

WEST CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE

29 November 2018

7.00 - 9.40 pm

Present: Councillors Nethsingha (Chair), Payne (Vice-Chair), Bick, Gehring, Gillespie, Hipkin, Holt, Martinelli, Harrison, Nethsingha and Richards
Also present Councillor Scutt

External Representatives Present:

Project Manager, Greater Cambridge Partnership: Adrian Shepherd,
Project Director, Mott MacDonald: Jo Baker
Police Representative: Sergeant Mišík

Officers Present:

Anti-Social Behaviour Officer: Sarah Steggles
Committee Manager: Toni Birkin

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**18/26/WAC Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Cantrill.

18/27/WAC Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

18/28/WAC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18/29/WAC Matters and Actions Arising From the Minutes

The Action Sheet was noted and an updated copy could be viewed at the following link under 'Committee Action Sheet'.

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s44511/180920%20Committee%20Action%20Sheet%20WCAC.pdf>

18/30/WAC Open Forum

Members of the public asked a number of questions, as set out below.

1. Member of the Public (MOP)

What should members of the public do if they are concerned about rough sleeping or drug taking?

Councillor Bick suggested that the public should call the police if there was an on-going crime or if the concern was the wellbeing of the individual, there were contact points that he would share outside the meeting.

2. Richard Taylor

Stated that his question, asked at the July meeting to be forwarded to the CSP and answered in the action sheet, was an inaccurate reflection of what he said. He stated that the reply did not instill confidence that violent offenders were sufficiently monitored when serving community sentences.

Councillor Nethsingha said this was a matter outside the remit of this Committee and that offering personal perspectives on the matter would not be helpful.

18/31/WAC Executive Councillor for Streets and Open Spaces:

The Executive Councillor for Streets and Open Spaces, Councillor Thornburrow, gave an overview of what had been achieved in the West Central Area using EIP funding in recent years.

The following questions were asked:

1. Councillor Gehring

Welcomed the assurance that the Lammas Land Fountain project would be delivered. It was hoped that this would reduce plastic waste.

The intention was to install taps on public buildings where ever possible in the future.

2. Councillor Bick

There are outstanding EIP projects that have been in the pipeline for three years. Is there sufficient officer resource to deliver the work required?

Officers were confident that they have the resources required to deliver these complicated projects, some of which require joint working with other bodies.

3. Councillor Hipkin

Pedestrians find themselves forced into the road due to street furniture, including tables and chairs. Is there a checking process to ensure that traders are not encroaching on the footpath? What are the fees for pavement tables and who collects them?

The Executive Councillor undertook to investigate this further.

Action: Cllr Thornburrow

4. Councillor Gillespie

The winter market and fun fair on Parker's Piece has grown beyond what was originally envisaged. What action is planned for the future?

A new contract would be negotiated shortly.

5. MOP

Why are the minutes of the Cam Conservators meeting not available to members of the public?

Meeting are open to observers but at present minutes were not routinely published.

6. MOP

Some organisations had been asked to consultation events regarding the development of the Market Square.

The Executive Councillor's remit for the Market Square only covered cleaning.

Councillor Nethsingha suggested the officers involved in the project could be invited to a future West Central Area Committee.

7. MOP

Initiatives to look at some areas of the riverbank and city centre fail to consider the area as a whole. Can a joined up approach be adopted?

Currently a biodiversity strategy exists but is in need of updating.

8. MOP

Is there a strategic approach to the delivery of car charging points in the city centre?

Various options were being considered.

The Executive Councillor thanked West Central Area Committee for the invitation to attend. She stated that she is keen to develop her understanding of Ward level issues. Ward walkabouts were planned for the New Year and suggestions of places to visit would be welcomed.

18/32/WAC Policing and Safer Neighbourhoods

The Committee received a report from Sergeant Mišík regarding policing and safer neighbourhoods trends.

The report outlined actions taken since the last reporting period. The current emerging issues/neighbourhood trends for each ward were also highlighted (see report for full details). Previous priorities and engagement activity noted in the report were:

- i. Drug dealing, associated begging and anti-social behaviour.
- ii. Dangerous driving by coaches on Queen's Road at key times on Saturdays

Sarah Steggles, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, gave an update on initiatives to address rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour. Her team had a range of options open to them. Working with other agencies, individuals would be offered support to move them off the streets but some were reluctant to engage in this process. Where problematic behaviour impacted on other people further action, including Police action, could be considered.

The following questions were asked:

1. MOP

Fitzroy Street and Grafton Centre area is suffering due to anti-social behaviour and criminal activities.

The Police need as much evidence, that can be gathered safely, to investigate. Car registrations, descriptions (including descriptions of dogs) were all helpful to build up a picture of activities.

2. MOP

When reporting an incident of threatening behaviour via 999 callers were told to use the 101 number.

If the situation was no longer ongoing (the perpetrator had moved on) then 999 operatives would make a judgement call about referring callers to the 101 number. However, Sergeant Mišík undertook to feed back the MOP dissatisfaction with the response.

