

**Minutes of the Meeting of Warwickshire County Council
held on 24 March 2015**

Present:

Councillor Brian Moss (Chair)

Councillors John Appleton, John Beaumont, Sarah Boad, Mike Brain, Peter Butlin, Les Caborn, Richard Chattaway, Jonathan Chilvers, Chris Clark, Jeff Clarke, Alan Cockburn, Jose Compton, Yousef Dahmash, Corinne Davies, Nicola Davies, Neil Dirveiks, Richard Dodd, Sara Doughty, Peter Fowler, Jenny Fradgley, Bill Gifford, Mike Gittus, Brian Hawkes, Colin Hayfield, Martin Heatley, Bob Hicks, John Holland, John Horner, Julie Jackson, Philip Johnson, Keith Kondakor, Joan Lea, Keith Lloyd, Phillip Morris-Jones, Peter Morson, Bill Olnor, Maggie O'Rourke, Dave Parsons, Mike Perry, Caroline Phillips, Wallace Redford, Clive Rickhards, Howard Roberts, Kate Rolfe, Jerry Roodhouse, Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe, Dave Shilton, Jenny St. John, Bob Stevens, June Tandy, Heather Timms, Angela Warner, Alan Webb, Mary Webb, Matt Western and Chris Williams

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Kam Kaur, Danny Kendall, Bernard Kirton, Clive Rickhards and John Whitehouse.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meetings held on 5 February 2015 and 9 March 2015 be approved as a correct record.

(4) Announcements

Civic Service

The Chair advised that his Civic Service was being held on 29 March at Kingsbury, The Church of St Peters and St Pauls, commencing 2.00 p.m.

Open Evening

The Chair was holding an Open Evening on 25 April 2015, commencing 6.30 p.m. All members were welcome to attend.

Transport Planning Highly Commended Award for Stratford Parkway Station

The Chair announced that the Council's Transport Planning team had been awarded a prize of 'Highly Commended' for Stratford Parkway Station on 19 March 2015 in the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation regional awards for the West Midlands. A submission had been made in the 'Small Highway and Transportation Project'.

The team had achieved the 'Highly Commended' Award due to the level of innovation demonstrated in the submission. The partnership in place with SLC Rail was emphasised, which maximised the skills and expertise within the project team and helped with the complicated negotiations with Network Rail and train operating companies. This partnership also helped Warwickshire navigate through the complex commercial arrangements needed to successfully deliver the rail station project. Margaret Smith, Senior Transport Planner, presented the award to the Chair.

Councillor Peter Butlin, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, explained that the Council had worked successfully with a number of bodies in respect of Stratford Parkway Station and had received valuable support from SLC Rail. He believed that the Parkway was a positive example of a combined transport scheme due to the integration of Park and Ride, the railway station and bicycle park, which had assisted with the flow of people through the town. In addition, Stratford train station had doubled its throughput by moving to a half-hourly service.

In relation to items on this agenda

The Chair advised that officers from the Observatory were in the ante-chamber to respond to technical queries regarding the Quality of Life report. Members were advised that it was the Local Area Research and Intelligence Association's 'Local Research Fortnight' so members may be photographed with officers as part of the national campaign.

(5) Public Speaking

There were no public speakers on this occasion.

2. Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16

Councillor Alan Cockburn, Deputy Leader, presented the report and asked Council to approve the recommendations which had been agreed by Cabinet on 19 February 2015. He reported that the Council had been the founding investment member for the UK's first Social Fund Bond which involved short-term investment for job creation, education, health, social care, community development and affordable housing. In its first year, the investment had delivered a £1 million return for the Council and had received the Cabinet Office New Markets Award. In addition, the Council had been the first local authority to be involved in the Local Government Association's Municipal Bond Agency, which would enable the authority to borrow at rates below those offered by central government. Although there was no intention to borrow until 2017/18, being involved in the Municipal Bond Agency would reduce

borrowing costs in future years. He confirmed that overall the Council's level of existing debt was within an affordable level.

