

WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Warwickshire County Council held on 31 October 2006

Present:

Councillor Chris Davis (Chair)

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

Invitees: Colin Ball, Project Manager – Pride of Camp Hill and Nick Robinson
Finance and Programme Team Leader, Nuneaton and Bedworth Building
Sustainable Partnerships (for item 4)

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Anne Forwood, Richard Hyde, Bernard Kirton, Phillip Morris-Jones, Mike Perry, Dave Shilton, Kam Singh and Bob Stevens.

The Council was sorry to hear that former councillor, Derek Forwood, was unwell and requested that their best wishes be conveyed to both Derek and Anne.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

District/borough memberships

The following councillors disclosed a personal interest as members of the district or borough council indicated.

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Councillors: Peter Fowler, Colin Hayfield, Joan Lea, Brian Moss, Mick Stanley, Ray Sweet and Sid Tooth.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Councillors Pat Henry and John Ross.

Rugby Borough Council

Councillors: Tom Cavanagh, Gordon Collett, Richard Dodd, Jerry Roodhouse and Heather Timms.

Stratford on Avon District Council

Councillors: John Appleton, Peter Barnes, Richard Hobbs, Susan Main, Chris Saint, and Izzi Seccombe.

Warwick District Council

Councillors: Les Caborn, Alan Cockburn, Jose Compton, Chris Davis, Michael Doody and Eithne Goode.

Other interests

Item 7 (2) Energy Review

Councillor Richard Hobbs declared a prejudicial interest as an owner of one of the sites mentioned by the mover of the motion. Councillor Hobbs left the meeting for the debate and vote on this motion.

(3) Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2006 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(4) Announcements

(1) Fred Watson

The Council stood in silent memory of former councillor, Fred Watson who had died on 10 October. Fred Watson served on this Council for 20 years (from 1973) and was Chair of Council for his last year 1992-1993.

Councillor John Vereker was joined by other members in paying tribute to Fred Watson's service to Warwickshire, including his work as Chair of Social Services Committee, and the national recognition he had received, and also paid tribute to Fred's many skills and personal attributes that would be greatly missed.

The Council agreed that their appreciation for Fred's life's work and sincere condolences be conveyed to the family.

(2) Jackie Page

Councillor John Burton, Cabinet portfolio holder for Schools, paid tribute to Jackie Page, who had recently died and had been head teacher of Shukstoke School until last year.

The Council agreed that their sympathy be conveyed to Jackie's family.

(3) White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities

The Chair referred to a briefing note that had been made available for members and that a seminar would be arranged for members to consider the impact for the Council.

(4) Chedham's Yard

The Chair congratulated the Museum Service for their work and promotion of the Chedham's Yard, an historic forge and wheelwright's yard in Wellesbourne, which had won the final of the BBC programme 'Restoration Village'. As a result of the win the project would secure £1m investment from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

(5) 'A National Voice'

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Cabinet portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Families, referred to the organisation 'A National Voice' which had been brought to her attention at a recent conference. The organisation was run for and by young people who have been in care and acts as an independent advocate for young people, giving support and advice and running national campaigns. The Council supported the decision of the Children, Young People and Families Directorate to support the service through an annual subscription (£250).

(6) Heather Watson

Councillor Alan Farnell, Leader of the Council, reported that Heather Watson, Operations Manager with the Youth Offending Team, had received the 2006 National Youth Justice Award. The Council expressed its congratulations to Heather.

(7) Road Safety Awards

Councillor Martin Heatley, Cabinet portfolio holder for Environment, reported that the Environment and Economy Directorate had received the following two awards in relation to road safety.

European Road Safety Charter – presented to the Road Safety Unit by Malcolm Harbour MEP, for the Council's excellent and innovative approach to casualty reduction.

The Prince Michael of Kent International Road Safety Award - The award was for the joined up approach of the eight Midlands safety camera partnerships in their anti-speeding public information campaigns. The Midlands was the only region to be recognised as having this joined up approach.

