

## Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Warwickshire County Council held on 19 May 2015

Present:

Councillor Bob Stevens (Chair)

Councillors John Appleton, John Beaumont, Sarah Boad, Mike Brain, Peter Butlin, 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, Bob Hicks, John Holland, John Horner, Julie Jackson, Philip Johnson, Kam Kaur, Danny Kendall, Keith Kondakor, Joan Lea, Keith Lloyd, Phillip Morris-Jones, Peter Morson, Brian Moss, 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, June Tandy, Heather Timms, Angela Warner, Alan Webb, Mary Webb, Matt Western, John Whitehouse and Chris Williams

### 1. Election of Chair

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, seconded by Councillor Chris Williams, proposed that Councillor Bob Stevens be elected Chair for the ensuing municipal year. There were no other nominations.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe paid tribute to Councillor Martin Heatley for his service as Vice Chair but reported that it was with regret that Councillor Heatley was unable to take up the Chairmanship due to his ill health.

#### **Resolved**

That Councillor Bob Stevens be elected Chair of the Council until the annual meeting of the Council in 2016.

Councillor Bob Stevens made his declaration of office and thanked the Council for the honour and privilege of representing the Council as Chair.

Councillor Bob Stevens also expressed thanks to Councillor Martin Heatley, both as Vice Chair, but also in his service to the Council and wished him well for the future.

#### Vote of thanks to Councillor Brian Moss

Councillor Bob Stevens proposed a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chair, Councillor Brian Moss and paid tribute to Councillor Moss for the welcoming and relaxed way he had hosted events and for the kindness he had shown to others.

Councillor Brian Moss thanked the Council for their support throughout the year and paid tribute to his Vice Chair, Councillor Martin Heatley who had provided excellent support. He also expressed thanks to his consorts Margaret Moss and Tricia Parker and to his PA Dawn Mardle for their excellent support.

## **Resolved**

That the County Council places on record its appreciation to Councillor Brian Moss for his excellent service as Chair of the Council during 2014/15.

## **2. Election of Vice Chair**

Councillor Bill Olnier proposed Councillor Bob Hicks and was seconded by Councillor June Tandy.

## **Resolved**

That Councillor Bob Hicks be elected Vice Chair of the Council until the annual meeting of the Council in 2016.

Councillor Bob Hicks made his declaration of office and thanked the Council for its support.

## **3. General**

### **(1) Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Les Caborn, Martin Heatley and Bernard Kirton.

The Council sat in silence for Councillor Bernard Kirton whose wife had passed away the previous week. It was agreed that the Council's condolences be forwarded to Councillor Kirton.

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

Councillor Jeff Clarke declared a pecuniary interest in Item 10 –Nuneaton Opportunities Centre, due to his employment and left the meeting during consideration and voting on this item.

Councillor Mike Gittus declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 10 – Allocation of Capital Receipt – Globe House, Alcester, due to his membership of Alcester Town Council, Stratford on Avon District Council and as a trustee of the Alcester Heritage Trust.

### **(3) Minutes**

#### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2015 be approved as a correct record.

### **(4) Announcements**

#### Learning at Work

The Chair announced that it was national Learning at Work Week and encouraged members to visit the display setting out the opportunities available to staff.

#### Nepal Earthquake Appeal

The Chair reported that a recent 'dress down day' had raised £1,409.78 from staff for the Nepal Earthquake Appeal and encouraged members to also contribute.

### **(5) Public Speaking**

There were no public speakers.

## **4. Appointment of Committees and Other Bodies 2015/16**

### Committee Structure and Delegations

- A Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council moved recommendation (1) in the report as follows and was seconded by Councillor Alan Cockburn:

'That the Council confirms the Committee structure and delegations to member bodies and officers as set out in the Council's Constitution'.

- B Councillor Sarah Boad, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, moved the following amendment and was seconded by Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group:

'This Council believes that the current size of Cabinet should be reduced in line with the savings being made across all council services, and that it being constituted of members from a single political group does not serve the best interests of Warwickshire residents.'

The Council calls on the Leader to review whether it is appropriate to establish a Cabinet consisting of seven members which reflects the political make-up of the County Council in accordance with the proportionality rules, and to report back at the next meeting of the full County Council.'

Councillor Keith Kondakor, Chair of the Green Group, expressed his support for a smaller Cabinet but with involvement of other groups to allow more debate on issues and also requested representation on the Warwickshire Waste Partnership.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe advised that she considered a single party Cabinet provides strong leadership and allows for other parties to provide healthy challenge, and was an arrangement that has served the Council well.

