

**AGENDA ITEM NO.**

**TO: ECONOMIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2004**

**SUBJECT: THE FUTURE OF THE WARWICK MOP**

**FROM: THE WARWICK MOP WORKING PARTY**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To detail the work undertaken by the Working Party set up to consider the future of the Warwick Mop Fair and to detail the recommendations made by that Working Party on how the Mop Fair should operate and be managed so as to attract more people to the event.

**2. BACKGROUND.**

2.1 A Working Party comprising Councillors Davis, Mrs Hodgetts, Holland and Guest was set up in January 2004 to consider the future of the Warwick Mop.

2.2 Among those who took part in the consultation were: The Warwick Chamber of Trade, Warwickshire County Council, Showmen's Guild (Midland Section), Warwickshire Fire and Rescue, Warwickshire Police, Warwick Town Council, Warwick District Council Environmental Health Officers, The Warwick Society, Warwick Racecourse, Lloyds No. 1, plus a number of other businesses in the town and a small number of local residents.

2.3 The consultation was by means of one to one meetings, letters, emails and telephone calls. The Working Party were satisfied with the level of consultation undertaken and the variety and quality of the responses received.

2.4 Having completed the review of the Warwick Mop and Runaway Mop, the Working Party identified a number of key issues regarding the overall operation and management of the Mop. These key issues are set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

**3. OUTCOMES REQUIRED.**

3.1 The Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the recommendations set out in items 5.1 - 5.4 of Appendix 1 of this report and the recommendations set out in section 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 of the Private and Confidential report on The Future of the Mop included with the agenda.

3.2 To confirm the recommendations set out in this report and propose these to the Executive for adoption at their meeting in February.

**Adrian Field**

**Warwick Town Centre Business Development Manager  
on behalf of the Warwick Mop Working Party**

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of the meetings held by the Working Party.

Information received as part of the review process.

Areas in District affected:	Warwick
Executive Portfolio Area and Holder:	Councillor Tamlin
Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Economic
Key Decision:	No
Included in Forward Plan:	Yes

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### Appendix 1.

The Mop has been in existence in Warwick for over 650 years. The current licence arrangements regarding the Mop were agreed with the Showman's Guild in 1993. That licence agreement was for a period of 10 years, which was extended for another year to allow the review to be undertaken under the current arrangements.

The work undertaken by the Working Party for this report covers four main headings.

- 1) The principles under which the Mop should operate.
- 2) The operational and layout issues associated with the current Mop and recommendations for the future.
- 3) The traffic management issues associated with the current Mop and recommendations for the future.
- 4) The accommodation requirements associated with the current Mop and recommendations for the future.

#### **1) The main principles under which the Mop should operate.**

1.1.1) There was considerable difference of opinion about the way the Mop should be managed and / or operated received from those people who took part in the consultation process. This ranged from those whose view was "no change of any kind" to some who advocated "No Mop".

1.1.2) The Working Party considered the views expressed by those who took part in the consultation process and concluded that the Mop Fair was a tradition which should be continued. However as a new License agreement for the Mop had to be drawn up, the opportunity to re-appraise the way the Mop was operated and managed should be taken and this needed to be fully reflected in the new license agreement which would need to be drawn up.

1.1.3) The Working Party concluded that the re-appraisal should take into account not only the changes in legislation which have taken place during the period covered by the current licence agreement but should also take into account the impact which the Mop has on local residents and businesses living and operating in and around the vicinity of the Mop.

## 1.2)The Role of the Mop.

The Working Party considered the evidence from the large number of groups consulted and concluded that the role of the Mop Fair and Runaway Mop should follow its current form and this should be reflected in the licence agreement.

## 1.3) Location of the Mop.

1.3.1) Given the legal constraints of moving the location of the Mop Fair and the added financial impact of a move to other suggested locations like St Nicholas Park or the Racecourse, the Working Party concluded that the best option given the continuation of the Mop Fair was for it to remain located in Warwick town centre.

## 1.4) Area covered by the Mop.

1.4.1.) Given that the Mop will remain in the town centre, the Working Party felt there was no reason to alter the current geographical boundaries of the Fair area. They agreed that no rides should be operated in New Street, as at present, although this street might be considered by E G Skett & Co, the market operator, as a possible Charter Market and / or Farmers' Market location if deemed feasible.

1.4.2.) Consideration will need to be given to the changes under consideration for the use of Westgate Car Park as part of the proposed Warwick Town Centre Traffic Management Scheme. It was agreed that any future amendment to the layout of Westgate Car Park should not be restricted by the requirements of the Mop Fair. A review of the location of rides currently located in Westgate car park would need to be taken after any changes to Westgate car park are completed.

1.4.3) The Working Party requested that the timing of any building work associated with physical changes to Westgate Car Park should not be phased in October or at such a time that they had an impact on the operation of that years Mop.

## 1.5) The Period of Operation of the Mop.

1.5.1.) The Mop has traditionally operated across two weekends often referred to as the Mop and Runaway Mop. As a result of operating over two weekends back to back there is a considerable amount of duplication of workload and effort for both officers and the Showman's Guild.