(8) Eliot Park Innovation Centre

The Chair announced that the EPIC had received further prestigious awards for its environmentally friendly construction. The centre had won both national and regional Midlands British Council for Offices (BCO) awards for best commercial workplace.

The Chair and Council members paid tribute to all of those involved in the development, including consultants SMC Corstorphine and Wright, officers within the economic development team led by John Scouller and the Council's solicitors and treasurers who had worked on the contract.

(9) Communications Awards

The Chair reported that the Communications Division of the Performance and Development Directorate had received two awards from the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Local Government Group at their Excellence in Communications Awards 2006. One was for 'Best Civic Newspaper/Magazine', for the publication of 'Warwickshire View' that has over 60,000 circulation. The other was in the 'highly commended' category for their 'council tax explained' leaflet.

(10) Cleaning and Caretaking

The Chair reported that the Cleaning and Caretaking Support Team within the Resources Directorate had been awarded the nationally recognised Chartermark Accreditation for customer service excellence, for its cleaning and caretaking of the County Council's buildings, including schools, museums and libraries. The Council expressed its congratulations to the Team.

(11) Climate Change

The Chair referred to the display in the ante-chamber and promotion of 'Switch it off' week in Warwickshire whereby residents were being urged to turn off appliances when not in use and to take other energy saving measures. This would culminate on Friday 3 November with the public being urged to switch off between 4.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. when central networks would monitor the energy usage to see what affect people could have on reducing energy consumption.

(12) Sports Awards

Councillor John Burton, Cabinet portfolio holder for Schools, and Councillor Wells, Vice-Chair of Council, referred to the Sports Awards at the Ricoh Stadium at which many pupils from a wide range of Warwickshire schools had received awards. The Chair agreed that the Council's congratulations be sent to all of those involved.

2. Value for Money Presentation

Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources, outlined the principles of 'value for money' and summarised Warwickshire's performance against other local authorities. It was noted that the 'ideal' VFM score would be to have high performing services at relatively low cost. The Council was advised that, according to the results, there were parts of the Council's services within this ideal range but there was variation across services so that some scored relatively low on performance (with low cost) and others that scored relatively low on performance but were relatively high cost. This information is being used by the Audit Commission and is part of the overall assessment of the Council's performance. It was emphasised that, although the Council was seen as improving, it needed to ensure it improved at a pace to keep up with the increasing performance of other authorities.

It was noted that a series of VFM reviews had been set up to analyse the information in more detail.

3. Building sustainable neighbourhoods

Colin Ball, Project Director of Pride In Camp Hill, gave a presentation on the success of the Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods Initiative in Nuneaton. (Copy of the presentation is viewable on the Warwickshire website alongside these minutes).

The Council noted the positive feedback that the organisation had received from a recent survey of organisations and individuals and that the service planned to extend outside of the regeneration zone.

Members expressed their appreciation to this and other initiatives of this kind and requested that Colin Ball pass on their thanks to his team for their excellent achievements.

4. Local Democracy Week

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Cabinet portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Families, introduced the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development that set out the progress with initiatives undertaken and launched during Local Democracy Week 2006.

Members commended the young people who had taken part in the events, for their enthusiasm and, in particular, for the high level of thought and skill they had displayed in the debates and question time sessions. It was hoped that more schools would be involved in future activities.

Resolved

That the feedback from participants form the basis for future events aimed at engaging people in local democracy.

5. Review of Scrutiny

Councillor Ken Browne, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group, introduced the report of the Group. This summarised the findings of a review of overview and scrutiny and proposed a number of ways of enhancing the overview and scrutiny process.

Councillor Ken Browne moved (and was seconded by Councillor Alan Cockburn) the adoption of the recommendations 1-15 in the report and authorised the changes to the Constitution as set out in the Appendix to the report.