## VOTE

A vote was taken on the amendment at B which was LOST, the voting being 11 for, more against.

A vote was taken on the recommendation at A above and was CARRIED

## Resolved

- (1) That the Council confirms the Committee structure and delegations to member bodies and officers as set out in the Constitution’.

### Committees – number of places, allocations and memberships

The Chair moved the appointment to Council Committees and bodies as tabled (and amended at the meeting). This was seconded by Councillor Izzi Seccombe and agreed as set out below:

## Resolved

- (2) That the number of places on Council Committees be as follows

<b>Committees</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Lab</b>	<b>LD</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
Audit & Standards Committee	3	2	1			<b>6</b>
Regulatory Committee	5	4	2		1	<b>12</b>
Staff & Pensions Committee	3	2	1			<b>6</b>
Adult SC& H OSC	4	4	1		1	<b>10</b>
Children & YP OSC	4	4	1	1		<b>10</b>
Communities OSC	4	4	2			<b>10</b>
Corporate Services OSC	4	3	1	1	1	<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>64</b>

(3) That the Council appoints the following committees and membership:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Ind</b>
Audit & Standards Cttee	J Horner C Saint B Stevens	J Beaumont J Tandy	B Gifford		
Regulatory Cttee	M Brain M Gittus M Perry D Shilton C Williams	P Morson B Olnier J Tandy A Webb	R Dodd C Rickhards		H Roberts
Staff & Pensions Cttee	J Appleton K Kaur I Seccombe (ch)	B Moss A Webb	B Gifford		
Adult Social Care & Health OSC	M Gittus M Heatley M Perry W Redford	R Chattaway S Doughty B Hicks M O'Rourke	K Rolfe		H Roberts
Children & Young People OSC	M Brain D Shilton A Warner C Williams	J Jackson D Parsons C Phillips M Webb	C Rickhards	J Chilvers	
Communities OSC	Y Dahmash M Gittus J Lea W Redford	C Clark C Davies P Johnson J St John	S Boad J Fradgley		
Corporate Services OSC	J Appleton P Fowler P Morris-Jones C Saint	N Dirveiks J Holland M Western	N Davies	K Kondakor	K Lloyd

(4) That John Bridgeman be confirmed as the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee.

(5) That the County Councillor membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board be Councillors John Beaumont, Les Caborn, Jose Compton and Izzi Seccombe.

(6) That the Leader of the Council be confirmed as the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

(7) That the Council appoints the following members to the bodies shown:

	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
Corporate Parenting Panel	P Fowler D Shilton C Williams (Ch)	D Parsons J St John	C Rickhards
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education	D Kendall Vacancy	J Jackson M Webb	C Rickhards

(8) That the Council appoints the following members to the external/partnership bodies shown below:

	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
LEP	I Seccombe	J Tandy	
Waste Partnership	J Clarke(Ch) W Redford	C Clark P Johnson	J Fradgley
LGA	I Seccombe (2 votes) A Cockburn (1 vote)	R Chattaway (1 vote)	J Roodhouse (1 vote)
CCN	I Seccombe P Butlin	R Chattaway	J Roodhouse
LGA Fire	J Horner		

- (9) That the Strategic Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leaders of the political groups, be authorised to change the allocation of seats between the political groups on the Police and Crime Panel following the district/borough elections to ensure the geographical and political balance of the Panel.
- (10) That Council appoints Councillor Alan Cockburn and Councillor Matt Western to the Local Pension Board.
- (11) That Council endorses the appointment of Keith Bray as the independent chair of the Local Pension Board.

*Authorisation to Strategic Director of Resources to amend the Constitution*

The Chair moved recommendation (3) on the report and was seconded by Councillor Izzi Seccombe. This was agreed as set out below:

**Resolved**

- (12) That the Council authorises the Strategic Director of Resources to make such amendments to the Council's Constitution as may be required as a consequence of any changes agreed by Council.

**5 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15**

Councillor June Tandy, Leader of the Labour Group and Chair of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the annual report on the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees during 2014/15 and thanked members for their hard work over the year.

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke, Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, thanked Ann Mawdsley, Senior Democratic Services Officer, for her support of the Committee and invaluable knowledge and also thanked the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Health and for Social Care who had at all times supported the work of the Committee.

Councillor O'Rourke highlighted the importance of the contribution of provider organisations and commissioners with whom the committee had worked closely

over the year and also paid tribute to the work of council officers who had been under immense pressure with the implementation of legislation but had kept members up to date on the changes and challenges of the Care Act.