1.5.2.) It was accepted that there is at times a considerable level of disruption created by the Mop to residents and businesses. This does have an impact from prior to the Mop moving onto site until the removal of the Runaway Mop 11 days later. However better levels of communication and co-operation between all parties had reduced this to a minimum.

1.5.3.) The costs to Warwick District Council of operating and managing the Mop Fair are increasing. The costs incurred include the cost of removing and installing significant amounts of street furniture from around the town centre required to allow the Mop Fair to set up and knock down twice over eleven days, plus the cost of stewarding the event and the loss of income from car parks and the operation of two traditional markets

1.5.4) The option of the Mop Fair taking place over one extended weekend to help reduce these costs was fully explored. The Working Party concluded that such an arrangement would not allow the Showman's Guild the opportunity to continue to operate the Mop Fair in the current form as many of their members were committed to other events elsewhere.

1.5.5.) The Working Party recommends that the Mop should continue to operate over two weekends. The hours of operation would remain the same for both the Mop and Runaway Mop. These are Friday 5pm until 10pm and Saturday 12 noon until 11pm.

1.5.6.) The set up times on the Thursday would remain the same as at present with the roads closed from 4pm. The set up should commence no earlier than 6pm. Larger rides should be brought on site between 3 and 4pm with the agreement of the Police.

1.5.7.) It was agreed to try and develop the appeal of the Runaway Mop by involving local charities, organizations and businesses in the event. This would be done by means of potentially looking at the Charter Market and Farmers' Market being run alongside the Mop in the area of New Street.

## 1.6) The Marketing of the Mop.

1.6.1) The Working Party felt there was evidence that the Mop was not promoted as fully as it is in other locations including Stratford where the event is promoted at all access points to the town.

1.6.2) If the level of publicity was increased including advance publicity of the dates on which the Mop takes place then it is felt this would encourage more people to attend.

1.6.3) Recommendations to improve the promotion of the Mop Fair include the use of posters, banners, signage in and around the immediate Mop area. With the necessary permission from WDC's Planning Department, this would be undertaken by the Showmen's Guild under the terms of the new Licence Agreement..

## **2) The operational and layout issues associated with the current Mop and recommendations for the future**

### 2.1.) General Layout of Fair Area

2.1.1) Subject to licensing restrictions on New Street Car Park it is recommended this area be utilised more than it is at present possibly for a Market and / or Farmers' Market.

2.1.2) The layout of the Fair will be strictly enforced and will be conducted to the satisfaction of the designated officer from Warwick District Council, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue and Warwickshire Police.

2.1.3) It is recommended that a detailed plan of the layout of the Mop Fair be produced by the Showmen's Guild and presented to the delegated officer each year for approval. A meeting with the license holder to agree the layout should take place in late March prior to each Mop Fair.

### 2.2 Specific layout of stalls within the Fair area.

2.2.1) The Working Party agreed that there is a need to revise the location of a few of the current rides and stalls so as to improve the general pedestrian access around the Fair and improve co-operation and support with local residents and businesses.

2.2.2.) The Showman's Guild will be required to provide the Member Working Party with a written undertaking to action these layout changes before any new licence is agreed. This includes the relocation of certain equipment in Puckerings Lane and within the Market Square.

### 2.3) Food Stalls.

2.3.1) The Working Party recommended that there are no more than 20 food stalls at any one time during the operation of the Mop Fair on either weekend. This is two less than the current agreement; although there were less than 20 food stalls at this year's Mop Fair.

2.3.2.) The Group recommend that the operating requirements of the WDC Environmental Health Food team are incorporated in the licence agreement. These requirements include the fact that all food stalls must comply with the Regulations and Standards set by Warwick District Council.

2.3.3.) Failure to comply will result in the withdrawal from the fair of any vendor not complying with the Standard until the relevant officer of the Council is satisfied; that

action will be taken in line with the Warwick District Council Food Safety Enforcement Policy.

2.3.4.) The Guild shall act immediately upon all instructions given by any authorised officer of the Council in relation to food safety; and that the Licensee shall submit to the team a full written list of names and addresses of food vendors who will be attending the Fairs 4 weeks in advance of the first Mop Day.

#### 2.4) Stewarding.

2.4.1) It is recommended by the Working Party that the Stewarding costs which were paid equally between Warwick District Council and the Showmen's Guild are in future wholly paid for by the Guild.

2.4.2.) The Guild will confirm the number of stewards to be provided, their hours of operation and remit. They will be managed and hired by Warwick District Council and the costs included in the "general operating" cost of the Mop covered by the licence holder.

#### 2.5) Policing

2.5.1.) Currently there is a nil cost for the Policing for the Mop. The Police have now indicated that they will charge in line with their new policy for certain aspects of policing of the Mop.

