

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 12 July 2006, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Evans (Chair); Councillors Ashford, Mrs Begg, Mrs Blacklock, Boad, Mrs Bunker, Caborn, Chander, Cockburn, Mrs Compton, Copping, Crowther, Davies, Davis, Ms De-Lara-Bond, Mrs Edwards, Ms Flanagan, Gifford, Gill, Mrs Goode, Guest, Harris, Hatfield, Mrs Hodgetts, Holland, Kinson, Mrs Knight, Kundi, MacKay, Mrs McFarland, Mrs Mellor, Pratt, Short, Smith, Tamlin and Vincett.

203. PRAYER

A period of reflection was presented by the Chair's Chaplains.

204. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Butler, Coker, Doody, Mrs Falp, Hammon, Ms Hirsch, Kirton, Sandhar, Mrs Sawdon and Shilton.

205. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 June 2006, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair.

206. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (A) The Chair reported that he had written a letter to the Leamington Spa Krishna Temple expressing condolences on behalf of the District Council for the bombings which had taken place in Mumbai on 11 July 2006.
- (B) The Chair reported that he and a group of guests had attended the Royal Garden Party on 11 July 2006.
- (C) The Chair thanked all those who had supported the Garden Party at the Warwick Quaker Centre on 8 July 2006. A total of £557 had been raised, together with £20 paid direct to his charities.

207. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 7(2)

- (A) From Councillor Mrs A Blacklock to Councillor A Boad, Housing Services Portfolio Holder:-

"Where does the responsibility for dealing with Travellers in this District lie – with the County Council or with the District Council?

Has an 'Accommodation Needs Assessment' been carried out in line with Government guidance? If so what were the conclusions?

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

Also, what provision is made by our neighbouring Councils and, if the provision of authorised sites (both for permanent occupation and for transit purposes) in the County is inadequate, can we expect more unauthorised encampments here, with the ensuing enforcement problems?"

Councillor Boad replied:-

- "1. Responsibility for dealing with Travellers in this District lies both with the District and County Councils. Section 77 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 2004 gives local authorities – defined as *In England outside Greater London, a County Council, a District Council or the Council of the Isles of Scilly* – a permissive power to direct unauthorised campers to leave land. The County Council owns two residential sites within Warwickshire, and a further site is owned and managed by Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 2. To date, an Accommodation Needs Assessment has not been carried out. The Government has only issued **draft guidance** as yet, it is expected that definitive guidance will be issued shortly.
 - a. A *Warwickshire Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Needs Study* has been carried out jointly with the other local authorities in Warwickshire. This study had some things to say about the settled gypsy community, but did not report on the needs of travellers.
 - b. The West Midlands Regional Assembly, Government Office for the West Midlands and Sustainability West Midlands jointly issued the West Midlands Regional Housing strategy in June 2005. This Strategy, which covers the period 2005 – 2021 included some work in relation to gypsies and travellers. However, there is more work to be done to inform both the Regional Housing Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy, and this will be commenced in the spring of 2007.
- Given the nature of the Inspection regime, it is felt that we should wait to organise an Accommodation Needs Assessment until the guidance is published and until the West Midlands study is completed.
3. There are three local authority-owned sites within the County with accommodation for up to 68 caravans. In addition, there are 108 pitches on privately-owned sites. In January 2006, there were, throughout Warwickshire, 85 caravans stationed on sites without planning permission. 75 of these were on land owned by gypsies themselves (14 of these were being tolerated by the local authorities concerned) and 10 on land not owned by gypsies, none of which were being tolerated. None of the gypsy-owned sites are in the Warwick District Council area, however, 4 of the caravans identified as being on land not owned by gypsies were in the Warwick District Council area.
 4. Research carried out by Birmingham University has indicated that, by 2010, a further 205 to 275 residential pitches will be needed in the South Sub-Regional Housing Market Area of Warwickshire (Warwick District Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Worcestershire). The

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

same research indicated that between 240 and 360 Transit Pitches would be needed by the same time in the whole of the West Midlands area. The Government Office is pressing the West Midlands Regional Assembly to carry out a more detailed study. It is planned that this work will commence in spring 2007.