3. MOP

Residents in Grafton Area had reported a number of incidents via the 101 number. However, when they use an FOI to view recorded incidents, many of their reports were missing.

The local team were well aware of the issues in the area. Complex issues such as these would be investigated and cross team action would follow.

4. MOP

Similar problems were reported last year. A single point of contact would be helpful.

Sarah Steggles suggested that incidents could also be reported to the City Council ASB team.

5. MOP

Reported incidents of drug dealing were not taken seriously and no action followed?

Sergeant Mišík stated that his team reviewed reports relating to their own areas and were aware of on-going issues. The FOI might not have produced the full results due to IT issues and complication of the search methods. There were complex issues in the area that are being addressed in a cross team approach.

6. Councillor Bick

Residents were concerned that ASB is linked to the wider criminal offences that were taking place in the area. If the criminal

behaviour was addressed the ASB would also be resolved. People lack faith in the reporting systems. Can an audit of reported incidents over a set period be carried out?

Sergeant Mišík stated that a similar approach had been used elsewhere. He undertook to meet local residents outside the meeting to discuss this further.

7. Councillor Nethsingha

Suggested that the Council could do more to discourage people giving to beggars and to promote more appropriate routes for donations.

Sarah Steggles outlined the Street Aid gifting process. She suggested that members of the public did not welcome authorities, such as councils, telling them not to give directly to people who appeared to be homeless.

Councillor Nethsingha suggested that the Police and Crime Commissioner could be invited to West Central to discuss the issues around drugs and rough sleeping.

8. Councillor Scutt

Are there any details available on the use of young people (under 16's) as couriers by drug dealers? North Area Committee had agreed a priority to protect young people who had been excluded from school being abused.

Information around this matter was unclear. People move around and accurate figures were not available.

9. Councillor Scutt

A long term solution was needed regarding coach parking on Queen's Road.

Members noted that they were no longer asked to vote on priorities and the following areas of concern were discussed.

- i. Drug related behaviour in the Grafton Centre area as already discussed.
- ii. Poor behaviour of cyclists and moped riders in the City Centre. This included speeding, lack of lights and cycling on pavements.

- iii. Night time road safety at the following junctions: Histon Road/Victoria Road and Chesterton Road/ Magdalen Street.

18/33/WAC Cambourne to Cambridge Public Transport Project Update

The Committee received a presentation from Adrian Shepherd, Project Manager, Greater Cambridge Partnership and Jo Baker, Project Director, Mott MacDonald.

The strategic case for the transport route was outlined with the three main drivers being, Economic Growth, Congestion and New Growth.

The following questions were asked:

1. MOP

What happens to the buses once they reach Grange Road?

It was anticipated that the vehicles would follow demand lead routes, possibly similar to existing services.

2. Councillor Hipkin

What had convinced Mayor Palmer of the compatibility of the Greenways and Rapid Passenger Transit systems?

Councillor Nethsingha stated that Mayor Palmer had apologised for his original comments and had revised his views in light of recent consultant reports.

3. Councillor Hipkin

Concerns had been voiced regarding the rail link to Bedford and what route that would be taking. Are details available?

No information was currently available as a separate business case needed to be completed.

4. Councillor Hipkin

The plans (for the Cambridge Autonomous Metro) are very ambitious. What would it cost?

The project is currently being developed by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and a Strategic Outline Business

Case is to be prepared. At present the cost and finances are not confirmed.

5. Councillor Hipkin

How compatible would the system be and what sort of vehicles would be used?

The system would be called a Rapid Transport System and would be likely to change over time. Currently, it was anticipated that the vehicles would have rubber wheels and would be electric.

6. Councillor Gehring

Consultation results have been ignored and the current proposal is the one that no-one wanted. Additional buses entering an already busy area would add to existing problems. Gantry points are also unpopular.

To allow a tidal flow of vehicles, gantry points would be necessary. The consultations concentrated on the most deliverable options. Initially, it was anticipated that there would be around 9 per hour. Once they reach the end of their dedicated track, they would take different routes.

7. If Mayor Palmer is insistent on a tunnel option, why damage West Fields to deliver a track?

Attendees at Local Liaison Forums (LLFs) had spent years giving feedback that had been ignored in the report. Current proposal would present a risk to the historic core.

The importance of West Fields had been recognised. However, there was a need to move forward with the project. Reports on the consultation results were published before a short pause in the project. LLF feedback had been noted. Nothing was yet determined. The project team would engage with the Save West Fields group.

8. MOP

Where would the bus interchange be?

There are no plans for a bus interchange.

The Committee thanked Adrian Shepherd and Jo Baker and hoped they would return at a later date when there were more details on the project.

18/34/WAC Rough Sleeping Report: Oral Update

Councillor Bick stated that there was currently nothing to add to the report previously considered by Housing Scrutiny Committee and this Committee. An update might be brought back at a later date.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

CHAIR