Resolved

- (1) That, wherever possible, joint scrutiny arrangements with partner agencies should be undertaken and each overview and scrutiny committee should consider these opportunities on a regular basis as part of the development of its work programme.
- (2) That each overview and scrutiny committee should include within its work programme monitoring progress on the outcomes of the relevant Local Area Agreement block(s) and the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group should maintain an overview of this work.
- (3) That there should be a joint scrutiny arrangement with partners to review the overall progress of the Local Area Agreement and partnership working generally.
- (4) That the chair of each overview and scrutiny committee should meet the relevant portfolio holder(s) at least quarterly to discuss:
 - areas where the committee could help the Council achieve its overall objectives.
 - areas about which the committee has concerns or suggestions for improvement.
- (5) That some form of community meeting be held in each locality every year to identify, amongst other things issues, where the community has concerns which should be pursued by overview and scrutiny committees.

- (6) That the basis for the localities to be used for community meetings should be explored further but, at the very least, one local scrutiny exercise will be undertaken in each of the five area committee areas by 30 June 2007.
- (7) That the contribution that area committees themselves can make to the scrutiny process be the subject of further exploration by members.
- (8) That each overview and scrutiny committee should increase its use of the following:
 - select committee style
 - small working groups of members on a task and finish basis.
 - site visits
 - visits to other authorities

This should be done by members proactively managing the work programme and identifying areas of work to be pursued in these ways.

- (4) That partners, service users and members of the community play a larger role in overview and scrutiny by ensuring that their potential contribution receives specific consideration as part of each scrutiny exercise and that they are also encouraged to contribute in ways which help them to do so.
- (10) That the role of overview and scrutiny committees in performance management should focus on in-depth reviews using the data from the Council's performance management system and identifying issues arising from exception reports.
- (11) That a suite of initiatives be developed to promote and publicise the work of overview and scrutiny committees.
- (12) That within the overall member development framework, there should be opportunities for members to develop their collective and individual skills in a practical way, with a recognition that listening and constructive questioning skills are essential to fulfil the potential of scrutiny.
- (13) That the Terms of Reference of the overview and scrutiny committees be revised to reflect a more outward looking approach including the making of reports and recommendations about public services generally. (As set out the appendix to these minutes)
- (14) That each overview and scrutiny committee should produce an annual report to the Council.
- (15) That each overview and scrutiny committee should monitor the progress on actions arising from its recommendations.

- (16) That the Constitution be amended as set out in the appendix to these minutes.

6. Review of Financial Standing Orders

Councillor Alan Cockburn, Cabinet portfolio holder for Resources, presented the report that had been considered by Cabinet and proposed that the amended Financial Standing Orders be approved.

Resolved

That the County Council approves the amendments to Financial Standing Orders.

7. Notices of Motion (Standing Order 5)

(1) Advancement of Closure of the Peugeot Works at Ryton

Councillor Heather Timms proposed the following motion and was seconded by Councillor Gordon Collett:

“The Council views with concern the announcement of advancement of the closure of the Peugeot works at Ryton and:

a) The Chief Executive is instructed to write to the Sub Regional Peugeot Partnership with a clear message that its support plans for displaced workers are immediately updated in the light of the company’s decision.

b) In conjunction with rugby Borough Council, this Council’s economic development and planning officers are now asked to work together with the greatest possible urgency to secure the long term future of the site for employment purposes.

c) The Council looks at ways to enable displaced Peugeot workers to be more regularly aware of its job vacancies”.

Following a debate, the motion was put to the vote and was AGREED as set out above.

During the debate it was agreed that a full report come back to a future meeting of the Council.

The meeting adjourned at 12.30 p.m. and reconvened at 2.15 p.m.

(2) Energy Review

Councillor Richard Hobbs declared a prejudicial interest as an owner of land referred to by the mover of the motion and left the meeting for the debate and vote on this motion.

Councillor John Whitehouse proposed the following motion (revised since the publication of the agenda as indicated in italics) and was seconded by Councillor Peter Barnes:

“That this Council notes the Government’s Energy Review, published in July 2006, and:

1. *While recognising progress made towards meeting the UK's Kyoto targets on climate change, urges the Government to go further and faster* on energy efficiency, renewables, decentralised energy generation and other cleaner, sustainable energy technologies, including clean coal and carbon capture and storage.
2. Expresses its alarm at proposals to encourage a new generation of nuclear power stations, with the resultant need to find safe storage for an increased amount of nuclear waste.
3. Further notes the health and environmental risks posed by transporting nuclear waste in addition to storing it due to the possibility of accidents or terrorist action.
4. Confirms its opposition to the disposal in or transportation through Warwickshire of nuclear waste.
5. Supports a low carbon, non-nuclear sustainable energy strategy, based on energy demand reduction, greater energy efficiency, the use of economic instruments, combined heat and power, micro-generation and community-based forms of generation and a mix of renewable energy sources that includes biomass, wind, wave, tidal, and solar, within a more fully liberalised EU energy market.