Councillor Keith Kondakor, Leader of the Green Group, referred to the level of over-borrowing of £60.6 million in 2014/15 and requested assurances that this would be monitored. He also expressed his view that caution should be taken when investing in certain countries. Councillor Kondakor referred to the recent announcement that the Council had been unsuccessful in its bid for the LED street lighting project. Despite this, he believed that investment in this type of technology would offer a considerable return and requested that this be considered as an investment opportunity.

Councillor June Tandy, Leader of the Labour Group, asked whether, following the recent announcement that the LED lighting bid had been unsuccessful, Cabinet would reintroduce night-time street lighting.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, seconded the recommendations in the report and advised that the level of borrowing was within the £20 million threshold set by the Council; this included the £4 million commitment to LED lighting project. Councillor Seccombe therefore believed that the authority was managing its borrowing effectively. (The response to Councillor Tandy's question was provided under member question time - see minute 7 below).

The recommendations were put to the vote and CARRIED, the vote being 55 for and two abstentions.

Resolved

That Council:

- 1) Approves the Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy for 2015/16 and approve that its provisions have immediate effect in the current financial year 2014/15;
- 2) Notes the Prudential Indicators, as approved by Council on 5 February 2015;
- 3) Requires the Head of Finance to ensure that net borrowing does not exceed the prudential level as outlined in the Strategy, taking into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in the budget report;
- 4) Delegates authority to the Head of Finance to undertake all the activities listed in report, subject to the use of any new financial instruments being approved by Cabinet; and
- 5) Requires the Head of Finance to implement the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy.

3. Final Recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Committee for England on the electoral arrangements for Warwickshire County Council

Councillor Bob Stevens, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Health, in presenting the report, acknowledged that there would be a mixed view regarding the Local Government Boundary Committee's (LGBCE) final recommendations for Warwickshire, which would take effect following the Council elections in May 2017. He explained that the recommendations sought to achieve equality across the county by introducing a

threshold of 7,780 electors per division. He asked the Council to note the housing developments planned for Warwickshire and queried whether a move to a Greater Birmingham authority would have an impact on future housing numbers.

During the debate, a number of members expressed disappointment in the final recommendations with the view that the LGBCE had failed to acknowledge their responses to the consultation. A number of members expressed the view that the modification of divisional boundaries did not demonstrate co-terminosity, lacked cohesion with the District and Borough boundaries and would divide existing communities; for example, Newbold-upon-Avon, primarily an urban area, would be incorporated into the Fosse division. The following views were expressed:

- While the review had aimed to achieve equality, Rugby appeared to have a higher proportion of electors per division; for example, the Fosse division was 9% higher than the Warwickshire average.
- Due to a lack of co-terminosity, some members would have a higher number of district/borough areas within their divisions.
- The modifications did not appear to acknowledge future population estimates; for example, the Weddington and Galley Common divisions already had a higher than average number of electors, yet were likely to increase further due to proposed housing developments.

Councillor Mike Perry acknowledged that the LGBCE recommendations could not be favourable to all members and considered that the recommendations offered fairer representation to electors through equal sized divisions.

Councillor Jeff Clarke, in seconding the proposal, pointed out that communication with the public was critical in preparation for the implementation of the changes in May 2017.

The recommendation was put to the vote and CARRIED, the vote being 55 for and two abstentions.

Resolved

That Council notes the final recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Committee for England (LGBCE).

4. Quality of Life Report

Councillor Seccombe presented the Quality of Life report which provided an annual assessment of the county in respect of a number of areas, such as housing, education and employment. The effective use of the document was critical; in accordance with the One Organisational Plan (OOP), it should be used to inform the shape and design of sustainable services according to the needs of communities going forward. She reported that the information would need to be shared with partners for commissioning purposes and to develop a flexible approach to service delivery. She expressed her gratitude to the Acting Head of Service Improvement and Change Management and the Observatory team for the document.

Councillor June Tandy, Leader of the Labour Group proposed the following amendment and was seconded by Councillor Richard Chattaway, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group:

‘That the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees receive a report from the Corporate Board that introduces a system that ensures the data in the Quality of Life Report is used to inform policy development and service transformation, and its use is evidenced. In particular it should ensure that the data is used to ensure services are targeted in a way that addresses the inequalities that exist across the County and that is identified in the Report as one of the key messages. In so doing the system will also demonstrate how the Council is meeting the OOP outcome: ‘resources and services are targeted effectively and efficiently to reduce inequalities that exist across the County.’

