

WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Warwickshire County Council held on 20 September 2005

Present:

Councillor Gordon Collett (Chair)

Councillors John Appleton, George Atkinson, Peter Barnes, David Booth, Ken Browne, John Burton, Les Caborn, Tom Cavanagh, Alan Cockburn, Jose Compton, Jill Dill-Russell, Michael Doody, Alan Farnell, Anne Forwood, Peter Fowler, Eithne Goode, Richard Grant, Colin Hayfield, John Haynes, Marion Haywood, Martin Heatley, Pat Henry, Bob Hicks, Richard Hobbs, Richard Hyde, Mick Jones, Katherine King, Nina Knapman, Joan Lea, Bryan Levy, Barry Longden, Anita Macaulay, Frank McCarney, Helen McCarthy, Phillip Morris-Jones, Brian Moss, Tim Naylor, Raj Randev, John Ross, Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe, Kam Singh, Ian Smith, Mick Stanley, Bob Stevens, Ray Sweet, B.E.M., June Tandy, Heather Timms, Sid Tooth, John Vereker, C.B.E., John Wells and John Whitehouse

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Sarah Boad, Richard Chattaway, Chris Davis, Richard Dodd, Bernard Kirton, Mike Perry, Jerry Roodhouse, Dave Shilton and Mota Singh.

(2) Members Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

The following Members disclosed interests in the items indicated:

Item 4 – Proposed Changes to the NHS

Councillors John Wells (personal interest - Rugby PCT member),
Colin Hayfield (personal interest – North Warwickshire PCT member),
Jose Compton (personal interest as associate manager of South Warwickshire PCT),
Mick Jones (personal interest as employee of North Warwickshire PCT),
Barry Longden (personal interest as daughter and son-in-law are NHS employees).

Item 2 – Adult and Community Learning Plan

Councillor Richard Grant declared a personal interest as a member of the Learning and Skills Council.

Item 3 – Warwickshire Youth Justice Plan

Councillors Colin Hayfield and John Vereker declared personal interests as magistrates.

The following councillors declared personal interests in the event of any debate relating to the councils they are members of, as indicated below:

Tom Cavanagh – Rugby Borough Council
Gordon Collett - Rugby Borough Council
Anita Macaulay – Stratford on Avon District Council

Item 7(1) – Motion to Council

Councillor Peter Barnes declared a personal interest.

(3) Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2005 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

The Acting Chief Executive announced that, in relation to minute 6 – “Capital Programme for Transport 2005/06”, a letter had been sent to all MPs and that in relation to minute 8 – “Concessionary Fishing Licences” a letter had been received from the Environment Agency referring to a review of the scheme.

(4) Announcements

Jim Graham – Chief Executive

The Chair welcomed Jim Graham to the meeting and looked forward to his taking up the post of Chief Executive on 1 October.

Eric wood – Acting Chief Executive

The Chair and Members paid tribute and thanked Eric Wood for his valuable support as Acting Chief Executive.

Councillor June Tandy moved and was seconded by Councillor Jill Dill-Russell, the motion agreed below:

Resolved:

That the County Council puts on record its appreciation to Eric Wood for his services as Acting Chief Executive.

Vice-Chair

Councillor Chris Davis, Vice-Chair was unable to attend the meeting.

Councillor June Tandy proposed, and was seconded, that Councillor Ray Sweet be appointed Vice-Chair for the meeting.

Resolved:

That Councillor Ray Sweet be appointed Vice-Chair for the meeting.

Brindley Medal - Trading Standards Service

Councillor Richard Hobbs (Cabinet portfolio holder for Community Safety) presented the Brindley Medal to the Head of Trading Standards.

The award had been made in recognition of the service's contribution to consumer awareness and work undertaken in classrooms. The classroom initiative had received national acclaim and had been adopted by other councils throughout the country.

The Chair requested that the Council's congratulations be relayed to all of the staff involved in this initiative.

Fire and Rescue Service – Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Councillor Richard Hobbs advised the Council that the Fire and Rescue Service had been assessed as good by the CPA inspectorate.

The Council congratulated the Chief Fire Officer and his staff.

Education Service – Investors in People Award

Eric Wood, County Education Officer, reported that the Education Service was the first of the Council's services to be re-assessed and to achieve the IPP award under new standards of assessment.

The Chair, on behalf of the Council, congratulated Eric Wood and requested that their congratulations and thanks be passed to the staff of the department.

Proposed Police Reorganisation

Councillor Alan Farnell, Leader of the Council, referred to the recent announcement regarding proposals to reorganise Police forces and announced that a special meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 11 October at 10.00 am to discuss the implications for Warwickshire.

(The Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be moved from 10.00 am to 2.15 pm on that day).

Petition – Traffic Congestion in Camp Hill Road

Councillor Sid Tooth presented a petition on behalf of residents in the vicinity of the Camp Hill Dental Practice in Camp Hill Road. The residents were concerned that parking for the dental practice was causing access problems for residents and was a hazard to other road users.

The Council was advised that the petition was also being submitted to the NHS Primary Care Trust, the Borough Council and the Police Authority.

(The petition would be passed to the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy for consideration and report back to Councillor Tooth and the petitioners).

