



<u>Committee and Date</u> Whitchurch and Prees Local Joint Committee 6 October 2010 7.00 pm

<u>Item</u> 4 Public

**NOTE OF THE LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 JULY 2010
AT TILSTOCK VILLAGE HALL**

7.00 pm to 9.00 pm

Responsible Officer Karen Nixon
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Present

Committee Members

Doris Ankers
Susan Bower
Christopher Dutton
Ian Henderson
Peggy Mullock
Peter Thompson
Roy Tydeman
Paul Wynn (Chaired the meeting)

*Cllr Stephen Charmley was also in attendance to present the budget item with
Stephanie Jackson, Head of Finance.*

Shropshire Council Officers

Tom McCabe, Lead Officer
Karen Nixon, Committee Officer
Julie Ruler, Community Regeneration Officer
Stephanie Jackson, Head of Finance, Exchequer Services
Neil Willcox, Support Officer

West Mercia Police

PC Karena Evans
PC Paul Frank
PC Antony Jones

Shropshire Fire Service

John Harrison, North Shropshire Group Manager

There were approx 30 members of the public present.

Apologies & Substitutions

1. Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Gerald Dakin (Chair) and Tom Biggins. There were no substitutions.

Declarations of Interest

2. Cllr Doris Ankers declared an interest in Better Welcome (agenda item 6) and Cllr Paul Wynn and Peggy Mullock both declared a personal interest in the Whitchurch Rugby Club funding application (agenda item 8).

None of the above took part in the discussion of or voting on the items declared.

Chairman's Welcome

3. The Chair welcomed everyone to the Whitchurch and Prees Local Joint Committee meeting including guest speakers.

Note of Meeting

4. The note of the previous meeting held on 17 May 2010 was approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendment;

Whitebrook Meadow Prees (minute 8), Mr Henderson clarified that he had spoken on behalf of Prees Parish Council.

The Committee also noted the 'Comments, Questions and Suggestions Action Sheet'.

RESOLVED: That subject to the foregoing, the note of the previous meeting, held on 17 May 2010, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Partners and Communities Together: PACT Meeting

5. PC Tony Jones (Whitchurch Town) gave an update on action taken regarding matters of concern raised by residents at the previous meeting;
 - Motorcyclists speeding along the A41, the A49 (bypass) along A525 Wrexham Road, and along all roads into and out of Whitchurch.

PC Frank informed that this matter was being prioritised. A multi agency crackdown operation involving Staffordshire, Shropshire and Cheshire police forces was imminent, using CCTV, air surveillance and motorbikes.

The Camera Safety Partnership would also be working closely on this issue over the next 8 weeks and Speed vans had recently been put on the A525.

- Parking opposite Greenfields Way, going into Greenfields Rise and by the bus stop, thereby creating problems.

PC Jones commented that two letter drops had already been undertaken to local residents in connection with this problem and the provision of grasscrete had been investigated. However it was noted that the problem persisted.

It was agreed that PC Jones in conjunction with appropriate highways officers should discuss ways of tackling the issue further, including the provision of another leaflet drop to try and educate local residents.

PC Jones asked if there were any new issues anyone wished to raise. The following matters were highlighted by local residents present;

- Parents parking on Brook Road and Anchor Close at school drop off and collection times were creating cause for concern and problems for local residents. PC Evans said she would speak directly with the Head and liaise on ways to combat this e.g. introduction of a walking bus?
- Problems of parking on and around the roundabout at St Alkmunds Church in Whitchurch were raised by Cllr Ankers. It was agreed that this be looked at again by officers.

PC Evans, Jones and Frank undertook to look at all the issues raised over the next three months and update the Local Joint Committee on outcomes at the next PACT meeting in October 2010.

In conclusion PC Jones advised that the local policing teams for the area were based at Whitchurch Police Station, Station Road, Whitchurch and Market Drayton. He reminded everyone that if they had any issues or concerns they should contact their appropriate local police team directly via **telephone no 0300 333 3000**. Other contact details people may find useful were email www.westmercia.police.uk or Crimestoppers 0800 555 111.