Councillor O'Rourke thanked members for their enthusiastic participation in the work of the committee and their robust challenge, when needed, of service providers both internally and externally. Members had also given up considerable time to serve on the Quality Accounts Task and Finish Groups where they had ensured a focus on improving the patient experience. Tribute was also paid to Healthwatch and to the Director of Public Health who had provided specialist knowledge and evidence based information on health priorities.

Councillor O'Rourke referred to the challenges ahead but looked forward to the Committee continuing to ensure the focus is on patient safety and experience.

Councillor Bob Hicks, Chair of the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, referred to the high level of activity of the Committee over the year and the variety of methods undertaken by the Committee. This had included some very important areas of work, such as the select committee that had taken an in-depth look at child sexual exploitation. Councillor Hicks thanked members for their enthusiasm and hard work.

Councillor Keith Kondakor, Leader of the Green Group, commended the work of the Committees but expressed his disappointment that the overview and scrutiny review of bus fares had not resulted in action, other than the Cabinet agreement to write to the Department of Transport. Councillor Kondakor highlighted the recent increases in fares and the increase in bus fare poverty and hoped that this issue would be taken up again in the current municipal year.

Councillor John Whitehouse referred to the Children & Young People Committee's work on Super Priority Areas and reminded members that this had resulted in a unanimous report but that Cabinet had chosen to not accept the Group's recommendation. Councillor Whitehouse expressed concern that the admissions problem had not diminished and is likely to increase.

Councillor Colin Hayfield, Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning, thanked the Councillor Hicks for the challenging but positive approach taken by the Committee and added that his experience of working with the Committee was that there is clear cross party agreement around the key objectives for education in Warwickshire.

Councillor Richard Chattaway, Chair of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, thanked officers for their support of the Committee and also thanked members and spokespersons for their contributions, in particular in managing a programme of work that covers a large range of services.

## **Resolved**

That Council receives the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15.

## **6. Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2014/15**

Councillor Phillip Morris-Jones presented the Annual Report on the work of the Police and Crime Panel and expressed his appreciation of the progress made by the Panel and of the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor June Tandy seconded the report and paid tribute to Councillor Peter Morson for his Chairing of the Victims' Services Task and Finish Group, whose report had received national recognition. Councillor Peter Morson thanked the members of the Task and Finish Group and paid particular tribute to those victims who had given evidence to the Group and who had provided invaluable information that underpinned the Group's final recommendations.

Councillor Nicola Davies expressed her thanks to Councillor Morson for his sensitive chairing of the Group, many of whose recommendations had been accepted by the Police and Crime Commissioner and would make a concrete difference to the treatment of victims of crime. Councillor Davies added her thanks to Georgina Atkinson, Democratic Services Team Leader, for her support of both the Panel and in particular this Task and Finish Group and considered that both the Panel and Police and Crime Commissioner had now 'found their feet' and the work of the Panel could now have a real impact. Councillor Peter Fowler added his appreciation to the Chair of the Task and Finish Group and commended the members of the Panel for how well they are working together.

### **Resolved**

That Council receives the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2014/15.

## **7. Annual Monitoring Report on the use of the Urgency Procedure and Call-In.**

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, presented the annual report on the use of the urgency and call-in procedures and proposed that the Council note the report. This was seconded by Councillor Alan Cockburn, Deputy Leader.

### **Resolved**

That the annual monitoring report be noted.

## **8. Amendment to Employment Standing Orders**

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, presented a report setting out a new requirement for local authorities to amend their standing orders in relation to the process required before notice of dismissal can be given to the posts of Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer. This includes a requirement to have independent persons on any disciplinary panel.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe moved the recommendations in the report and was seconded by Councillor Alan Cockburn.



The Council agreed as set out below.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Council approves the changes to the Officer Employment Standing Orders as set out in the appendix to these minutes.
- (2) That the Council authorises the Strategic Director of Resources to make such arrangements as he considers necessary for the appointment and remuneration of independent persons.

### **9. Allocation of Capital Receipt from the disposal of the current Alcester Library property to fund the consolidation of the Library and Warwickshire Direct into Globe House.**

- A Councillor Alan Cockburn, Deputy Leader of the Council, moved the recommendation from Cabinet set out in the report, as follows:

‘That Council approves the allocation of the capital receipt from the disposal of the property known as Alcester Library, Priory Road, Alcester to fund the consolidation of Alcester Library and Warwickshire Direct into globe House, Alcester (as outlined in appendices C and D of the report to Cabinet on 16 April 2015).’

