

The **WARWICK AREA COMMITTEE** met at **WARWICK** on the **21st NOVEMBER, 2006.**

Present:-

Councillor Sarah Boad (Chair)
“ Ken Browne
“ Les Caborn
“ Alan Cockburn
“ Jose Compton
“ Chris Davis
“ Michael Doody
“ Eithne Goode
“ Marion Haywood
“ Bernard Kirton
“ Tim Naylor
“ Mota Singh
“ John Whitehouse

Also Present:-

Officers: Martin Stott and Mike Waters (Environment and Economy Directorate), David Carter, Kushal Birla, Peter Hunter and Tim Healey (Performance and Development Directorate) Dave Clarke (Resources Directorate) Kate Nash (Community Protection Directorate) Dave Jones (Children, Young People and Families Directorate).

Michael Samai (Community Development Worker from Sierra Leone) – item 4.

Mark and Sam (Youth Bank)

1. Budgets 2007/2008

Dave Clarke said that this was the first of five presentations to Area Committees on the budget prospects for 2007/08. In addition a mori poll was being used to gather public opinion. He made the following points:-

- Where we spend the money 2006/07
 - Total spending £672m.
 - Of that the Children, Young People & Families Directorate (£398m) and the Adult, Health & Community Directorate (£152m) accounted for 82%.
- Where the money comes from 2006/07

- Business Rates £62m (9%). District Councils collect the business rate on behalf of the government who in turn redistribute it to local authorities.
 - Specific Grants £348m (52%) – grants given by the Government for specific purpose; the largest of which is the Dedicated Schools Grant (£256m) and is paid over to schools.
 - Revenue Support Grant £12m (2%).
 - Charges and Services £57m (8%).
 - Council Tax £193m (29%) – represents less than a third of the Council's income.
- Context of the Budget 2007/08 onwards
 - Internal
 - Modernisation Agenda – looking at new ways for the County Council to work better:-
 - Customer focus – customer service centres, website and one stop shops.
 - Joining up with stakeholders – County Council obliged by the Government to enter into Local Area Agreements with public authorities and the voluntary sector operating in the county for the provision of services.
 - Departmental restructure reducing nine departments to six directorates. This achieved an initial saving of £700,000 and this was expected to rise in future years.
 - No overall political control – no single political group could push through a budget without the co-operation of one of the other groups.
 - External
 - White Paper
 - Structure of local government – the Queen's Speech included a proposal for a Local Government Bill. Local authorities would be able to bid for unitary status and for those who did not choose that opportunity, they would be expected to make the same level of efficiency savings as those that did.
 - Empowerment to communities.
 - Lyons Report – Sir Michael Lyons, a former Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council, had been commissioned by the Treasury to look at changes to local authority funding. This long-awaited report was expected to make recommendations for changes.
 - Capping – Council Tax increases would be capped at a maximum of 5%.
 - 2007/08 + Budget Drivers
 - Inflation – actual increases in costs and not the RPI; for example pay inflation was likely to be restricted to below the RPI.
 - Demographics – for example growth in the elderly population increases demands on services. This illustrated the difference between the private and public sectors; whereas in the private sector increased demand led to increased profits in the public sector it led to increased costs.

- Loss of grant funding – the County Council was a “floor” authority in that it was protected from falling below a certain level of RSG income. This meant that the Council would receive no additional RSG when specific grants were absorbed into the RSG although the work would still remain.
- Service improvement.
- Legislation requirements.
- Government Funding
 - The Dedicated Schools Grant was likely to rise by 5.6% and the Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates were likely to rise by 1.9%; an overall increase of 4.7%.
- Medium Term Financial Planning Strategy
 - Inflation and capital financing costs and standstill pressures generally to be funded from Government Grants, Council Tax and Disinvestment. Developing the Authority would be funded from cash efficiency savings and disinvestment. Funds for the second category may be used to fund the first category but not vice versa.
 - The funding available, excluding school cost pressures funded from DSG, is set out below:-

	£m		£m
Government Grant	1.397	Inflation and capital financing costs	9.078
Council Tax 0% increase	0.969	Standstill pressures	16.165
Disinvestment	?	Total	25.243
Total	2.366±?		
Cash Efficiency Savings (if 2.5%) equivalent	6.033	Customer Service Centre	0.785
Disinvestment	?	Developing the authority	7.718
Total	6.033+?	Total	8.503
Total	8.399±?	Total	33.746

If the County Council were to raise the Council tax to the capping figure (5%), an additional £9.735m could be raised giving a total of £18m against total pressures in excess of £33m.

The Chair thanked Dave Clarke for his presentation.

2. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Raj Randev and Dave Shilton.

(2) Members' Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Personal interests relating to any item on the agenda arising by virtue of the member serving as a Warwick District Councillor were disclosed by Councillors Les Caborn, Alan Cockburn, Jose Compton, Chris Davis, Michael Doody, Eithne Goode and Bernard Kirton.

In addition the following Councillors disclosed the following interests:-

- (a) Councillor Jose Compton – agenda item 12 – Board Member Warwick District Council for Voluntary Service – prejudicial.
- (b) Councillor Mota Singh – agenda item 11 – Trustee of Sydni Centre and member Elderly Asian Men's Group – prejudicial.
- (c) Councillor Les Caborn – agenda item 8 – personal.
- (d) Councillor Tim Naylor – agenda item 11 – member of Leamington Credit Union – prejudicial.
- (e) Councillor Sarah Boad – agenda item 7 – Lillington grant – personal.

2. Public Question Time

(1) Additional Road Safety Engineering and Reduced Speed Limits on the C25 between Shrewley and Claverdon

Mr. Hull

He asked whether the County Council were only prepared to put additional road safety engineering and reduced speed limits on this stretch of road after someone was killed or maimed. It linked the M6 at Coleshill and Stratford-upon-Avon via intermediate villages. A County Council area surveyor described it as a rat run and yet it was a country lane used by school children, farm traffic, horses, cyclists, walkers and local motorists. It was the scene of a significant number of serious accidents, with three occurring during a seven day period during September 2006. There were black spots on the 1.6 mile length were as follows:-

- Bends at the junction of Lye Green Road and The Cumsey and adjacent to Cumsey Lodge and Lavender Lodge in The Cumsey.
- Blind cross roads at Star Lane/Common Lane and in Pinley.
- Blind junctions Holywell Lane from The Cumsey and Lye Green Road and the lane adjacent to Lavender Lodge into the Cumsey
- Poor visibility when exiting from many of the 25 properties which include Ardencote Manor Country Club and Hotel.

The response so far from County Council employees included wearing residents down, passing round departments, non response, suggesting action was to be taken that never materialised, explaining that there were rules and then changing them when it suited. Rowington Parish Council had been told that the Budget for such works for the year was £750,000, which

was enough for 3 schemes costing in excess of £200,000. He suggested that it would be better to spread the investment more widely into smaller schemes for greater benefit.

A major improvement would be to introduce a combination of a reduced speed limit, say 40 mph, combined with a number of traffic calming measures such as new and improved signage, chevrons painted on the road, white lining to give the impression that road was narrower than it presently appeared, red asphalt on bends and rumble strips. Those actions would be in line with Department of Transport guidance on Rural Single Carriageway Roads set out in Circular 01/2006 as supplemented by Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/06 Speed Assessment Framework Balancing safety and mobility objectives on rural single carriageway roads. His concerns were shared by 100% of his neighbours and he asked the Committee to use its influence to ensure that appropriate road engineering improvements and speed limits were introduced as soon as possible.

Councillor Jose Compton fully supported Mr. Hull's comments and confirmed that there had been three serious accidents between the 18th and 25th September 2006. She referred to the new guidance from the government that raised the profile of rural roads. She shared local residents' lack of confidence in the road accident data. She then asked Martin Stott to take up the matter and ensure that it was dealt with seriously.

Mr. Stott said that he had not been aware of the issue before and confirmed that it would be dealt with seriously. There was clearer guidance now. He would look into what could be done and report back to the next meeting of the Committee and would reply to Mr. Hull.

(2) Decriminalisation of parking – Residents Parking
(i) Russell Terrace, Leamington Spa

Alan Wilkinson, resident

Residents in Russell Terrace already experienced problem with parking and some were forced to park illegally. If implemented, the decriminalisation proposals would make this worse. There was considerable opposition about the proposal for echelon parking in the road because of the danger of traffic backing out of the parking spaces into traffic. There was a need for a resident parking scheme for Russell Terrace. He and his neighbours did not want the proposals to go ahead until there was a residents parking scheme in place and more information was provided about the proposal for echelon parking.

Councillor Tim Naylor questioned the conclusion that there was a higher traffic flow along Leam Terrace than Russell Terrace. He was concerned that there had been no consultation with residents of Russell Terrace and he, as the local member, had not been consulted. He asked for evidence of the statistics used in drawing up the proposal. He wanted the residents of Russell Terrace to be treated fairly.

Mike Waters said that the decriminalisation proposals would go to a special meeting of the Committee on the 30th January 2007. It was intended that the scheme would be introduced on an incremental basis. This would enable the impact of the proposals introduced first to be monitored.