This Council further notes the Government’s consultation currently taking place on the Policy Framework for New Nuclear Build, which is due to close on 31 October 2006, and expresses its concern that there should be no undermining of local planning enquiry processes in reviewing possible new nuclear builds.

This Council resolves to:

- a) Campaign for these aims and encourage members of all parties and Warwickshire’s MPs to campaign and use their influence wherever possible.
- b) Write to the Secretary of State expressing the concerns outlined in this motion.
- c) Respond accordingly to the Government’s consultation on the Policy Framework for New Nuclear Build.

Following a debate, the motion was put to the vote and was LOST (11 voted for and 31 against).

It was agreed that the issue be considered at a future meeting based on a full officer report.

(3) Small Shops and Post Offices

Councillor Peter Barnes moved the following motion and was seconded by Councillor David Booth:

“That this Council reaffirms its support of local shops and post offices and continues to recognise their importance in the community as a lifeline for older and vulnerable people.

In particular, this Council notes with disappointment the uncertainty facing rural post offices as the rural subsidy provided by the Government runs out in March 2008. The rural subsidy of £150 million per year helps around 8,000 rural post offices to stay open and continue providing essential post office services.

This Council resolves to:

- a) Write to local MPs, the Secretary of State and the Post Office Ltd, asking each to use their respective influence to ensure that a long-term strategy is developed, which will secure the future of the post office network, including the continuation of the rural subsidy beyond March 2008.
- b) Ensure that methods to support local shops and post offices in Warwickshire are included in the Council’s own rural strategy”.

Following a debate a vote was taken and the motion AGREED as set out above.

(4) A45 (Dunchurch to Warwickshire/Northamptonshire Border

Councillor Gordon Collett referred to the motion printed in the agenda (and set out below) and agreed that the issue could be referred to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration as a matter of urgency:

“That this Council is concerned by the extremely poor accident record of the A45 between Dunchurch and the Warwickshire /Northamptonshire border and asks that a letter be sent to Rugby borough Council confirming Warwickshire County Council’s commitment to take necessary steps to improve the safety of this stretch of road, as a matter of urgency”.

The Council agreed that the matter be referred to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

(5) Energy Saving Trust

Councillor Joan Lea proposed the following motion and was seconded by Councillor Martin Heatley.

“That this Council notes that, through a reversal of policy by HM Revenue and Customs, the Energy Saving Trust (EST) must now pay VAT on goods and services bought in relation to its provision of grants.

The EST advises households on reducing energy consumption and works closely with local authorities. It has stated that of the £25m that it currently spends each year on energy efficiency measures and reducing carbon, £5m will now have to be returned to the Treasury. Of that £5m, £2m would have been invested in helping local authorities to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions.

In light of the publication by the government of the Energy Review Report in July 2006, which rightly identifies energy issues as critical to the country’s future prosperity and the health of our planet, we believe this decision highlights, at the least, a lack of co-ordinated thinking between government departments.

This council resolves that a letter be sent to:

- 1) HM Revenue and Customs expressing its concerns, as stated above, and a copy sent to each of Warwickshire’s MPs and the Secretary of State for Environment, food and Rural Affairs.
- 2) EST expressing its support for its work and informing it of the letter sent to HM Revenue and Customs.”

The motion was put to a vote and was AGREED, no one voting against.