Councillor Cockburn outlined the history of the site and the benefits of the project, in particular in consolidating services onto one site. Cabinet had given support to the proposals at its meeting on 15 April but the approval of Council was required as the use of capital receipt for reinvestment in this way would be a departure from the Council’s policy that capital receipts are used to repay debt.

Councillor Mike Gittus seconded the proposal and thanked both members and others from the local authorities involved, the community and Alcester Heritage Trust who had worked hard for years on this project.

- B Councillor Richard Chattaway, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, moved the following amendment and was seconded by Councillor Matt Western:

‘Add

- (2) That this Council welcomes the reinvestment in local communities but has concerns about this sudden departure from the approved budget and policy framework without prior consideration of the policy.
- (3) That the Strategic Director of Resources and Head of Finance consider the scope for similar schemes alongside the review of property protocols.
- (4) That the Strategic Director of Resources submit a report to full Council by September with options for change of the current policy.’

Councillor Richard Chattaway explained that the Labour Group has no objection to investment in local communities but wished for a review to the current policy so that the Council may have opportunities to also invest in other areas of the Council. Councillor Matt Western, in seconding the amendment, recognised support for the

proposal for Globe House, Alcester but emphasised the need for consistency of approach.

The following points were made by members in support of the amendment:

- There may be other similar opportunities that may not be coming forward because of the current policy so it is appropriate to now review the policy.
- This may be appropriate for Overview and Scrutiny to look at the policy prior to report to Council.
- One of the issues raised in discussions regarding Bath Place, Leamington, was that it was not possible to reinvest the receipt from disposal locally.
- Discussion regarding Bulkington Library had also included the issue of receipts needing to be centralised to support the One Organisational Plan.
- The approach to Alcester does not seem equitable when compared to the approach in other areas.
- The policy should be reviewed rather than have policy 'made on the hoof'.
- The policy should make explicit the intention of allowing flexibility.

Councillor Alan Cockburn responded to the debate and explained that this proposed departure from the policy was on the basis of the business case and community benefit which were very strong in this case, unlike the position of Bath Place. Councillor Cockburn added there was a need to provide a Library in Alcester and this is a cost effective way of doing this. Councillor Cockburn also gave assurance that there was no current appetite to end peppercorn rents and that, as discussed by Overview and Scrutiny, there are cases where there is community need for these. Councillor Cockburn concluded that he would rather retain the policy as it is but consider exceptions on a case by case basis.

## VOTE

A vote was taken on the amendment at B above which was CARRIED

A vote was taken on A as amended by the addition of B which was CARRIED.

## Resolved

- (1) That Council approves the allocation of the capital receipt from the disposal of the property known as Alcester Library, Priory Road, Alcester to fund the consolidation of Alcester Library and Warwickshire Direct into globe House, Alcester (as outlined in appendices C and D of the report to Cabinet on 16 April 2015).
- (2) That this Council welcomes the reinvestment in local communities but has concerns about this sudden departure from the approved budget and policy framework without prior consideration of the policy.
- (3) That the Strategic Director of Resources and Head of Finance consider the scope for similar schemes alongside the review of property protocols.

- (4) That the Strategic Director of Resources submit a report to full Council by September with options for change of the current policy.

## **10. Nuneaton Opportunities Centre**

Councillor Jeff Clarke declared a pecuniary interest in this item and left the room during the debate and voting on this issue.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, presented the outcome of the review of the business case for closure of Nuneaton Opportunities Centre. This review had been requested by the Council at its meeting in September 2013.

Councillor Seccombe reminded members of the history of the centre which had been developed to fulfil a need in the area for entry level vocational skills and training opportunities to local young people, supporting the economic and social regeneration of Camp Hill in Nuneaton. At that time there were no other providers in the market place.

Councillor Seccombe reported that there were currently 16 students on part time courses, who attend alongside studies they are undertaking elsewhere, and also a manager, caretaker and one member of staff whom the Council was seeking to redeploy. Councillor Seccombe highlighted the findings of the review in terms of the financial burden of the Centre, the alternative provision now available for skills and vocational training and the reduced local demand. Councillor Seccombe also raised concern that the current provision may not be providing the best opportunity for the young people. Councillor Alan Cockburn seconded the proposal to note the review.

Councillor Colin Hayfield, Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning, supported the conclusions in the review on the basis that the current provision no longer provided the best use of resources to ensure the delivery of positive destinations for young people.