5. Over the past 18 months, there have been 22 groups of travellers which have camped illegally in the District. As some of these groups have moved around the District a number of times before finally leaving the area, this represents 41 illegal encampments.
 - a. The groups ranged in size, the smallest being 2 vehicles, the largest 15.
 - b. Three of the 22 groups were English travellers. The remainder were Irish travellers.
 - c. 17 of the encampments were dealt with under the powers exercised by the police (albeit with involvement from Private Sector Housing), 16 were persuaded to move from the encampment by Private Sector Housing staff. The remaining 8 camps were moved on following private action (the employment of bailiffs) by the landowners.
 - d. Although a number of the sites which were occupied are owned by the County Council, only one illegal encampment was on land occupied by the District Council.
6. It does not appear that either the frequency of illegal occupancy or the numbers of caravans/vehicles forming illegal encampments is increasing."

In a supplementary question, Councillor Mrs Blacklock asked Councillor Boad:-

"The answer leads me to ask that the Needs Assessment, when it is carried out, is done as soon as is feasible, and that there is no undue delay. Also, that the Members of the Equalities and Diversity Group could be kept informed and, ideally, could they please be involved in that process?"

In reply, Councillor Boad said:-

"I would say that, of course, the Needs Assessment will be done when the Government issues proper guidance rather than draft guidance, so at least we will know what we are doing. I would draw your attention to answer 2(b) where the West Midlands Regional Assembly will actually be doing a significant amount of work, commencing in Spring 2007, on the gypsy and travellers issue. Of course, our Working Party on Black Minority Interests should have a look at what is coming through."

208. EXECUTIVE

It was moved by Councillor Crowther, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report of the Executive dated 12 June 2006, be approved and adopted.

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

209. REGULATORY COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Goode, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the reports of the Regulatory Committee dated 2 May, and 6 and 27 June 2006, be approved and adopted.

210. AUDIT AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Caborn, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report of the Audit and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 6 June 2006, be approved and adopted.

211. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Kinson, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 6 June 2006, be approved and adopted.

212. CULTURE AND SOCIAL POLICY COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Mellor, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report of the Culture and Social Policy Committee dated 7 June 2006, be approved and adopted.

213. ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Compton, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report of the Environment and Economic Policy Committee dated 7 June 2006, be approved and adopted.

214. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Guest, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report of the Standards Committee dated 14 June 2006, be approved and adopted.

215. EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Crowther, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report of the Employment Committee dated 26 June 2006, be approved and adopted.

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

216. PLANNING COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Tamlin and duly seconded that the reports of the Planning Committee dated 3 and 23 May, and 21 June 2006, be approved and adopted.

- (A) Request by CAAF for separate speaking rights at Planning Committee (184)

First amendment: It was moved by Councillor Tamlin, and duly seconded that the recommendation in Minute 184 be deleted and replaced with the following:-

“Recommended that Council amend the public speaking procedure for Planning Committee to include another speaking category of Warwick District Towns Conservation Area Advisory Forum (WDTCAAF), who would be permitted to speak for three minutes at Planning Committee on any Conservation Area item where they have a significant interest, (as long as they have registered before the public speaking deadline), as a trial for twelve months at which point there will be a review of this decision by Planning Committee, to consider the effectiveness of the decision, and whether permanent changes to the arrangements for public speaking be recommended.”

On a vote being taken, the amendment was declared carried.

- (B) Adoption of Report:

The original motion, as amended by the First Amendment, was then put to the meeting and declared carried.

217. COMMON SEAL

It was

RESOLVED that the Common Seal of Warwick District Council be affixed to such deeds and documents as may be required for implementing decisions of the Council arrived at this day.

(The meeting ended at 7.50 pm)

CHAIR