Warwickshire Schools Results

Councillor John Burton, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Schools, announced that the schools Minister, Jacqui Smith, had congratulated Warwickshire on the high results in key stage 2 school examinations.

The Council congratulated schools and pupils for their achievements.

2. Adult and Community Learning service – Three Year Plan 2005/06 – 2007/08

Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult and Community Services, introduced and proposed the adoption of the Adult and Community Learning Service Three year Plan 2005/06 – 2007/08. (Councillor Joan Lea seconded the proposal to adopt the plan). Councillor Hayfield referred to the discussion on this item that had taken place at Cabinet on 21 July and the intention to look further at the opportunities for learning open to the elderly.

During the debate on this item Councillor Farnell advised the Council that a proposed reorganisation of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) would impact on employment in the area. He also referred to the positive

relationship between Warwickshire and the LSC and thanked Mike Bell and his team at the LSC for their excellent support.

Resolved:

That the Adult and Community Learning Development Plan 2005/08 be adopted by the Council.

3. Warwickshire Youth Justice Plan

Councillor Peter Fowler, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Family Services, introduced and proposed that the Youth Justice Plan for 2005/06 be adopted by the Council.

Councillor Fowler highlighted the achievement of the various agencies in reaching 13 national targets and he and other councillors congratulated the former members of the Youth Justice Board for their work. The Council also paid tribute to Diane Johnson head of the Youth Offenders Team.

It was noted that the Board membership had been reviewed following the County elections and that the Cabinet Portfolio Holders Councillor Peter Fowler and Councillor Richard Hobbs became members on 1 September and the new Chief Executive, Jim Graham, would be invited to chair the Board. A proposal would be put to the Board to invite Labour and Liberal Democrat representatives.

During the debate, members were reminded that there would be a seminar on 15 October on strategies to tackle anti social behaviour.

Resolved:

That the Council adopts the Warwickshire Youth Justice Plan 2005/06 subject to the following amendments’.

- Page 14 - Membership amended so that the County Council have two members on the Youth Justice Board
- Page 17 – Amended to give correct title of ‘Fire and Rescue Service’
- Page 47 – Amended to make it clear that the list of officers who approved the scheme were those officers in post at April 2005

4. Proposed Changes in the NHS

The Council considered a report from the Director of Social Care and Health (issued since the despatch of the Council agenda and updating the information in the first report issued with the agenda).

Councillors had also been sent a copy of a letter from the South West Midlands Strategic Health Authority (StHA) setting out options on which the StHA were seeking views. The letter also advised that, in the light of this

consultation, the StHA would put a proposal to the Department of Health. If the Department of Health approve the proposal, this will be subject to formal consultation.

The Council also had before them the views of the primary care trusts.

The Council discussed the options. The debate included contributions from Conservative and Labour Group Leaders and Deputy Leaders and a video clip from the Liberal Democrat Leader and Deputy Leader who had been unable to attend the meeting.

The conclusion of the Council was that it would support the option of one primary care trust for Warwickshire.

Councillor Bob Stevens moved the following motion and was seconded:

“That a response is sent, *following consultation with Group Leaders*, to the Strategic Health Authority, outlining the County Council’s views as part of the pre-consultation process. This should make it clear that the only option supported by the County Council is a Warwickshire PCT with effective locality arrangements that are responsive to the community’s needs.”

A vote was taken and the motion was AGREED with no vote against.

5. Members’ Allowances

The Council considered a report from an independent panel which recommended that there was no need for changes to the current scheme, other than increases in line with the percentage increase in APT&C salary scales.

Resolved:

That the Council approves the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel that 1) travelling and subsistence allowances continue to be paid in line with those for officers and 2) all other allowances should be increased in line with the average percentage increase in the APT&C salaries with effect from the 17 May 2005.

6. Member Question Time (Standing Order 7)

(1) Leamington Urban Mixed Priority Route

Councillor Ken Browne asked Councillor Martin Heatley (Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment):

“Could the portfolio holder please explain why the Leamington Urban Mixed Priority Route demonstration project is behind schedule and over budget, and what measures are being taken to ease the

difficulties being caused to both shoppers and businesses on the Parade in Leamington?"

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

"There have been problems, one of which was the discovery that cellars of properties were close to the surface. This led to delays. Work was due to cease in October, to enable Christmas promotions to start. The northern end will be finished but the southern end will have to be halted for the winter and restarted during finer weather. A report will be put to Cabinet in October when costs will be known."

Councillor Ken Browne asked the following supplementary question:

"What compensation will there be for businesses, particularly for small traders, and will you give a commitment that the work will be finished?"

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

"The County Council is not responsible for offering rate relief to businesses and it is difficult to calculate compensation for individuals. I am sympathetic to those effected and want to see the scheme finished but cannot pre-empt the budget decisions."

Councillor Tim Naylor asked:

"Can the portfolio holder give a categorical assurance that, whatever sums are required, these will be provided in the capital budget for 2006/07?"

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

"I cannot commit the budget for 2006/07 but will ensure that this is looked at sympathetically."