8. Question Time (Standing Order 7).

(1). Traffic outside schools

Councillor Pat Henry asked Councillor John Burton (Cabinet portfolio holder for Schools) the following question:

“At a recent meeting of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee I expressed concern over congestion at school gates when parents drop off and pick up their children. You intimated that steps were being taken to combat this problem. Would you care to elaborate, as in Arbury and Stockingford division there are major problem with congestion especially at

St Pauls School in Wiclif Way where residents are unable to get out of their driveways”.

Councillor John Burton gave the following reply:

“ All schools are now required to produce school travel plans, which include measures such as walking buses, encouraging cycling etc. Governors and head teachers make great efforts to encourage parents to act responsibly in taking children to school but this is often to little affect. The problem is endemic to our schools. Any traffic management measures that are possible are the responsibility of the Environment and Economic Directorate.”

Councillor Pat Henry asked the following supplementary question:

“How can we introduce measures to change attitudes to address this problem?”

Councillor Martin Heatley, Cabinet portfolio holder for Environment, replied:

” This is a problem. Decriminalisation of parking might help. Double yellow lines can help but this moves the problem down the road rather than removing it. I do not have any magic solutions to this. It may be worth asking the Area Committee to look at it. I will ask the Safer Routes to School team look at it.”

Councillor Ken Browne asked:

“Eco-schools is an initiative that includes transport and is part of the curriculum of schools, therefore what is Councillor John Burton doing to promote this to parents?”

Councillor Burton replied:

“ We do not have power to enforce anything. It is very difficult to change the attitude of parents but we do everything we can.”

(2). Co-ordination of projects

Councillor Alan Cockburn asked Councillor Martin Heatley (Cabinet portfolio holder for Environment) the following question:

“There are a number of projects taking place in Kenilworth Town Centre which requires co-ordination of work by various utilities. From an examination it appears that the various parties are not aware of what others are doing and there is still four years of work. Can the portfolio holder tell me what is being done to ensure co-ordination of work?”

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

“ I have asked officers to sit down with the town council, police, utilities and all other parties to discuss the schemes, especially the re sewerage work. I do not like adding to the wage bill but it appears there is a need for a project officer.”

Councillor Alan Cockburn asked the following supplementary question:

“ Is it possible to work more closely with utilities when road works are being undertaken?”

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

“Yes. There are quarterly co-ordination meetings. There is also a web page referring to the co-ordination of works.”

Councillor John Whitehouse asked:

“There is a lot of existing bodies that seek to achieve this co-ordination, including a liaison committee and a town centre manager, and there is no point in having another officer. Will you ensure there is a right level of officer support and that the parties talk to each other?”

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

“Yes, this is a good point.”

(3). Use of hand- held mobile phones in vehicles

Councillor Richard Grant asked Councillor Richard Hobbs (Cabinet portfolio holder for Community Protection) the following question:

“Recent research showed that, although speed is a factor in many road traffic accidents, driver inattention is a significant factor. Drivers using hand held mobile phones whilst driving their vehicles on Warwickshire’s roads are a real threat to the safety of our citizens. Please will the Cabinet member detail actions and timescales being taken by the Council and our partners such as the police to tackle this persistent problem and to reduce the threat to the safety of our residents? What measures are being put in place to scrutinise the effectiveness of the proposed actions?”

Councillor Richard Hobbs replied:

“ These are well-made points. There is a fixed penalty system and the issue of these has increased in Warwickshire from 619 in 2004, to 918 in 2005 and 1005 to date in 2006. There have been 17 court cases and 13 pleaded guilty. The penalty is currently £30 with £1000 if taken to court. There is currently a debate regarding a proposal to increase

the fixed penalty rate to £60. I will lobby through the Police for an increase in the penalty.”

Councillor Richard Grant asked the following supplementary question:

“ Given that we are a large employer, and informed opinion leader, what is the Council doing to encourage employees not to use hand-held phones and is it true that if they use these whilst on business it would be considered a disciplinary matter?”

Councillor Richard Hobbs replied:

“Yes, we do issue instructions to staff. I will check whether ignoring this is treated as a disciplinary matter and give you a written answer.”

Councillor Richard Chattaway asked:

“As the message is not getting across to the public, what is the Council doing to raise awareness?”

