

The **WARWICK AREA COMMITTEE** met at **WARWICK** on the **12th SEPTEMBER, 2006**.

Present:-

Councillor Sarah Boad (Chair)
“ Ken Browne
“ Les Caborn
“ Alan Cockburn
“ Chris Davis
“ Eithne Goode
“ Marion Haywood
“ Tim Naylor
“ Raj Randev
“ Dave Shilton
“ Mota Singh
“ John Whitehouse

Also Present:-

Officers: Martin Stott and Lee White (Environment and Economy Directorate), David Carter and Peter Hunter (Performance and Development Directorate).

1. General
(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Jose Compton, Michael Doody and Bernard Kirton.

(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, Chris Davis, Eithne Goode, and Dave Shilton.

2. Public Question Time
19 Wake Grove, Chase Meadows, Warwick – Flooding

Mrs Patricia Shaw

Mrs. Shaw made a plea for help over a flooding problem with a ditch that ran beside her home along the Hampton Road. Her home had been flooded on a number of occasions leaving a foul damp smell and silt behind. The water was carried away from the ditch via a length of County Council pipe that in turn fed into Severn-Trent pipe. The Environment and Economy Directorate had deepened the ditch and cleaned the pipe, resulting in a reduction of flooding in the area but unfortunately her house was located at the lowest position. The County Council length of pipe had a smaller diameter than the

Severn-Trent pipe. The flooding had caused dreadful disruption to her life and those of her family. Her health had suffered in consequence.

Councillor Raj Randev spoke in support of her plea and said that he did not know whether the problem was the responsibility of the County Council, the developers, Severn-Trent or the riparian owners of the brook where the water eventually drained. However, it was important for the County Council to take immediate action to ensure a solution was found. Other members expressed their sympathy and reinforced the need for immediate action.

Martin Stott gave the history of action taken by the Environment and Economy Directorate and said that so far this year there had been no flooding. Improvement work might be possible when the A46 was realigned and it might also be possible to construct a bund to protect her property.

The Committee agreed that officers should look into the situation with the utmost urgency and that Martin Stott should arrange for the Chair and Committee Spokespersons to be informed by e-mail by Friday 15th September 2006 of any progress. David Carter undertook to ask the Legal and Governance Team of his Directorate to look into whether there was any action needed to be taken by the Riparian owner that could be undertaken by the County Council and then recharged.

The Chair thanked Mrs. Shaw for attending and drawing the Committee's attention to the problem.

3. Bus Rapid Transit Projects "Sprint" – Outcome of Public Consultation and Next Steps

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

The following observations of the Kenilworth Society were circulated to the Committee:-

We wholeheartedly welcome the recommendation that "Sprint" is not routed across the green belt between the University of Warwick and Kenilworth.

We would be grateful for clarification on the matter of the Gibbet Hill Road/Kenilworth Road route. It was included in the consultation, but Coventry City Council seems to be refusing to consider it as an option. Is this because the public consultation exercise showed a hostile response from Coventry residents?

If the green belt option were abandoned and the Gibbet Hill and Kenilworth Roads used instead, we would nevertheless oppose the route within Kenilworth as set out in the consultation exercise. New Street, High Street, Castle Hill and Castle Road are not suitable for fast moving vehicles. The residents of these areas are campaigning for traffic calming measures and

lower speed limits. We do not believe that they would welcome high speed buses on their narrow and winding streets.

We support in principle the recommendation that the possibility of extending the "Sprint" service to Leamington Spa and/or Warwick be examined. We would support a BRT link between the University of Warwick, Stoneleigh Park and Leamington Spa provided that it did not encroach on green belt and between Coventry and Kenilworth, i.e. the route would have to go via Gibbet Hill Road and Stoneleigh Road, Coventry.

If as seems likely, the "Sprint" route terminates at the University of Warwick, we request that the County Council spends money on improving bus services in northern Kenilworth. The Castle estate is poorly served at the moment. The nearest bus route is the "tourist" one along High Street and Castle Hill, and this only operates in the summer.

Was there any feedback from the consultation exercise on who in Kenilworth might wish to use "Sprint"? Anecdotal evidence suggests that the people most likely to use a BRT are those who already travel to work etc. by bus.

Lee White introduced the report.

Councillor John Whitehouse said that he would be moving the recommendation in the report amended to enable further consideration of the involvement of Kenilworth in the "Sprint" with a focus on the University of Warwick's green travel plans to support its planned further expansion and opportunities to achieve a modal shift from private car to public transport among university staff residing at addresses with Kenilworth postcodes. Unofficial figures revealed that there were over four hundred staff at the University with addresses carrying Kenilworth postcodes.

Councillor Dave Shilton supported Councillor John Whitehouse and said that Kenilworth could not afford not to be involved in the "Sprint". The redevelopment of Kenilworth Town Centre was intended to attract people into Kenilworth. As for the speed of the buses through Kenilworth, they would be subject to whatever speed restrictions existed on the roads they travelled.

Councillor Alan Cockburn said that Kenilworth had a population of 23,000 and desperately needed improved transport. He agreed that the green belt route was unacceptable and would welcome the "Sprint" going through Stoneleigh to Warwick and Leamington.

Councillor Tim Naylor sounded a word of caution in that whatever bus services might be introduced, they should not be allowed to affect the viability of existing very good services between the University and Leamington Spa.