Councillor Izzi Seccombe welcomed the amendment.

In moving the amendment, Councillor Tandy requested that further work be undertaken to identify how inequalities in all parts of the county would be addressed. This view was supported by a number of members and a number of comments were made during the debate, as follows:

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, commented that a holistic view of inequality is critical; there are many pockets of deprivation and isolation in rural areas which should not be overlooked. He added that, in addition to defining the Council’s priorities for tackling inequality, there needs to be an understanding of the different causes and effects of deprivation in all areas of the County.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers considered that economic growth and wellbeing were interconnected. He requested that a number of headline wellbeing indicators be identified for monitoring purposes, which could be consistently referred to alongside economic growth indicators.

Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning, agreed that the effective use of the data in order to identify solutions was critical. He stressed that understanding the gap between the educational attainment of children in different areas of the county was equally as important as narrowing that gap.

Councillor John Holland suggested that the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Director of Public Health had an important role in addressing inequality from a health perspective, with a focus on preventable deaths and illnesses and the promotion of healthy lifestyle. He suggested that the Council considers its statutory powers and responsibilities in respect of health and wellbeing as a logical basis for determining strategies to reduce inequality.

Councillor Keith Kondakor, Leader of the Green Group, highlighted that health and transport and housing issues were interrelated. He pointed out that half of the County’s long-term unemployed population resided in the Nuneaton and Bedworth borough, compared to one-fifth 12 years ago. He expressed his view that Warwickshire was a divided county, in terms of the quality of housing, education and employment, and stressed the importance of funding in deprived areas in order to close the gap.

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke agreed that resources should be invested in strategies to improve health outcomes. She acknowledged that there were pockets of deprivation across the County and that this was widespread in Nuneaton and Bedworth. Furthermore, Councillor O'Rourke reported that historically, Nuneaton and Bedworth's health services had been 9% underfunded in comparison to other areas and that recent reductions to the Adult Social Care budget had increased the number of hospital admissions. She urged members to take a strategic view in terms of tackling inequality.

Councillor Sarah Boad, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, drew members' attention to the profiles which provided significant health and wellbeing data for local community forum areas. She commented that the inequality debate had been ongoing for a number of years; it was now time to take action and identify solutions. Councillor Boad highlighted the essential role of children's centres and the importance of an effective strategy for 0 to 5 year-olds to ensure that disadvantaged children were nurtured through schools to help break the cycle of deprivation.

Councillor John Appleton highlighted the consensus among members regarding the need to improve the lives of residents. He considered that the data in the Quality of Life reported needed to be used to develop short term strategies to improve the lives of residents.

Councillor John Horner considered inequality to be a complex problem which could not be resolved on a short-term basis. It was important that the Council had cross-party agreement, which would not alter following changes to the political administration, to provide stability regarding the Council's vision. Councillor Horner also highlighted that the electorate needed to feel that their individual needs were being addressed. He urged members not to lose sight of the fact that they had been elected by their constituents to meet their needs.

Councillor Mike Perry agreed that all members should work together to improve the lives of Warwickshire residents. He highlighted the positive work undertaken by the Council in recent years and considered that improvements had been achieved, despite budget pressures and challenging circumstances.

Councillor Jose Compton, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, also highlighted a number of positive initiatives that had taken place within Adult Social Care to address health and inequality issues, such as the Dementia Strategy, Better Together Strategy and the Priority Families programme. She considered that the Council should be proud of its recent achievements and continue to build on this positive work.

In seconding the amendment, Councillor Richard Chattaway, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, reiterated the role of Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees in considering how the data in the Quality of Life Report informed decision-making. He clarified that the essence of the amendment was to help the Council achieve a fair and equal society.

Councillor Stevens, in seconding the recommendations, acknowledged the different pressures across the County; for example, deprivation was higher in the north and there was an increasing elderly population in the south. He welcomed the

assistance of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as proposed in the amendment.

The Chair advised that, as the Labour Group had submitted a friendly amendment to the report, it did not require a vote.