Councillor Ken Browne said that a letter should have been written to every resident affected by resident parking schemes. As there was no proposal for a residents parking scheme in Russell Terrace, the residents there would not have received that letter. He agreed that the position of Russell Terrace needed revisiting.

The Chair said that she had asked for copies of the Observer wrap related to the proposal to be made available at the meeting. As this had not been done she asked Mike Waters to send copies to Committee members. There were copies in the reception of the Barrack Street offices and at the Leamington Spa Town Hall.

Councillor Tim Naylor asked that the wraps be circulated to every resident affected by the proposals.

(ii) Oxford Street, Leamington Spa

Alex Endean, resident

He was in favour of enforcement and with improving the on-street parking facilities but he had several issues with the plan where he believed improvements could be made:-

- He would like to see the introduction of a scratch card system where the cards could be purchased from shops and bars or the provision of ticket machines able to take a cash card, text message or other cashless system.
- Oxford Street had recently acquired six additional sign posts to accommodate signs for parking and hoped that this would not be repeated across the town and that the County Council would be sensitive to the appearance of the town.
- Encourage low emission vehicles through free or lower parking charges.
- The Council should have regard to the experience of other towns and gave illustrations of issues arising from a scheme introduced in Reading:-
 - The working practices of sub-contracted parking attendants were definitely not welcome – in Reading it was easy to collect a ticket; he had received one during the time it took him to go to his brother's house to collect a visitor's pass.
 - Residents immediately outside the restricted area found it impossible to park, resulting in the residents parking scheme being expanded and expanded until it cost more in time walking in from an unrestricted area to paying the parking charge.

- Portland Street was a similar street to Oxford Street and the same distance from the town centre and yet while Oxford Street did not have a residents parking scheme, Portland Street did.
- The 9am-5pm parking restrictions had allowed residents to return from work after and to set off to work before the period during which the restrictions operated. This would no longer apply once the new 8am-8pm parking was introduced.

Councillor Jose Compton said that the members of the working party had expressed a preference for the type of parking meter that was both the easiest to use and the least obtrusive.

4. An oral presentation by Michael Samai a Community Development Worker from Sierra Leone introducing him and providing an outline of his exchange visit and his work in Sierra Leone

Michael Samai thanked the Committee for giving him the opportunity to participate in the exchange visit. He was grateful for the kindness shown to him by the British people. He gave a brief description of his role in Sierra Leone and what he had done on his visit to England. He was grateful for the experience of sitting on a committee at which grants were awarded.

The Chair thanked him for coming.

Councillor Mota Singh spoke of the importance of the work of One World Link and the emphasis of helping each other rather than just offering charity.

5. Warwick Town Centre Traffic Management

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

Mike Waters briefly introduced the report.

Sue Butcher, Chair of the Chamber of Trade

The Forum had transformed the relationship between the people of Warwick and the County Council officers responsible for the scheme. She hoped that the Committee would confirm the vision. There had been a number of time-consuming but effective workshops.

James Mackay, Warwick Society

He supported Sue Butcher's comments and expressed his thanks to Mike Waters. The Forum and the workshops had been important in building consensus and proved to be a powerful means of consultation.

Wayne Young, Resident 21 Friars Street

He was also representing the shopkeeper and residents at nos. 7 to 21 in objecting to the proposed pedestrian crossing in the street. He made the following points:-

- Most of the people who parked in Friars Street were County Council employees so there was not a need to provide a crossing to access other facilities.
- There were no real safety issues for children crossing the road because no parent would let their children cross on their own.
- If the parking charges at Hampton Road were abolished there would be no need for people to cross the Road.
- He witnessed several instances where people crossed between existing crossing facilities.
- Children from Westgate Primary School were picked up at the Bowling Green Street entrance.
- There were many instances of damage done to cars when not parked outside the drivers' houses but none when they were.
- The local shop would close if there were a drop in trade as a result of customers not being able to park outside.
- There would be a drop in property values if the crossing was located where indicated but this would not be the case if it was located elsewhere in the street as there were only two owner occupied houses in the street.
- He added that if the parking on the road outside his house was lost he would apply for dropped kerbs and provide off road parking in front of his house.

Councillor Marion Haywood noted the comments but felt that the report was an excellent paper and the proposals covered the objectives.

Councillor Ken Browne said that the Forum had done an excellent job. He noted the objection made but pointed out that no one had a right to park outside their home.

Councillor John Whitehouse then indicated that he was not happy with supporting the second part of the recommendation in the report, as he was not convinced that all the points of concern expressed by Mr. Young had been covered.