Councillor John Whitehouse, seconded by Councillor Ken Browne, moved and it was Resolved unanimously:-

That the Warwick Area Committee:-

- (1) Notes the results of the Bus Rapid Transit “Sprint” public consultation exercise outlined in paragraph 2.1.
- (2) Recommends that the “Sprint” route across the green belt between the University of Warwick and Kenilworth be not pursued, but that further evaluation of the alternative route to Kenilworth be continued, with particular focus on:
 - the University’s green travel plans to support its planned further expansion;
 - the opportunities to achieve a modal shift from private car to public transport among university staff residing at addresses with Kenilworth postcodes.
- (3) Requests officers to report on the costs and benefits of extending the “Sprint” service to Leamington Spa and/or Warwick should the funding bid being made by Coventry City Council for the remainder of “Sprint” be successful.

4. Safer Neighbourhoods Policing – presentation by Warwickshire Police

Chief Superintendent David Whitehouse, Chief Inspector Richard Long (Warwick District Commander) and Pete Cutts (Community Safety Manager – Warwick District Council) attended for this item.

Chief Superintendent David Whitehouse gave a brief presentation to the Committee about the proposals around safer neighbourhood policing. Although there was generally a reduction in overall crime, it was acknowledged that there was a need to tackle the fear of crime. This police would achieve this by working closely with the community and partner organisations. There would be eight teams in Warwick District with staffing allocated on a needs basis. Although there would be no additional police resources, the number of Police Community Support Officers would increase from 63 to 124. The Government had committed itself to funding additional PCSOs countrywide and the effect locally would be to increase further the number to 187.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

- (1) Members were generally supportive of the proposals.
- (2) PCSOs would not be given their own transport to ensure that they remained out in the community and not driving cars. They would be dropped off by police vehicle or use public transport where necessary.

- (3) Their would be enhanced communication, including e-mail, to enable the public to contact the Teams.
- (4) PCSOs would be involved with the low level intelligence gathering.
- (5) The intention was to build on existing structures rather than inserting another layer of management. For example, a sub-group of Kenilworth Town Council would be responsible in that town while in the rural areas the Electoral Divisional Panels would be the focus. All levels of local government would be involved.
- (6) The local steering committees would be able to set their own priorities and as this would be at grass root level it was not expected that this would lead to a conflict with priorities set by the government.
- (7) It was agreed that Peter Hunter would act as the link between the Committee and the police.

David Carter explained that work would continue to refine the arrangements and a report would go to Cabinet.

The Committee asked that a positive message be sent on to Cabinet confirming the Committee's full support for the proposals.

5. Developments of the Warwickshire Local Area Agreement (LAA)

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

Peter Hunter introduced the report.

Members then went through the first draft LAA and made the following comments:-

- (1) It was recognised that the data and targets in the LAA required refining and annotation to clarify them.
- (2) The targets involved a lot of organisations so it was essential to identify who would be responsible for steering them.
- (3) For the LAA to add value to the partnership and Members accepted that a proportionality test was essential. There was little point to setting targets that took a disproportionate time to monitor.
- (4) It would be helpful if those targets that were mandatory were grouped together within themes.
- (5) In recognition of the need for developments in the LAA to take place rapidly, it was suggested that it should be placed on the website with a facility for feedback. Members should be e-mailed about any significant changes.
- (6) The blocks of the LAA should be sent to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6. Provisional Items for Future Meetings

The Committee noted the following provisional items:-

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.

7. Minutes of the meeting of 11th July 2006 and matters arising

(1) Minutes

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting of the Warwick Area Committee held on the 11 July 2006, having been circulated, be approved and be signed by the Chair.

(2) Matters arising

(i) Minute 3(1) – York Road, Leamington Spa - Closure

The Committee received the following response from Roger Bennett, Team Leader – Strategic Projects, Environment & Economy Directorate, to a request from Mr. Tuyn for the closure of one end of York Road, Leamington Spa to provide a pedestrian and cyclist friendly route to Princes Drive, the new library and the new cultural quarter:-

Some time ago Warwick District Council put forward a one-way traffic scheme for York Road under its environmental highway improvement programme. This was accepted in principle by the County Council but it was felt that before this could be considered further there would need to be improvements to the Adelaide Road/Avenue Road junction. This junction operates at or over capacity and would not be able to cope with the additional traffic which would be diverted. There is no scheme in our current capital programme for this but it may be possible for the improvements to be carried out in connection with development proposals on the Station Road Approach site. A planning application for office development on part of the site has been submitted and this is currently being considered.

The requests from residents to close York Road to through traffic would displace even more traffic onto the Adelaide Road/Avenue junction. In addition there would be a need to provide a turning facility (or facilities) in York Road and this would almost certainly require the acquisition of adjacent land. Although the outcome cannot be guaranteed the best prospect for achieving this is if any development proposals come forward for the former Library and College site at the York Road/Avenue Road junction.

The District Council no longer has any budget for environmental road improvements and County Council funding is prioritised for accident

reduction schemes. Fortunately, York Road has no history of injury accidents and with this exceptionally good road safety record it is not possible to justify the use of public funds. Therefore, further consideration can only be given to the request to close York Road to through traffic if and when the above highway improvements proceed, the new arrangements can be made to work satisfactorily and it is possible to link the closure to other developments in the area.

Councillor Chris Davis undertook to pass the response on to Councillor Bill Gifford, Warwick District Council, to share with Mr. Tuyn.

(ii) Minute 3(2) – Bus shelter in St Margarets Road, Leamington Spa and Bus Service

The Chair said that Councillor Balvinder Gill, Warwick District Council, had reported that the bus shelter had been removed.

8. Any other items

None.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 8.24 p.m.