Resolved

That Council:

- 1) Supports the promotion of the key messages emerging from this year's Quality of Life Report;
- 2) Promotes and uses the findings from the Quality of Life Report as part of the its commitment to evidence-based decision making as we plan our services for the future; and
- 3) Requests that the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees receive a report from the Corporate Board that introduces a system that ensures the data in the Quality of Life Report is used to inform policy development and service transformation, and its use is evidenced. In particular it should ensure that the data is used to ensure services are targeted in a way that addresses the inequalities that exist across the County and that is identified in the Report as one of the key messages. In so doing the system will also demonstrate how the Council is meeting the OOP outcome: 'resources and services are targeted effectively and efficiently to reduce inequalities that exist across the County.

5. Proposal to Create a Shared Audit Service between Warwickshire and Worcestershire County Councils for the Provision of Internal Audit Services

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, presented the report and asked Council to approve the recommendation to enter into a shared audit service with Worcestershire County Council from 1 May 2015. The proposal, which had been considered by Cabinet on 17 March 2015, offered a valuable opportunity to develop cross-boundary relationships, while achieving value for money for both authorities. Councillor Seccombe confirmed that both authorities would retain their individual Audit Committees. She added that a significant amount of work had been undertaken to identify resource implications and risks. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Alan Cockburn, Deputy Leader of the Council.

Councillor Keith Kondakor, Leader of the Green Group, asked a question regarding the location of staff and the use of technology to reduce travelling between sites. In response, Councillor Seccombe advised that the shared service would be delivered from three offices based in Worcester, Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick. This offered an opportunity for staff to share knowledge and expertise, thereby strengthening the position of the team.

Councillor Chris Saint reported that the proposal had been supported by the Audit and Standards Committee. He confirmed that the Audit Committee of each authority would retain its independence and only receive reports relating to the constituent authority.

The recommendation was put to the vote and CARRIED, the vote being 54 for and three abstentions.

Resolved

That Council approves the creation of a shared internal audit service for Warwickshire and Worcestershire County Councils with the aim of starting the arrangement on 1 May 2015, or earlier if possible, on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director of Resources.

6. Motions to Council

(1) Local member engagement

Councillor June Tandy, Leader of the Labour Group, proposed the following motion and was seconded by Councillor Richard Chattaway:

“A major campaign is underway as a result of proposals for the demolition of the old Park Avenue School in Attleborough, Nuneaton.

This Council recognises that it is vitally important that action is taken to ensure that, in future, local elected members are kept fully informed of any actions that are to be taken in their electoral area so they are able to speak openly and transparently with the local community.”

Councillor Tandy explained that she had not been informed of the proposal to demolish the existing building and create a new three-story facility which she believed would impinge on the residential houses surrounding the area. Councillor Tandy had received an apology from the relevant department regarding the oversight, but expressed her frustration that local members were often overlooked in the consultation stage of decisions. This view was supported by a number of members who highlighted the need for an appropriate balance between the confidentiality of property-related decisions and information-sharing with local members. It was requested that senior managers ensure that all officers were aware of their obligations to inform local members.

The motion was put to the vote and was agreed as set out below:

Resolved

That action is taken to ensure that, in future, local elected members are kept fully informed of any actions that are to be taken in their electoral area so they are able to speak openly and transparently with the local community.

(2) Pension Fund Investment

Councillor Matt Western proposed the following motion:

“That the Council requests the Pension Fund Investment Sub-Committee consider active support of strategically important Warwickshire businesses through its

investment in them – ideally 'overweight' in investment terms, recognising their significant contribution to Warwickshire's wider prosperity.”

Councillor Western believed there would be value in exploring investment opportunities within Warwickshire, given that it hosted a number of global companies, which could have a positive impact on both the pension fund and the wider community. He understood that the Council did not have the authority to direct the Pension Fund Sub-Committee and clarified that the motion was to request the Sub-Committee to explore opportunities.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers proposed an amendment to the motion, as follows:

‘That the Council requests the Pension Fund Investment Sub-Committee consider a managed divestment from the top 200 companies with the largest known fossil fuel reserves’.