2.5.2) The cost will cover the cost of providing the Policing required to assist in the setting up of the Mop Fair but does not include the costs of providing Police during the actual operating hours of the Mop Fair which will remain free. The costs of Policing will be included in the "general operating costs" of the Mop covered by the licence fee.

#### 2.6) Noise nuisance.

2.6.1.) The Working Party recommends that on the advice and assistance of Warwick District Council Environmental Health, monitoring will be carried out to quantifying a reasonable level of noise nuisance and a reasonable standard be set to allow control of any noise nuisance. The details of which will be set within the new License.

2.6.2.) This work will set a standard which all parties are clear about and are able to quantify. It also helps to appease complaints from residents and businesses. The designated officer of the Council will inform any operator of any breach of noise level identified. Failure to comply will result in the immediate withdrawal from the fair of any operator until the relevant officer of the Council is satisfied that action will be taken in line with Warwick District Council's Enforcement Policy.

### **3.) The traffic management issues associated with the current Mop and recommendations for the future.**

### 3.1) Traffic Management Scheme Implications

3.1.1.) There could be a requirement to update the Licence in view of the fact that the proposed Traffic Management Scheme might affect some of the decisions currently made as well as the existing arrangements.

### 3.2) Car Parking

3.2.1.) The following car parking areas will be closed for the newnext License, New Street, the Racecourse Members Enclosure and Westgate car parks. The loss of car park income from these car parks will be charged against the "general operating cost" of the Mop.

3.2.2.) Linen Street would normally remain open until midnight each night of the Fair from the Thursday preceding the Mop until the end of the Runaway Mop. Barrack Street Car Park will be increasingly highlighted as a parking venue during times when it is open to the public. Linen Street and Barrack Street car parks are well placed to serve the parking usually allocated in Westgate and New Street Car Parks.

### 3.3 Buses and Coach Provision

3.3.1.) The decision to continue to use Westgate Car Park as part of the Mop Area will result in buses and coaches continuing to use the existing temporary stops in the town.

3.3.2.) There was general agreement from those who raised this issue at the consultation that this was an acceptable arrangement and that the locations of the temporary stops were the best option considered.

## **4.) The accommodation requirements associated with the current Mop and recommendations for the future.**

### 4.1 Living Accommodation location

The Working Party recommend that the accommodation offered to the Guild during the period of the Mop be on the Members' Enclosure car park on Hampton Road (part of the Racecourse) for the duration of Mop (for a period of time as agreed in the latest License).

### 4.2 Provision of services.

The St. Mary's Lands project has earmarked £10,000 to fund the provision of water and sewerage servicing at the Members' Enclosure for the use of the Mop. The provision of electricity will be through a temporary portable generator either funded or provided by the Licensee.

### 4.3 Other locations considered.

4.3.1 Locating the Mop accommodation on St. Nicholas Car Park. This would result in severe financial losses to Warwick District Council of income from both car parking and attendance at the Leisure Centre and was therefore rejected.

4.3.2. Locating the Mop on the Racecourse. The new Lease agreement with the Racecourse company would not allow the Mop to be located there although there is allowance for the accommodation to be located on the Members Enclosure. This location is not therefore now an option.

## **5. Recommendations of the Member Working Party.**

The main recommendations of the Working Party are set out below under the four main headings of the report. Other recommendations are included in section 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 of the Private and Confidential report to the Executive on The Future of the Mop

### **5.1 Principles**

5.1.1. The role of the Mop should continue in its present form and this should be reflected in the licence agreement.

5.1.2. The Mop should remain located in Warwick Town Centre.

5.1.3. The Mop should continue to operate over two weekends. The hours of operation would remain the same for both the Mop and Runaway Mop.

5.1.4. The set up times on the preceding Thursdays would remain the same as at present with roads closed from 4pm. The full set up is to be no earlier than 6pm but larger rides can be brought on site between 3 and 4pm if agreed by the Police.

5.1.5. Increased levels of promotional activity should take place including the use of posters, banners, signage in and around the immediate Mop area.

### **5.2 Operation and layout.**

5.2.1. Negotiation on the location of a small number of rides and stalls are to be made. The Showman's Guild will be required to provide the Member Working Party with a written undertaking to action these layout changes before any licence is agreed.

5.2.2. The Farmers' Market and Saturday Charter Market be allowed to relocate into New Street if deemed feasible and desirable.

5.2.3. A detailed plan outlining the names and specific location of the rides is to be given by the Showman's Guild 6 months in advance of the Mop Fair for consideration and approval by Warwick District Council officers.

### **5.3 Traffic Management.**

5.3.1. The license shall be subject to any changes which are necessary in view of the proposed Traffic Management Scheme and any new Health and Safety legislation.

### **5.4 Accommodation**

5.4.1 The Members' Enclosure Car Park on Hampton Road will be used as the site for accommodating the Guild's members during the period of the Mop.

5.4.2. The provision of water and sewerage servicing on the Members Enclosure Car Park should be made and must adhere to Health and Safety requirements. Electrical generators are to be provided or funded by the Guild