The following points were raised in opposition to the proposed closure of the Centre:

- The alternative provision cited in the report would require journeys, some of them long, for people who may not have cars and for whom the bus journey time and cost would be prohibitive.
- The Centre has been allowed to run down.
- This will take out service for Camp Hill.
- The Equality Impact Assessment identifies that there is an impact on disadvantaged young people and people with disability.
- The young people may not find it easy to go into mainstream provision and large college/class room environment may not be suitable for some.
- There is no reference in the report to the views of staff, users, pupil or the community and no costing for social value.
- The Centre has facilities that other sites do not have.
- Schools have identified that they would like to be able to use the Centre and there is an opportunity to increase charges.
- There is a shortage of provision in the area and the service is needed in Nuneaton (even if in another building).

- There is no indication that alternative property has been considered.
- The budget did not specify looking at just the Centre for savings.
- There is still a need for skills and education training in the most deprived areas of the County and removing the service will increase the level of those disadvantaged. The report does not recognise the social cost of closure.
- Disposal of site is not going to meet shortfall. Is there room for negotiation with the landlord.
- The facility could be rejuvenated if the will was there.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe responded to the debate and gave assurance that all of those at the Centre were having their education needs met elsewhere, alongside their part time attendance at the Centre. 11 will finish their courses at the end of the summer and the remaining 5 will be found alternative provision and every effort will be made to ensure they have positive destinations that suit their needs. In terms of alternative provision, some young people have come from Leicestershire and other destinations outside of the County and there may be provision in those areas. Councillor Seccombe added that with restricted funds it is necessary to do the best possible for the largest number of people and to also ensure the young people are given access to the best opportunities which may be better provided in their peer groups.

## VOTE

The recommendation to note the report was put to the vote and agreed as set out below.

## Resolved

That Council notes the outcome of the review of the business case for closure of the Nuneaton Opportunities Centre, undertaken by the Strategic Director of Communities.

*The outcome of the review will be put to Cabinet for decision on 11 June 2015.*

## 11. Motions to Council

### (1) Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Councillor Matt Western proposed the following motion and was seconded by Councillor John Holland:

“That Warwickshire County Council calls on the Government to oppose the introduction of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership given that this may lead to the sale of public and local authority assets with consequent impacts on this authority’s ability to deliver services at a viable cost.”

Councillor Matt Western referred to a petition he had received signed by 432 people who were concerned about the proposed introduction of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Councillor Western proposed that this partnership, which would reduce regulation and make it easier for them to gain access to public

markets will benefit larger corporations, and disempower local authorities from challenge of large corporate investors. Councillor Western highlighted the difficulty that was already evident in use of the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) that allows an investor to bring case against a country hosting its investment. This has led to states facing bills for damages from corporates where a state has refused particular projects. This could happen to local government, particularly if the ISDS clause is included.

Councillor John Holland, in seconding the motion, emphasised the need to make views known now whilst negotiations are underway as it will impact on local authorities. Councillor Holland referred to a report from War on Want who fear that TTIP could lead to those in poverty having no control over regulations on activity (such as toxic chemicals) that have greatest negative impact on the poor and thus will increase the divide between rich and poor. Councillor Holland added that the Environmental Audit Committee has also expressed concern that the UK will be less able to protect the environment.

The following points were also made in support of the motion:

- It is wrong that this is being negotiated in secret.
- It appears that if a local authority attempted to reject something in its area, it could be sued by a US company.
- This is the time to make representations before the negotiations are complete.

The following points were raised against the motion:

- There is support from national political parties to the negotiations and the TTIP between the EU and US which could bring benefits to the UK economy (up to £10bn a year for the UK has been projected) but the Liberal Democrat party support is on the proviso that the agreement upholds EU standards on consumer, employee and environmental protection and allows local determination of how NHS services are provided.
- The Council does not have the facts to take an informed decision to oppose this which is subject to current negotiations.
- There has been assurance from the Prime Minister that the NHS will stay in the public sector.
- The EU advice that it cannot result in the blocking or reversal of regulation and once agreed all EU member states can accept or reject the treaty.
- It is not possible to make a decision on the basis of a summary of what is a complex issue.

Councillor Western, in responding to the debate, expressed his concern that negotiations were being undertaken in secrecy and added that there were now people casting doubt on the level of anticipated financial benefit and increasing concern about the impact on public service.

## VOTE

The motion was put to the vote and was CARRIED, the voting being 25 for and 23 against.

### **Resolved**

That Warwickshire County Council calls on the Government to oppose the introduction of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership given that this may lead to the sale of public and local authority assets with consequent impacts on this authority's ability to deliver services at a viable cost.