The Chair ruled that the motion was out of order on the basis that it was unrelated to the original motion.

The following points were raised in support of the motion:

- Investment in local businesses may generate a good rate of return while having a positive impact on economic growth and employment. There may be other investment opportunities, such as in public sector and affordable housing as undertaken by the Greater Manchester Pension Fund.
- The Council had a responsibility to make suggestions to the Pension Fund Sub-Committee and ask them to consider all feasible investment opportunities.

Councillor John Holland referred to the annual meeting for members of the pension scheme, at which Professor Williams of the Manchester Business School had advised that, on condition that the fiduciary duty was met, there may be value in investing in local businesses. Councillor Holland suggested that Professor Williams be invited to offer guidance to the Sub-Committee on this matter.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Phillip Johnson confirmed that the motion did not seek a complete withdrawal of the existing investment policy. He considered that the profitable investment in Warwickshire to generate a good return whilst generating jobs in the county was advantageous. He referred to Germany, which he reported to have an effective and dynamic manufacturing industry, primarily due to the government’s active policy of investing in local businesses.

The following points were raised in opposition to the motion:

- The Council was the administering body for the Warwickshire Pension Fund; therefore, it did not determine the investment policy. As members of the Pension Fund Sub-Committee were quasi-trustees, acting on behalf of the other 150 employers in the fund, it would be inappropriate for Council to agree the motion.
- The motion may give the impression that the Council was in total control of the Pension Fund, which was not the case.

- A large proportion if the Warwickshire-based business were owned by companies that were not based in the county; therefore investing in these businesses would present a number of challenges and risks and may not offer the greatest return.

Councillor Cockburn outlined a number of risks associated with investing in local businesses; however, he considered it appropriate to ask the pension fund managers to clarify existing investment in local firms.

Councillor Horner spoke in objection to the motion, due to the fiduciary obligation of the Sub-Committee; however, he suggested that the motion be withdrawn and reintroduced as a direct Warwickshire investment issue focusing on how public funds could be used to fund local government.

Councillor Keith Kondakor expressed his disappointment that the amendment had been rejected; he considered that it was equally as important to explore which areas should not be invested in and referred to the London Assembly which had recently disinvested in the top 200 companies with the largest known fossil fuel reserves.

As Chair of the Pension Fund Investment Sub-Committee, Councillor Appleton reported that the Pension Fund increase to £1.5 billion, at the same time as an increased draw down on pensions, was due to an effective investment policy. This was subject to regular review by the Sub-Committee and driven by the fiduciary duty to maximise pension security for all employers in the scheme.

The motion was put to the vote and LOST, the vote being 23 for, 32 against and two abstentions.

7. Member Question Time

7.1 Questions on Notice (Standing Order 7.2)

(1) Funding for improvements to Junction 12, M40

Councillor Keith Kondakor, Leader of the Green Group, asked Councillor Peter Butlin, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways, the following question:

“On the 17 December you mentioned on BBC Coventry and Warwickshire that Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) contributed significantly to the Junction 12 of the M40 project. How much funding has JLR provided for the works above the cost for their road signs?”

Councillor Butlin responded that JLR contributed to the project in a number of ways, which included collaboration and lobbying support, employment opportunities and business rate contributions. JLR had worked with the Council to address transport issues in the area, such as developing bus routes, car sharing scheme, alterations to their car parking layout and regulating staff arrival and departure from the site in order to minimise congestion. Furthermore, the company had paid for the temporary traffic lights management system and the new signage along their business frontage.

Councillor Kondakor asked a supplementary question regarding the costs for the temporary traffic light system. Councillor Butlin agreed to provide a response.

(2) Highways related safety assessments

Councillor Keith Kondakor asked Councillor Butlin, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways, the following question:

“The County Council has just modified the road and pavements on the Lutterworth Road, Nuneaton, where it crosses over the west coast mainline. Concerns were raised with me from members of the local cycling club about the increased risks to cyclists, produced by the slight narrowing of the carriageway, high kerbs and railings. The raised pavements also end in steep ramps, which could be a risk for the less able on foot or disability scooter.

I was shocked to find the risk assessment failed to consider the risk to cyclists and failed to consider the steep ramps on the pavements.