Better Welcome Whitchurch

6. Mrs Jane Bebbington project leader from the Whitchurch 'Better Welcome' Group thanked everyone involved in producing the promotional DVD entitled "Time to Discover Whitchurch"; an entertaining and educational DVD highlighting the history of Whitchurch.

Sincere thanks were expressed to all contributors to the project including the Local Joint Committee who had given financial support towards the production of the DVD. The project aimed to raise the profile of Whitchurch, its heritage and promote the town as a tourist destination.

Excerpts from the DVD were shown to the meeting. Anyone wishing purchase a copy were very welcome to do so from various local outlets (the Whitchurch Heritage Centre, BookShrop and Barn Books at Norbury) at a cost of £9.99 or online at www.redumbrella.co.uk

The Chair thanked Mrs Bebbington for the presentation and congratulated the Group on producing such an excellent DVD which was a great resource for today and future generations.

Shropshire Fire Service

7. John Harrison, North Shropshire Group Manager gave a presentation to the meeting on the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and in particular services relating to North Shropshire, including local fire stations at Whitchurch and Prees.

Resources countywide showed 23 Fire Stations and 22 retained Duty System or 'on call' Stations, receiving 7,000 calls per annum across the county. 60% of those calls were made in the more urban higher risk areas of Shrewsbury and Telford.

Plans showing incident locations within the LJC area and the type of fire within the previous year were noted;

Primary arson	5
Secondary arson	15
Primary fires	32
Acc domestic	13 (a third of these were where they did not have smoke alarms fitted)

Mr Harrison was pleased to report that there were no significant trends in and around the local area.

He highlighted that there were several vacancies locally for 'on call' fire-fighters, which were proving difficult to recruit at the following locations;

- Whitchurch - 1 vacancy
- Prees - 3 vacancies

He welcomed any interest from prospective applicants.

The tangible benefits to employers and individuals of becoming a retained fire-fighter were stressed and anyone wishing to volunteer their services were invited to make themselves known to John Harrison after the meeting or contact him directly on 01743 260283 or email him on john.harrison@shropshirefire.gov.uk

It was stressed that the Fire Service was much more than a response unit. It also provided community safety through home visits, school education programmes, youth initiatives, RTC reduction initiatives and partnership working.

A question and answer session ensued which Mr Harrison dealt with.

Finally, the importance of smoke alarms in all households was highlighted. He reminded everyone that a **FREE home fire safety check** and a ten year smoke alarm was available on request by ringing Tel: 01743 260298 or contacting the Community Fire Safety Department at Brigade HQ, St Michael's Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 2BR.

Funding Requests

8. The Committee received a report setting out four new funding applications for 2010/11.

Cllr Peggy Mullock and Paul Wynn both declared a personal interest in the Whitchurch Rugby Club application. Accordingly no member took part in any debate or voting for the item.

It was confirmed that all committee members had received copies of each application, along with supporting documents where provided prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- a. The Committee noted that a devolved budget of £50,000 had been allocated to the Local Joint Committee for 2010/11. There was also an unspent balance of £379 carried forward from 2009/10, making a total budget available to the LJC for allocation in 2010/11 of £50,379.

- b. The Committee noted that £11,640 had been allocated to date.

- c. The Committee approved the following grants; £

Whitchurch Lawn Tennis Club	2,000
Prees Cricket Club, Summer Children's Holiday Club	500
Whitchurch Rugby Football Club	2,000

Tilstock Village Hall's application for funding for a hearing loop, soundproofing and x10 lightweight tables was *deferred* pending more information regarding S.106 monies that might be available.

- d. The Committee endorsed the following youth applications;

Centre North East – Dance Workshops	500.00
Centre North East – Trip to Wembley/tour/London experience	559.00
Centre North East – Trip to Clothes Show/entry fees/transport	468.00
Centre North East – Team Building Rednal	239.00
Stonham Supported Youth Housing – Wii equipment	304.94

Total **£2,070.94**

- e. It was also noted that £540 allocated (on 17.5.10) to the Police Football Coaching Project to provide football training could unfortunately no longer be used due to a recent change in personnel. Therefore it was agreed that the money be re-directed and used in part to cover transport costs in getting the mobile Skatepark to Whitchurch, plus any other diversionary activities to be provided by the police.