Mike Waters responded to Mr. Young's points:-

- The crossing was designed to allow pedestrians to walk into town easily.
- A lot of people other than County Council employees worked in the centre of Warwick.
- The Warwick District Council manage the Hampton Road car park, not the County Council.
- The Schools support the location of the crossing.
- There was a mechanism for compensation for residential properties.
- There had been no objection from the shop in Friars Street.

It was agreed that each part of the recommendation would be voted on separately. On being put to the vote it was then Resolved, the vote on items

(1), (3) and (4) being unanimous and the vote on item 2 being carried with nine members voting for and 1 (Councillor John Whitehouse) against:-

That the Warwick Area Committee notes the progress made on the interim traffic management schemes and –

- (1) Approves the objectives and principles as identified by the Warwick Town Centre Forum (and detailed in Appendix A) as a sensible basis on which to develop more detailed traffic management measures.
- (2) Approves the implementation of a signal controlled pedestrian crossing on Friars Street as detailed in Appendix B.
- (3) Approves consultation with frontages and stakeholders on the relocation of the previously proposed pedestrian crossing on West Street outside numbers 22-28 to a location near the junction of Compton Street.
- (4) Endorses the further development of, and consultation on, a Variable Message Signing System for car parks in Warwick as detailed in section 5 of the report.

6. Proposed No Waiting At Any Time Restrictions – Barrack Street, Warwick

The Committee considered the report by the Strategic Director for Environment & Economy.

Councillor Jose Compton said that she had received an objection from a constituent because of the loss of parking when visiting the library, however she intended to vote in favour of the recommendation.

It was then Resolved:-

That the proposal to extend the existing no waiting restriction in Barrack Street, Warwick, be implemented as advertised.

7. Youth and Community Service – Warwick Area Annual Report – November 2006

The Committee considered the report by the Strategic Director of Children, Young People & Families.

The Chair expressed concern for the loss of ACEC and the small but vital grants that were awarded to groups. All but £30,000, which was spread across the whole of the County, was being absorbed into the budget of the Children, Young People and Families Directorate. She asked to be informed of where the money was diverted.

It was then Resolved:-

That the Warwick Area Committee endorse the progress report of the Youth and Community Service in the Warwick Area.

8. A presentation on the work of South Warwickshire Youth Bank and the local operation of the Youth Opportunities Fund

Mark and Sam from the Youth Bank presented a video on the work of that body. Young people were given the opportunity of agreeing which projects would be funded from the Youth Bank and the amount that should be awarded in each case.

The Members thanked them for their presentation.

Dave Jones outlined the Youth Opportunities Fund, which operated in a similar way to Youth Bank and which was available to provide grants for projects which met the needs of, and are initiated by Young People.

9. An oral presentation by Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Service and Access, Performance and Development Directorate, on the County Council Customer Access proposal in the Warwick area

Kushal Birla gave the Committee a brief presentation on the work carried out as part of the Council's customer access strategy:-

- Warwickshire Direct - Kenilworth was the first one stop shop in Warwickshire bringing together services run by the County Council and the Warwick District Council.
- The first customer satisfaction survey undertaken in April showed 100% satisfaction; 86% very satisfied.
- Visitors were asked whether they would use a number of services if they were provided at the one stop shop and the response would be used to inform what services should be provided in future.
- Future developments were:-
 - One stop shop in Whitnash covering services delivered by the County Council, the District Council, Whitnash Town Council and the Police – March 2007.
 - Integrated Customer Service Centre with Warwick District Council – this would be subject of a full report to Cabinet in early 2007.
 - One stop shop in Leamington – a feasibility study would be conducted by March 2007.

In response to a question from Councillor Tim Naylor, Kushal Birla confirmed that a further initiative for Lillington was subject to an Advantage West Midlands bid. Councillor Naylor asked that a smaller bid be pursued in event of the AWM bid not proceeding.

10. Stratford and Warwick Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships – Proposed New Working Arrangements

The Committee considered the report by the Strategic Director of Community Protection and County Fire Officer.

Kate Nash said that the Government Office for the West Midlands did not consider that the third part (appendix 3) of the proposal would be ready for the merger to take place as planned. There was a wish that there should be no more than a four to six month delay.

Members made the following comments on the membership of the new body:-

- (1) The suggestion that the chair should rotate between the portfolio holders from the County Council and the two District Councils could cause a problem if the County Council portfolio holder was not a from either of the Area Committees.
- (2) The five members from the County Council should be split 2 Conservative, 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Labour to reflect the political complexion of the two areas.

It was then Resolved:-

That the Warwick Area Committee approve in principle the draft submission documents for the merger of the Stratford and Warwick Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

Councillors Tim Naylor and Mota Singh left the room in accordance with their earlier disclosure of prejudicial interests.