(2) Advertising on Street Furnishings

Councillor Ken Browne asked Councillor Martin Heatley:

"At the Conservative Group's repeated insistence, despite opposition from four of the five Area Committees, the 2005/06 budget included at least £100,000 to be raised from advertising on street furnishings in the first year. This was said to be a cautious estimate. Would the portfolio holder please outline how much revenue has been raised to date, given we are now about half way through the financial year and that this was a cautious estimate."

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

"I could say it will be dealt with in the same way as you dealt with the projected £240,000 in your budget but I will not!

The scheme is progressing. The projected reserve of £200,000 will be achieved but this may not be in this year. Final documents will be signed in October with a provider and implementation will start."

Councillor Ken Browne asked the following supplementary question:

"So no revenue will be raised this year and will the portfolio holder accept that advertising on urban roads (as recognised by the CPRE in relation to advertising on hoardings in fields) puts the safety of people at risk?"

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

"The questioner may be aware that a recent audit of the Coventry scheme showed there had been no increase in accidents there.

I will not jeopardise safety. Appropriate positions will be chosen (and will not include motorways or motorway junctions)."

Councillor June Tandy asked:

"To what was the portfolio holder referring when he mentioned £240,000?"

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

"£240,000 was put in the 2003/04 budget, transferred to the services and put back in your budget the following year."

(3) Temporary Classrooms

Councillor John Whitehouse asked Councillor John Burton (Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Schools):

"How many children in Warwickshire are educated in temporary classrooms, and what are the plans and timescales for reducing this number?"

Councillor John Burton replied:

"There are 381 temporary buildings on school sites, some of which are used for early years, for small group work or for storage. Some are pending completion of permanent buildings (such as Alcester School).

The priority for removal of temporary classrooms is in the primary sector as primary classes tend to stay in the same room.

The number of temporary classrooms at June 2004 was:

89 in primary sector
127 in secondary sector
10 at Alcester High School
13 at Ashlawn School

Councillor John Whitehouse asked the following supplementary question:

“It was agreed in 2003 that the use of temporary classrooms was unsuitable in most cases and were a drain on maintenance budgets. Progress on replacement in Warwickshire has been slow leaving Warwickshire low on the LEA league table. Do you still agree that teaching in temporary classrooms is not acceptable in the twenty first century?”

Councillor John Burton replied:

“The allocation of capital spending peaked in 2003/04. We are now juggling priorities and pressures such as the condition of our buildings, meeting the demands of SEN, school rationalisation and money. (The Building for Schools Initiative only gives us one school by 2013). This is a major priority for the Authority within the budget we are allocated.”

Councillor Phillip Morris-Jones asked:

“Will the design of new schools, such as Avon Valley which is built to allow annexes to be added if needed rather than temporary classes, be taken into account in future build?”

Councillor Burton replied:

“Yes, that is an excellent idea which we can recommend to Property Services.”

7. Notices of Motion (Standing Order 5)

(1) West Midlands Fire Control Centre

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Richard Hobbs and seconded by Councillor Mike Doody:

- A. ‘The Government has, after a considerable delay, announced the location of the West Midlands Regional Fire control Centre at Wolverhampton. The delay and uncertainty around this announcement has not only increased the anxiety for our Control Staff but has also resulted in delays in the replacement of vulnerable communications equipment.

The Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority expresses concern about the processes that led to this delay and authorises the Chief Executive to write to the Minister to express regret at the delays, the failure to circulate the fully costed business case prior to the announcement and the awards of contracts, and the absence of clarity around funding to be provided for this project under the New Burdens arrangements as set out in the National Framework Document 2005/06.'

Councillor John Haynes referred to a letter from a senior civil servant in response to a letter sent to Government by the West Midlands Regional Management Board and advised Council that the civil servant had offered to attend a meeting to discuss fire control further. (This letter was circulated to all members following the Council meeting).

Councillor June Tandy moved the following amendment:

- B. That the suggested meeting with the senior civil servant takes place before this Council moves forward with the proposed motion.

Following a debate the amendment at B was put to the vote and was lost the vote being 20 for and more against.

The motion at 'A' was put to the vote and was agreed the vote being 33 for and less against.

(2) Road Traffic Offences by European Union Nationals

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Nina Knapman and seconded by Councillor Joan Lea.

'This Council notes with concern the difficulty of prosecuting non-UKEU nationals who commit road traffic offences within the UK.

It therefore believes that a letter should be sent to the Warwickshire MPs, the West Midlands MEPs and the Local Government Association asking each to use their respective influence to address this issue.'

Following a debate the motion was put to the vote and was agreed.

8. Any Other Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business

9. Exclusion of the Public

Resolved

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 7 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

10. Exempt Minutes

Resolved:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21 July 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11. Farm Waste Scheme Funding

The Council considered a report of the Director of Property services and County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive which sought approval to a recommendation from Cabinet for an addition to the 2005/06 Capital Programme.

Councillor Alan Cockburn moved, was seconded, and it was agreed as set out below:

Resolved:

That Council agrees the addition of £123,000 to the 2005/06 Capital Programme to cover the gross cost of projects shown in the table at paragraph 1.3 of the report.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

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Chair