### **(2) Pension Fund Investment**

Councillor Matt Western proposed the following motion and was seconded by Councillor Philip Johnson:

'That in light of the Rockefeller Fund and several other major investors divesting from the fossil fuel industry into the renewable sector, the Council requests the Pension Fund Investment Sub-Committee seriously considers undertaking a survey of pension fund members to understand whether such a strategy would be supported.'

Councillor Matt Western explained that a number of companies had divested from fossil fuel industries for financial reasons, if not ethical and that he considered it would be possible to survey pension fund members to see whether there was support for this strategy, as part of the annual notification of their pension performance. Councillor Philip Johnson, in seconding the motion, added that there is increasing evidence of climate change and of the impact of fossil fuels. The proposal asks for some consultation and prudence.

The following points were made in support of the motion:

- There is a need to reduce use of fossil fuels and the Council should be looking at ways of exerting influence.
- We are at a changeover point –from fossil to renewables and it is now more sensible to invest in renewables.

The following points were made against the motion:

- It is easier for those not operating pension funds (such as Rockefeller) to make such decisions about investment and take risks on returns.
- There are 16,000 paying members, 11,000 pensioners and 14,000 deferred members awaiting their pensions which is why there is a sub-committee to make the decisions and who are legally advised to get the best return on investments.
- If the investment does not result in good returns then the cost is met by the employers (including local authorities and other organisations such as CAB).
- If there is to be any review then it should not be piecemeal but a wholesale review.

Councillor Matt Western responded to the debate and argued that it is sometimes useful to challenge agencies responsible for investment and that this is in line with the Government's view that individuals should be taking more interest and responsibility for their pension investment.

## VOTE

The motion was put to the vote and was LOST.

*The Council adjourned at 1 p.m. and reconvened at 2.15 p.m.*

### (3) **Air Quality**

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers, Deputy Leader of the Green Group, moved the following motion and was seconded by Councillor Keith Kondakor, Leader of the Green Group:

'That, in the light of the latest evidence of increased early deaths due to air quality in Warwickshire and the recent UK Supreme Court ruling that the UK government must deliver new plans to address illegal levels of air pollution in Britain by the end of the year, this Council asks the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to:

- Prepare a report on progress towards the 3 air quality targets in Appendix C of the Local Transport Plan.
- Conduct a study of all newly commissioned highways projects in 2014 to ascertain whether they are contributing towards achieving the County's air quality targets.
- Consider what steps can be taken to consider Air Quality impacts better when being consulted on planning applications.'

Councillor Chilvers highlighted the impact on Warwickshire of the degradation of air quality on the health of people in Warwickshire with as many people dying due to poor air quality as die from the effects of alcohol. Air quality is particularly poor in the centres of towns in particular in Rugby, centres of Warwick and Leamington, Studley, Stonebridge in North Warwickshire near the M6 junction. Most of pollution has been from vehicles and in particular diesel lorries. Work has been undertaken with districts to produce management action plans some ten years ago as listed in the Local Transport Plan and which included targets to reduce the number of exceedances of the National Air Quality Standards and Objectives and to retain traffic volume at 2004 levels in the urban centres of Rugby, Nuneaton, Warwick and Leamington Spa. There has been some reduction of NO2 admissions but due to the rise in diesel vehicles there is now a problem of harmful particles of PM2.5 and PM2.10 and information is now needed on this and on what is the current position on traffic levels. Councillor Chilvers added that, although planning is a district council function, there has been joint work between Warwick District Council, Public Health and Highways and he looked forward to more leadership on this from the County Council and Cabinet.

Councillor Keith Kondakor, in seconding the motion, reported that 269 people per annum were dying prematurely in Warwickshire as a result of pollution. Road pollution is a large factor and most pollution is now caused by PM2.5 particulates which is produced mainly by vehicles and is worse in areas of stationary traffic. More needs to be done to reduce pollution. This could include using 'intelligent traffic lights' that operate in response to traffic levels to avoid unnecessary stationary vehicles and alternative forms of vehicles such as electric hybrid buses. Councillor Kondakor added that there needs to be a joined-up package of measures.