11. Community Development Fund 2006/07

The Committee considered the report by the Strategic Director of Performance and Development and it was then Resolved:-

That the Warwick Area Committee confirms the decision of the funding sub group to award in full the seven highest scoring bids for funding from the Community Development Fund in 2006/07 as follows:-

Organisation	Project Title	Amount Awarded £
RELATE	Family Counselling – Leamington Old Town	5,000.00
Warwick District Credit Union	Establish Credit Union operations in Warwick West	5,000.00
St Mary’s Church	Mountain Walking Expeditions for disadvantaged people in St Mary’s Leamington	5,000.00
Sydenham Neighbourhood Initiatives Ltd	Women’s Community Health Event	3,210.00
The GAP, Warwick	Match it Up – Multi- media training for local people in Percy Estate, Warwick	4,020.00
Brunswick Healthy Living Centre	Secret Gardens Project	5,000.00
MAYDAY Trust	Give it Back project – various locations in Leamington and Warwick	4,910.60
	TOTAL	32,140.60

The three-hour limit for meetings having been reached, the Committee agreed to continue the meeting.

12. Well-being Fund/Social Inclusion Fund 2006/07 – Funding Proposals

Councillor Tim Naylor returned to the room.

Councillor Jose Compton left the room for the discussion on the item relating to the grant to the CVS.

The Committee considered the report by the Strategic Director of Performance and Development.

Councillor Browne referred to the grant for the “Doing Forgiveness” project, and said that the matter should have been submitted to the Chair and Spokepersons for approval so that Member approval could be given prior to the event taking place.

It was then Resolved:-

- (1) That approval be given to a grant of £3,000 to the Leamington Old Town Men's Health Group – "Doing Forgiveness" to meet the cost of room hire, caretaking services, refreshments, speakers' expenses, hire of exhibitions, insurance, transport and publicity for an event hosted at the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre from the 18th to 25th November 2006 around the theme of forgiveness, the primary activity of which will be based around a major national photographic exhibition "The F Word: Images of Forgiveness", talks from keynote speakers, drama workshops for local people and schools, and the staging of a play written by one of the group members.
- (2) That approval be given to grants of £2,940 in 2006/07 and £8,815 in 2007/08 to the Council for Voluntary Service in Warwick District to meet half the cost (the other half to be sought from Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee) of employing a Trustee Co-ordinator to support the recruitment, development and training of trustees/directors working in the community and voluntary sector within the Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon areas to ensure that they have the skills to fulfil their role.
- (3) That approval be given to the virement of £160.60 to the Community Development Fund to meet a shortfall in funds required to meet the cost of the seven bids agreed under Minute 11 of this meeting.

13. Well-being Fund/Social Inclusion Fund 2005/06 – Monitoring Report

The Committee considered the report by the Strategic Director of Performance and Development and it was then Resolved:-

That the Warwick Area Committee note the use made of 2005/6 Well-being Fund and Social Inclusion Fund allocations.

14. Provisional Items for Future Meetings

The Committee noted the following provisional items:-

23rd January 2007

- Changes to indicated Admission Numbers of Budbrooke Primary School, The Ferncumbe C of E Primary School, North Leamington School and Southam College.
- Local Area Agreement: Production of Final Draft.
- Myton Road, Warwick Proposed 30 mph Speed Limit and proposed implementation of pedestrian refuges and interactive signs.

13th March 2007

- Speed Management Strategy – The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee is seeking the Area Committee's views on the draft strategy. It was agreed that this should be given a high priority on the agenda.

Not yet allocated

- Lillington Road, Leamington Spa – proposed cycle route linking North Leamington School to the town centre as part of the Safer Routes to Schools initiative.

15. Minutes of the meeting of 12th September 2006 and matters arising (1) Minutes

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting of the Warwick Area Committee held on the 12 September 2006, having been circulated, be approved and be signed by the Chair.

(2) Matters arising

(i) Minute 2 – 19 Wake Grove, Chase Meadows, Warwick - Flooding

The Chair reminded Members that she had forwarded an e-mail on this. She then thanked the officers concerned for dealing with the issue.

(ii) Minute 3 – Bus Rapid Transit Projects “Sprint”

Martin Stott said that it was looking less likely that the Coventry City Council bid would be successful.

16. Any other items

The Chair referred to the request from Mr. Macleod for a memorial plaque for his son and said that it was clear that it was inappropriate to have the discussion with the family at a public meeting. Accordingly it was proposed that a small number of Members would have initial discussion with the family.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 9.31 p.m.