Councillor Richard Hobbs replied:

“We have focused on national campaigns but we will take this issue up”.

(4). Migrant workers

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse asked Councillor Alan Farnell (Leader of the Council) the following question:

“Can the Leader of the Council update on us on what progress is being made to discover how many migrant workers are residing in Warwickshire? When will we see the baseline report and what resources being put in to support migrants?”

Councillor Alan Farnell replied:

“The latest Government figures are that there have been 450,000 migrants since 2004. Many are aged 18-25, are single and healthy and in little need for council services. Migrants are unable to access services until they have worked for a year, when they can claim ‘usual residence’ and it does not include visitors or short-term migrants. The International Passenger Survey can not give information at a local level. The Department for Work and Pensions does allocate national insurance numbers but this does not show the length of stay of migrants and the outflow can not be measured so it is difficult to give a figure at any one point in time.

That said the numbers allocated within Warwickshire in 2002/03 was 1510, in 2005/06 it was 3910. The breakdown for Warwickshire district areas is:

North Warwickshire – 190
Nuneaton and Bedworth – 530
Rugby – 1010
Stratford – 1110
Warwick -1017

There will be a report to Cabinet in December and I will ensure it is on the Council's agenda as a regular item."

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse asked the following supplementary question:

" Thank you for that reply. Would the Leader agree that this is putting pressure on local services and will the report include the budget implications?"

Councillor Farnell replied:

" The report will include as much information as possible and I will keep this on the agenda for the foreseeable future."

Councillor Jill Dill-Russell asked:

"Isn't it true that there are a number of schools with Polish and Portuguese students who need support as they do not speak any English and this is a concern for the education service?"

Councillor Alan Farnell replied:

"Yes, there are a number and are generally joining Polish and Portuguese communities".

(5) Reducing energy used in street lighting

Councillor David Booth asked Councillor Martin Heatley (Cabinet portfolio holder for Environment) the following question:

"Warwickshire County Council uses about 21 giga watt hours of electricity per year on street lighting at a cost of about £2m. What plans does the portfolio holder have to reduce the amount of energy being used on street lighting in Warwickshire while maintaining the security and safety benefits provided by street lighting in many locations?"

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

“ I have given a definitive answer to this at a previous meeting. We do purchase electricity from green energy sources. The cost of purchase in 2005/06 was £1.7m. We are following the approach in Essex. It is a budgetary matter and looking at various ways of saving electricity, including low energy bulbs. I can not yet give a definitive answer. Energy costs are rising so we will be paying more but we have an opportunity to look at green energy and the contract expires in July 2007 and we hope to be able to save energy costs”.

Councillor Booth asked the following supplementary question:

“ Can the portfolio holder confirm when positive action will be taken?”

Councillor Heatley replied:

“ When the contract is renewed in July 2007.”

(6) Drug, substance and alcohol misuse

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse asked Councillor Richard Hobbs (Cabinet portfolio holder for Community Protection) the following question:.

“ Following the Rugby pilot scrutiny exercise on drugs, substance and alcohol misuse, the Council committed itself to carry out a Warwickshire wide scrutiny review. Can the portfolio holder tell me when this will start? Can he also tell us what the cost of the consultant employed to look at DAT and when we will know the outcome of that work?”

Councillor Richard Hobbs replied:

“I will give a written reply to all members regarding the DAT review. The Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is looking at alcohol and young people.”

(7) Blocked drains and flooding issues

Councillor Nina Knapman asked Councillor Martin Heatley (Cabinet portfolio holder for the Environment) the following question:

“With ever changing weather patterns, including the recent rainstorms that have caused drains to overflow and gullies to be blocked, can the Cabinet member tell me what actions have been taken to improve the matter?”

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

“ There is a local drainage forum in Alcester that meets to discuss these issues. As a result of flooding there are three drainage gangs now who are called out to clean gullies. There are several methods of

approach to the problem. There needs to be closer working now with Severn Trent Water and I have asked our officers to look at this. It is also a budgetary problem. We have put on an extra gang to help the problem.”