Will the County Council, in future, ensure all highways related safety assessments:

- 1) Include a study of any risks to cyclists?
- 2) Include a study of any risks to pedestrians and disabled due to steeper gradients?
- 3) Include full consultation with local members and stakeholders such as the local cycle forum?”

In response, Councillor Butlin explained that the risk to all road users, including cyclists, pedestrians and people with disabilities, were considered as part of safety audits for highways schemes. The gradients on Lutterworth Road were to be modified. Councillor Butlin confirmed that local cycle forums were consulted in respect of all cycle infrastructure schemes that had an impact on cyclists. As this had not been the case for this particular scheme, the local cycle forum had not been consulted.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Keith Kondakor questioned the decision not to consult the local cycle forum, despite the modification to Lutterworth Road which had resulted in a width reduction of nine inches. In response, Councillor Butlin clarified that consultation had not been required; furthermore, it had been imperative to increase the safety of the bridge due to its incursion on the railway.

Councillor Phillip Johnson asked how the gradient modifications would be funded. Councillor Butlin agreed to provide the information.

(3) Economic Development in Nuneaton and Bedworth area

Councillor Kondakor asked Councillor Secombe the following question:

“Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council has recently made its only economic development officer redundant. It seems to have created three new posts, only one of which has so far been filled, and that was only by taking a member of staff from the Borough plan team.

Do you have any good news from your visit to Cannes for new employment within my borough and which sites in my borough were promoted at the show?"

Councillor Seccombe welcomed the development of the three posts at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and confirmed that she would work with the Borough Council to support their commitment to inward investment. In response to the question, she advised that the event had been attended by over 21,000 delegates from 93 countries and had offered an opportunity to showcase Warwickshire and Coventry to a global market, thereby encouraging inward investment and economic growth. The County's transport links and infrastructure, plus access to skills, education and proximity to key growth sectors, had been highlighted. A review of the outcomes and benefits of the event would be undertaken. To conclude, Councillor Seccombe confirmed that Nuneaton had benefited from inward investment; for example, the Coton Arches development.

Councillor Kondakor asked whether any of the Borough's sites had been promoted at the event. In response, Councillor Seccombe offered to provide the promotional material which had been based on the Strategic Economic Plan.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Perry, Councillor Seccombe advised that the event provided a valuable opportunity for Warwickshire and Coventry to showcase its intentions and ambitions for the region, which had been welcomed by the business sector.

(4) Pension Fund Management

Councillor Matt Western asked Councillor Cockburn, Deputy Leader, the following question:

"What fees (in absolute terms and as a percentage) do we pay the Pension Fund management companies and on what basis are they remunerated? How have they performed over the last 7 years (per annum and cumulatively) and what return are we achieving on our investment?"

Councillor Alan Cockburn advised that the appointment of the existing management company had been subject to a rigorous procurement process in 2014. To date, the Warwickshire Pension Fund had a positive track record for delivering above expected returns; for example in 2013/14, the fund had returned £74 million higher than expected. The management fees for that year had been £4.8 million.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Matt Western requested further information on management fees for the past seven years, to include flat fees, transaction fees, currency investments and the percentage of stock churn, equities and bonds held by the Fund.

In response to a question raised by Councillor John Holland, Councillor Cockburn agreed that Councillor Appleton's contribution to the debate at Item 6 had been beneficial and he welcomed members' interest in this item.

7.2 Questions without Notice to Leader of the Council and Cabinet Portfolio Holders (Standing Orders 7.7 and 7.8)

(1) Proposed Closure of Brownsover Surgery

Councillor Alan Webb referred to the proposed closure of the GP surgery in Brownsover on 30th November 2015. He asked Councillor Seccombe, in her capacity as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, to bring this to the attention of the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Councillor Seccombe agreed to the request.

(2) Coton Arches Roundabout

Councillor June Tandy, Leader of the Labour Group, referred to an article which had been published following a minister visit to the Coton Arches roundabout. The article had outlined a number of highways issues and, as a result, Councillor Butlin had been asked to identify solutions as a matter of urgency. Councillor Tandy asked Councillor Butlin to confirm what action had been taken and when local members would be updated.