The following points were also raised in debate:

- Road schemes have been introduced that include designs to take traffic away from urban centres and to alleviate stationary traffic.
- Encouragement of cycling and public transport helps alleviate pollution.
- Warwick members are meeting with Public Health and Highways to find ways of encouraging walking, cycling and public transport but Warwick District Council's recent housing plans place houses where it is too far or unsafe to walk or cycle to amenities, work or schools. In addition the housing is not being served by buses as the bus companies consider them unprofitable routes. A more joined-up approach is needed between Council departments and between local authorities.
- The focus should primarily be on improving public health. This means designing cycling and pedestrian access first and roads afterwards.
- Stratford Town's traffic mitigation scheme includes traffic lights that will increase standing traffic and with no apparent consideration of air quality.
- There needs to be consideration of alternative vehicles, be it considering the feasibility of reverting to petrol engines, or moving to hydrogen power.
- The construction of HS2 will bring additional pollution.
- There is a need to make towns more cycle-friendly, so that cycle ways are better connected, are on safe routes, and where there is better synchronisation of traffic lights for cyclists.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, reported that the Board is looking at the role of district and borough councils and agreed that there is a need for a joined-up strategy and focus on what communities need for the future (for example exploring provision for mobility scooters as well as cycles etc.).



Councillor Jonathan Chilvers responded to the debate and welcomed the work being undertaken with Public Health and Highways in Warwick District and agreed that cycle ways need to be primary focus in design and careful thought needs to be taken on junction design. Over 60% of people are within 2.5 miles of their school or workplace and it should be possible to find ways of encouraging people to use alternatives to car travel.

The motion was put to the vote and was CARRIED unanimously.

### **Resolved**

That, in the light of the latest evidence of increased early deaths due to air quality in Warwickshire and the recent UK Supreme Court ruling that the UK government must deliver new plans to address illegal levels of air pollution in Britain by the end of the year, this Council asks the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to:

- Prepare a report on progress towards the 3 air quality targets in Appendix C of the Local Transport Plan.
- Conduct a study of all newly commissioned highways projects in 2014 to ascertain whether they are contributing towards achieving the County's air quality targets.
- Consider what steps can be taken to consider Air Quality impacts better when being consulted on planning applications.

## **12. Member Question Time**

### **12.1 Questions on Notice (Standing Order 7.2)**

#### **(1) Safety of pedestrians and cyclists – A444**

Councillor Keith Kondakor asked the following question:

What is being done about the safe walking/cycling route alongside the dangerous section of the A444?

Councillor Peter Butlin, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways answered the question on behalf of Councillor Les Caborn, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, who was unable to attend the meeting. Councillor Butlin replied that the coroner's report following the fatality on this stretch of road had led to a call for a study to be undertaken into the feasibility of providing a footway link between Walsingham Drive and Sutherland Drive and measures to deter pedestrians from using this section of the A444. The signage and barrier measures have been completed. A study has been undertaken into the feasibility of providing a cycle and pedestrian route set back from the A444 but this would require land acquisition, signalised crossing point and barriers with construction work estimated to be £500 with additional costs including design work, traffic management and land acquisition resulting in an estimated cost of around £750,000. There is an allocation of £350,000 per annum for casualty reduction

schemes across the whole of Warwickshire and there are other sites with significantly more accidents. Councillor Peter Butlin added that this is a difficult situation in which there is a need to prioritise the money available.

Councillor Kondakor asked whether more could be done to get funding from developers?

Councillor Peter Butlin replied that this may be possible but it will be easier to target this funding once the Local Plan is in place.

## (2) Nuneaton and Bedworth – recycling service

Councillor Keith Kondakor asked Councillor Jeff Clarke, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment:

‘Since the start of April the recycling service in Nuneaton and Bedworth has been rejecting up to 500 bins per day and advising residents who complain to transfer contaminants to their black residual bins. The fiasco seems to be the result of a significant change to what was being accepted in the brown-lidded bin without a substantial education campaign. Most residents are very unhappy with the Borough Council’s actions.

Does the Portfolio Holder for Environment agree with me that responsibility for waste collection should be transferred from Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council to some other body and that the time has come to form a proper joint waste authority for Warwickshire?’

Councillor Jeff Clarke replied that there are challenges for recycling companies with the fall in value of materials which impacts on collection authorities. The quality of materials has to be right. These challenges are being felt nationally. The Waste Partnership is the right way to progress and welcomed Councillor Kondakor’s continued attendance at its meetings.

## (3) Bermuda Bridge Connectivity Project

Councillor Keith Kondakor asked Councillor Peter Butlin, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways:

‘The commitments to totally opposing the Bermuda Bridge connect project came from three of the top four candidates in the Nuneaton General Election.

This included a commitment to be fully opposed to full opening to all traffic by the successful Conservative candidate. The project cannot be said to have cross party support by any measure.