- f. After noting comments made by the Chairman of Whitchurch Tennis Club, it was agreed that the Committee would give their application further consideration at the next LJC meeting.

Outcome of Budget Consultation and 2011/12 Budget

9. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Stephen Charmley, (Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure) and Stephanie Jackson, Head of Finance, to discuss the Council's current financial situation. The scale of the Public Sector "funding crunch" in the UK was unprecedented compared to changes in the past 30 years. Local councils are planning cuts in Government funding in the region of 25% over the next 3 to 4 years.

Cllr Stephen Charmley referred to a report on the outcome of budget consultations for 2010/11, which provided a valuable insight into the priorities of Shropshire residents and thanked everyone for their comments. A number of changes had been made to the final budget strategy agreed by Council as a direct result of this feedback. Likewise the Council now sought local residents' views on the extensive financial difficulties the Council now had to deal with.

The main problems facing the Council were outlined; the Council was required to make nearly £10 million of savings in the current financial year, and find savings totalling nearly £50 million over the next three years. This was a huge challenge. Some savings could be made by internal efficiencies, but this would not be enough. It was not possible to raise council tax and therefore the Council had no option but to look at services.

A debate ensued with a question and answer session. The main issues and concerns raised included;

- Concern that public services would be hit directly.
- If Council tax was to stay the same where would the extra money required by the Council come from?
- Innovation was welcomed, but please don't be rash. You are being pushed rapidly into this. Change takes time.
- How can you balance 'quick savings' without damaging frontline services?
- Why not look at 'double summer time'?
- Suggest local schools and businesses procure food locally as far as possible.
- There was a suggestion to remove Parkright in the Market Towns, which was felt to be detrimental to local businesses.
- If the voluntary sector expands and takes on more work to help out, concern was expressed that when the economy picks up they will have to reduce their role.
- Look at the costs of providing Local Joint Committee meetings. Excellent as they are, maybe they could be reduced?
- Concern was expressed over the recent review being undertaken for the Meals on Wheels service. There was fear that the service being run-down.

Cllr Charmley described the ambitious transformation programme the Council had started to put in place to deliver its public services differently over the next three years. The Council was also in discussion with other local public service providers to see if savings could be made by working more closely together. He said the Council would not be afraid to take unpopular decisions, but explained that a wide consultation process was underway. Over the next 6 months he urged everyone to make their views known, either by contacting their local councillors directly, responding on the Council's website, writing in or telephoning. All views would be welcome and will influence the council's approach to its financial plan.

Public Question Time and Identification of Future Agenda Items

10. The Chair invited public questions from the floor and suggestions for future agenda items. The following were received/discussed;
- Update : Whitebrook Meadow Prees – an update was given by Ian Henderson; Following concerns raised at the previous LJC, a productive meeting had since been held with Cllr Malcolm Price, Housing Portfolio Holder and senior officers on 15 June 2010, which addressed the main queries. A further meeting is to be arranged. Mr Henderson reported that to date the provider was now making changes to provide 5 homes with joint /shared equity status which was pleasing and very much welcomed.

Suggested agenda items;

- Market Towns Revitalisation Programme - aimed at securing the long-term sustainability of Shropshire's towns by improving services, helping businesses to thrive, protecting towns' heritage and promoting high quality housing. Market towns in Shropshire are in line for a £3 million boost as Shropshire Council continues its work to support businesses and residents across the county. Local people will be able to influence decisions about how the money is spent. Everyone will be asked to give their views about what kind of projects are needed in their area.
- An update on the latest budget position was requested.
- Shawbury Helicopter School – presentation suggested
- Rural Libraries update
- Blackberry Fair in Whitchurch

Date of Next Meeting

11. It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 6 October 2010 at 7.00 pm at Whitchurch Civic Hall, High Street, Whitchurch.

CHAIRMAN

DATE