
Details

The Corporate Services and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee met at the Shire Hall, Warwick on the 16 September 2009.

2. Public Question Time (Standing Order 34)

Question from Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council – Presented by Mrs Keeley, member of the Parish Council and Elisabeth Uggerlose, Clerk to the Parish Council (revised question following launch of the Improvement Plan consultation)

Following the decision at the Council Cabinet meeting of 30th July 2009 to

“support the Chief Fire Officer in developing proposals for widespread consultation, designed to ensure that Warwickshire has a fire service that fully meets the needs of the 21st century”, Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council and the local community are extremely concerned about the closure of its local fire station – a fire station that has served its community faithfully for some 40 years; a dedicated crew that has an attendance record to be envied; a local crew that came to the assistance of the many residents of Bidford, Broom and Marlcliff during the July 2007 floods.

However, the Parish Council feels very strongly that it wants unequivocal assurances from Warwickshire County Council and the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service that

- It will be a proper full and meaningful consultation, which includes the question “do you wish to see fire stations closed”?
- The consultation includes details of the closure of specific stations with full and detailed reasons given for the closures and the benefits that will be forthcoming from them
- The consultation includes a detailed risk assessment that clearly shows the level of service that will be provided to every household and business now and in the future, bearing in mind the proposed increase in population in the county

- That the Full Council (not just the members of the Cabinet) will make its decision **AFTER** the consultation has been made, and the comments made by the people of Warwickshire has been properly considered and assessed and not **BEFORE**. The people of Warwickshire **DO NOT WANT A RUBBER STAMP CONSULTATION.**

In response DCFO Glen Ranger said that –

1. The consultation had already started and would be full and meaningful. The consultation did not, however, include the question “do you wish to see fire stations closed?” The questionnaire had been designed to draw out meaningful and useful responses, as opposed to one word answers;
2. In the area where a station was no longer required specific details of the reasons would be provided;

Councillor Richard Hobbs responded that the Council would not make its decision until the consultation had taken place, bearing in mind the increase in population in the county and the fire risks in specific areas. He hoped that where objections had been made to particular proposals the reasons for improvements had been taken on board and understood before comments were made.

Councillor Hobbs added that he had made contact with Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council and had concerns about the change of resources in that area . He had offered to attend individual meetings of parish councils and partners to ensure that the reasons for the improvement plan were fully understood. The public consultation dates had been arranged and circulated. He would ensure that these dates were widely publicised and he would endeavour to attend all of these meetings subject to his availability.

In reply to a question he said he anticipated that the decision would be made at full Council but he would need to seek legal advice on this issue.

The Chair thanked Mrs. Keeley and Mrs. Uggerlose for attending the meeting and said he would ensure that the response to their revised question would be forwarded to them.