) Arden Street Stratford-upon-Avon Proposed Puffin Crossing - Results of the public consultation resulting from Stratford Health Care Ltd agreement to provide a controlled pedestrian crossing on Arden Street Stratford-upon-Avon, under a Section 278 agreement,

Harbury Station Bridge Weak Edge Protection Report on alternative proposals put forward by local Parish Councils to protect the weak edges of Harbury Station Bridge.

17. Any Other Business

None

The Committee rose at 7.30 p.m.