Councillor Knapman asked the following supplementary question:

“Thank you for your answer. Officers are finding it difficult to put any pressure on Severn Trent Water. Can the Cabinet member assist our officers so that they have more influence?”

Councillor Heatley replied:

“ Yes, we are working very hard to get a relationship with Severn Trent.”

Councillor Helen McCarthy asked:

“ There are various areas in Warwickshire with these problems. We need to tackle inadequate sewerage systems and the effect of increased run-off. Can we get our officers together with officers from Severn Trent and the districts to look at measures to cure or at least alleviate problems?”

Councillor Heatley replied:

“Yes, we will make every endeavour to consult with officers”.

(8) Speeding through rural areas

Councillor Les Caborn asked Councillor Martin Heatley (Cabinet portfolio holder for Environment) the following question:

“There is great concern within our rural areas and villages about speeding, especially roads being used as ‘rat runs’ during morning and evening rush hours. Parish councils are becoming, along with residents, exceedingly frustrated at the lack of support for action from both the police and WCC. Lack of positive action is becoming a big issue. To move these issues forward would the portfolio holder :

- 1) assure the council that all departments connected with speeding, traffic calming etc. work in a crosscutting manner to ensure joined up thinking and action including use of budgets to deliver safer roads.
- 2) ensure that the Sid speed awareness devices are used to maximum affect by recording speeds and vehicle numbers,
- 3) guarantee that all statistics used are accurate and, jointly with the police, ensure that all accidents and vehicle incidents are recorded.

4) assure me that WCC will adopt a more 'can do' relationship with parish councils for effective joined-up working".

Councillor Martin Heatley replied:

" The Road Safety Partnership and a number of initiatives (such as parish newsletters, use of hand held devices) are moving us to a point when speeding will become unsociable. The relationship with Police is getting better and there is renewed enthusiasm in rural communities to employ themselves in controlling speeding. I do believe we are getting somewhere"

Councillor Jose Compton asked the following question:

" An officer starts next week as part of our Safer Neighbourhoods Scheme. One of our priorities is speeding through rural areas. Will the priority wishes be taken into account in the schemes?"

Councillor Heatley replied:

" It will be near the middle of next year before the priorities reviewed. Yes we must make sure the safer neighbourhood schemes are made aware of priorities."

9. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 4.45 p.m.

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Chair

SECTION 8 RESPONSIBILITIES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Overview and Scrutiny Committees - Terms of Reference
<p>Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee To review and or scrutinise the provision of public services in Warwickshire relating to adult services including the delivery of social care to older people and people with disabilities, mental health and health/residential care, libraries, heritage and cultural services and community education.</p>
<p>Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee To review and or scrutinise the provision of public services in Warwickshire relating to services for children, families and young people including schools, 16-19 years education, pre-school children, Connexions, the Learning and Skills Council, child protection, family support and social care, children with specific needs and the Youth Service.</p>
<p>Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee To review and or scrutinise the provision of public services in Warwickshire relating to community safety including Fire and Rescue, Trading Standards, Emergency Planning, crime and disorder reduction, drug and alcohol misuse and policing and criminal justice.</p>
<p>Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee To review and or scrutinise the provision of public services in Warwickshire relating to economic development including regional and sub regional matters, employment, tourism, strategic land use, regeneration and planning.</p>
<p>Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee To review and or scrutinise the provision of public services in Warwickshire relating to environment, transport and rural affairs including highways, public transport, road safety, waste management, environmental services, sustainability, smallholdings and rural estates.</p>
<p>Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee To review and or scrutinise any matter relating to the planning provision and operation of health services serving Warwickshire.</p>
<p>Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee To review and or scrutinise the provision of public services in Warwickshire relating to customer service and access, the development and coordination of partnership working including local area agreements and community partnerships, corporate and community governance and in relation to the Council to review and or scrutinise issues relating to finance, property, e-government and information technology, human resources, communication, traded services, facilities management services, change management, organisational development, information management, and law and probity.</p>

Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group

To liaise with the overview and scrutiny committees over their respective work programmes, to ensure that there is efficient use of the committees' time, and that the potential for duplication of effort is minimised.