In response, Councillor Butlin advised that a number of road traffic surveys were currently being undertaken in the borough. The local MP had also expressed concerns with the proposals for the Bermuda Connectivity scheme which would be presented to the Council in May following consultation.

(3) Blue Light Ambulances – Rugby Borough

Councillor O'Rourke reported that Blue Light ambulances were no longer stationed within the Rugby borough. She requested assurance from Councillor Seccombe, as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, that the risk to Rugby residents would be considered.

Councillor Seccombe agreed to consider the issue once further detail had been provided and suggested that the Adult Social care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee may also wish to consider the issue.

(4) Allocation of Community Safety Budget

Councillor Sara Doughty referred to the B4113 and the M6 junction which had experienced 77 accidents and 50 Killed and Seriously Injured incidents in the last five years. She reported that the normal funding stream, via the Community Safety budget, had already been spent despite that site being identified as a key priority. She asked Councillor Butlin to confirm where the funding had been allocated and what action would be taken to address the issues with this particular site.

In response, Councillor Peter Butlin advised that the Community Safety budget had been reduced to £350,000 per year and was therefore limited in terms of allocation. He agreed that he would investigate the issue.

(5) Traffic Diversions – Rugby Gyrotory

Councillor Howard Roberts referred to the highway resurfacing works at the Rugby Gyrotory. The closure of Dunchurch Road had required a number of traffic diversions which had caused considerable traffic congestion. He asked Councillor Peter Butlin to provide assurance that future diversions would be managed effectively.

Councillor Butlin explained that there had been slippage in the resurfacing work due to the delayed delivery of blacktop; therefore the work had continued into rush-hour period. Furthermore, a number of motorists had failed to use the diversion routes and had, as a result, entered the roadwork area. He confirmed that the resurfacing work had been completed and this particular situation was the only day that had experienced problems.

(6) Community Safety Budget

Councillor Richard Chattaway, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, referred to the question that had been raised by Councillor Doughty and asked Councillor Butlin to explain why the 2015/16 budget had already been spent.

In response, Councillor Butlin agreed to seek clarification on the matter.

(7) LED Lighting

Councillor Keith Kondakor, Leader of the Green Group, asked Councillor Peter Butlin, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways, to confirm the Council's position in respect of LED lighting following the unsuccessful government bid.

Councillor Butlin explained that the rationale for the bid was to invest in LED lighting which could be dimmed overnight, rather than continue a policy of part-night lighting. The achievement of significant savings was the basis for the part-night lighting policy; to date, this had been £500,000 per year. The £4m which had been allocated to the LED bid would remain and would be spent on LED over the next two years, allocated on a needs-basis. Other sources for LED funding would continue to be explored.

(8) Part-Night Street Lighting

Following the previous question, Councillor Julie Jackson asked Councillor Butlin whether the street lights in her division would be switched back on overnight. In response, Councillor Butlin confirmed that the part-night street lighting policy would continue until LEDs had been installed.

(9) Hawkesbury Village Railway Crossing

Councillor Julie Jackson requested that Councillor Peter Butlin meet urgently with officers to consider mitigation measures relating to the railway crossing in Hawkesbury Village. It had been reported that, due to NUCKLE improvements, the crossing had been down for 45 minutes in every hour. As this was the only route

into the village, excluding a considerable diversion route around Coventry, Councillor Jackson asked for this to be considered urgently.

Councillor Butlin advised that the issue had been raised at the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Officers had been asked to investigate the issue and a detailed response would be provided.

8. Any other items of urgent business

None.

9. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Resolved:

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the item mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

10. Urgent Decision Taken Since the Last Meeting of Council

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council summarised the decision and moved that the report is noted. This was seconded by Councillor Alan Cockburn, Deputy Leader of the Council.

Councillor Chris Clark requested that the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the procedure surrounding the case. Councillor Seccombe advised that the Council's urgency procedure required approval by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair. She advised that the decision had been taken in the best interests of the child. As this was a standard approach undertaken by the Council, Councillor Seccombe questioned the value that Overview and Scrutiny could offer.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

The Council rose at 1.15 p.m.

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Chair