Will the portfolio holder now offer the sensible alternative consultation option to upgrade the bridge for pedestrians and cyclists use only?’

Councillor Peter Butlin referred to the decision taken by Council in October and reminded members that the consultant’s report had concluded that the upgrading

of the bridge for cyclists and pedestrians only would severely weaken the business case for a number of reasons, including that the bridge already catered for cyclists and pedestrians, and would not attract the funding. The cost benefit analysis of the Council's scheme also did not include the employment growth factors.

Councillor Keith Kondakor disputed whether the projected additional jobs would be realised and asked whether the business case should be reworked?

Councillor Peter Butlin repeated that the cost benefit analysis (which had scored 5.9) had not included employment growth and that would be an additional benefit.

Councillor June Tandy asked whether the Portfolio Holder was aware of the intensive consultation due to take place on this issue?

Councillor Peter Butlin replied that he was aware of the 10 venues and dates for the consultation and encouraged members to attend.

#### (4) Procurement

Councillor Philip Johnson asked Councillor Alan Cockburn, the Deputy Leader, what proportion of the Council's procurement expenditure is spent with companies in Warwickshire.

Councillor Alan Cockburn replied that 41.8% of the Council's procurement expenditure was spent with companies based in Warwickshire in the last financial year.

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke asked what was being done to increase the level of procurement in Warwickshire. Councillor Cockburn replied that the Council was committed to spend with local companies provided the price is right.

## **12.2 Questions without Notice to Leader of the Council and Cabinet Portfolio Holders**

### (1) Pollution on Etone Bridge

Councillor Corinne Davies asked Councillor Peter Butlin, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways, what action was being taken to reduce the pollution on Etone Bridge.

Councillor Peter Butlin replied that he would provide a written reply.

### (2) B4113/ M6 Junction

Councillor Sara Doughty asked Councillor Peter Butlin, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways, what measures were being taken to address the accident levels at the B4113 junction with the M6.

Councillor Peter Butlin replied that he would get information to Councillor Doughty within 10 days

(3) Support for LGA letter regarding spending pressures

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers referred to the 375 local authority leaders who had written to Chancellor George Osborne raising concern about the risk to services if there are further cuts to local government and asked the Leader of the Council what she and local authority leaders would do if the Chancellor fails to listen to this warning in his budget.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe replied that she been persistent in making representations. This included asking the Department of Health to ensure it fully funds the Care Act. Councillor Seccombe gave her assurance that she will continue to press for this.

(4) Expenditure

Councillor Peter Morson referred to a question that had been asked by former Councillor Ann McLaughlin regarding a report on expenditure on care in each ward.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe replied that it was difficult to give information on this basis as it depends on need at any one time.

(5) Promotional Material at Cannes

Councillor Keith Kondakor referred to promotional material produced for the summit in Cannes that had given an inaccurate location for Nuneaton and failed to show the rail station or all of the key roads. Councillor Kondakor asked whether the Leader agreed that the correct material should have been produced.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe replied that she agreed and that she had made her views known to the promotional company engaged by the LEP who had produced the material.

(6) Use of local delegated highways funding

Councillor Julie Jackson asked Councillor Peter Butlin, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways, whether he could confirm whether it was possible to use the delegated budgets for meeting the cost of switching on street lights if this was considered a highway priority in an area. Councillor Jackson also asked whether it is possible to use the budgets for revenue purposes as suggested at their recent seminar.

Councillor Peter Butlin replied that the funding is for capital schemes. He added that he did not see how revenue can be guaranteed from switching the lights on. He added that he did not support a piecemeal approach to street lighting and preferred to see a unified approach across the County. Councillor Butlin undertook to give a detailed written response.

(7) Retention of investment in Warwickshire

Councillor Matt Western asked the Leader of the Council what was being done to ensure Aston Martin retains its investment within Warwickshire and who is responsible for that.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe replied that this was responsibility of the LEP where there had been discussion of this. She added that they are settled at present next to the JLR site at Gaydon and that there is continual work with them regarding their aspirations.

**13. Any other items of urgent business**

None.

**14. Report Containing 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.

**15. Acquisition of Long Leasehold Interest in Kings House, Bedworth**

Councillor Alan Cockburn moved the recommendations in the report from Cabinet and was seconded by Councillor Izzi Seccombe. The Council agreed to the acquisition of a long leasehold in Kings House, Bedworth on the terms set out in the exempt minutes.

The Council rose at 3.10 p.m.

.....  
Chair