Where matters fall within the remit of more than one overview and scrutiny committee, to provide a forum for discussion as to which of them will assume responsibility for any particular issue.

To provide a mechanism for discussion about the priority of referral made by or to the Committees where the volume of such reports creates difficulty for the management of Executive business or jeopardises the efficient running of the Council business.

2. General Role

Within their terms of reference, overview and scrutiny committees, **other than the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**, will:

- i. assist the Council and the executive in the development of its budget and policy framework by considering policy issues;
- ii. review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions or matters of public interest affecting the delivery of public services in Warwickshire ;
- iii. make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the executive and/or other committees, including joint or area committees in connection with the discharge of any functions and to relevant outside bodies;
- iv. conduct best value reviews in accordance with the programme agreed by the Council and make recommendations to the executive arising out of those reviews;
- v. question members of the executive and other committees and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area.
- vi. exercise the right to call-in decisions made but not yet implemented by the executive, any area committees exercising executive functions and officers making key executive decisions;
- vii. consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants;
- viii. report annually to full Council on its work.

3. Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee –Membership and Role

Membership of the Committee – 12 county councillors and one co-opted member from an overview and scrutiny committee of each district/borough council in Warwickshire. The co-opted members shall be voting members.

A co-opted member shall be appointed for two years and shall hold office until the earliest of the following events

- (i) on the expiry of 2 years from the date of appointment
- (ii) on ceasing to be an elected member of an overview and scrutiny committee of the district/borough council
- (iii) on ceasing to be an elected member of the district/borough council.
- (iv) on receipt of his/her resignation from the Committee

General role

Within its terms of reference the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee may

- i make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the executive and/or other committees, including joint or area committees in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- ii report annually to full Council on its work;
- iii make reports and recommendations to a local NHS body being a Strategic Health Authority, a Primary Care Trust or NHS Trust which provides or arranges the provision of, or performs any management function in relation to services to persons residing in Warwickshire and to any other relevant outside bodies;
- iv in making such reports and recommendations it shall include
 - (a) an explanation of the matter reviewed or scrutinised
 - (b) a summary of the evidence considered
 - (c) a list of participants involved in the review or scrutiny
 - (d) any recommendations on the matter reviewed or scrutinised
- v make reports to the Secretary of State for Health where the Committee considers that a proposal by a local NHS body for a substantial development or substantial variation of the health service in Warwickshire
 - (a) would not be in the interests of the health service in Warwickshire
 - (b) that the arrangements for consulting on such a proposal are inadequate

- (c) the reasons given for not consulting on such a proposal are inadequate.
- vi require a local NHS body on reasonable notice to provide the Committee with such information, other than confidential or prohibited information as defined in Regulation 5 Local Authority (Overview and Scrutiny Committees Health Scrutiny Functions) Regulations 2002, about the planning, provision and operation of health services in Warwickshire as the committee may reasonably require in order to discharge its functions.
- vii require members of the executive, other committees or chief officers of the council or an officer of a local NHS body on reasonable notice to attend the committee and answer such questions as appear necessary for discharging the functions of the Committee. No member or officer shall be required to provide confidential or prohibited information as defined in the relevant Regulations nor answer any question he or she could refuse to answer for the purpose of proceedings in a court in England and Wales.

4. Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group

4.1 Membership

The co-ordinating overview and scrutiny group shall comprise the Chairs of each overview and scrutiny committee and up to a maximum of five other elected members as determined by the Council.

4.2 Terms of Reference

To liaise with the overview and scrutiny committees over their respective work programmes, to ensure that there is efficient use of the committees' time, and that the potential for duplication of effort is minimised.

Where matters fall within the remit of more than one overview and scrutiny committee, to provide a forum for discussion as to which of them will assume responsibility for any particular issue.

To provide a mechanism for discussion about the priority of referral made by or to the Committees where the volume of such reports creates difficulty for the management of Executive business or jeopardises the efficient running of the Council business.

5. Further Guidance

Further guidance on the role and conduct of Overview and Scrutiny Committees can be found in section 3 of Part 4 of this constitution.