

Minutes of the Meeting of Warwickshire County Council held on 19 July 2016

Present:

Councillor Bob Hicks (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, Nicola Davies, Richard Dodd, Sara Doughty, Peter Fowler, Jenny Fradgley, Mike Gittus, Brian Hawkes, Colin Hayfield, John Holland, John Horner, Julie Jackson, Philip Johnson, Kam Kaur, Danny Kendall, Bernard Kirton, Keith Kondakor, Joan Lea, Keith Lloyd, Jeff Morgan, Phillip Morris-Jones, Peter Morson, Brian Moss, Maggie O'Rourke, Bill Olnier, Dave Parsons, Mike Perry, Wallace Redford, Clive Rickhards, Howard Roberts, Kate Rolfe, Jerry Roodhouse, Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe, Jenny St. John, Bob Stevens, June Tandy, Heather Timms, Angela Warner, Alan Webb, Mary Webb, Matt Western, John Whitehouse and Chris Williams.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Corinne Davies, Neil Dirveiks, Bill Gifford, Caroline Phillips and Dave Shilton.

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

Item 1 (5) – Petition –Home to School Transport Warton to Polesworth School

Councillor Joan Lea declared an interest as a close relative of hers had taken an active part in opposition to the charge for home to school transport.

(3) Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 17 May 2016 and the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on 1 July 2016 be approved as correct records.

(4) Chair's Announcements

Andy Davis, Warwickshire Observatory Manager

The Chair announced that Andy Davis was retiring in July following 20 years' service with the Council. Andy's leadership of the Warwickshire Observatory has ensured that the work of the team has made a significant contribution to the Council's policy development and decision making. The Observatory has national recognition and Andy has played a significant role in research and development of public services well beyond Warwickshire, including taking a lead role in the national association representing this body of professionals.

Councillor June Tandy, Leader of the Labour Group, paid tribute to Andy's leadership and his team's work for the Council, in particular the excellent support and advice he had provided to the boundary working groups over the years and wished him a very happy retirement.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, thanked Andy for his invaluable contribution to the Council and to his strong leadership of the Observatory which has developed into a critical resource in providing quality research and evidence upon which the Council can confidently make its decisions.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, thanked Andy for his work for the Council and for residents of Warwickshire and made particular reference to how the Observatory had instilled the importance of sound evidence, data analysis and methodologies in developing an understanding of Warwickshire (and distilled in documents such as the Quality of Life Reports and JSNA) and the contribution this had made to the development of a range of policies.

The Council thanked Andy for his valuable service and wished him well for the future.

Princess Royal - visit to Riding for the Disabled Association, Shrewley on 13 July 2016

The Chair reported that he had attended the visit to the Riding for Disabled Association on 13 July and had been impressed by the facilities, which included a riding simulator.

Queen's Award for International Trade

The Chair reported that he had attended an event at Holland and Barrett's headquarters in Nuneaton on 15th July in celebration of their receipt of the Queen's Award for International Trade. The headquarters are doubling in size and value the cooperation of the local authorities in their establishment in Warwickshire.

Citizenship Ceremony

The Chair referred to his first attendance at a citizenship ceremony and commended the ceremony for its warm welcoming of new citizens.

George Eliot – Quote for the meeting

The Chair recited the following quotation from George Eliot's 'Impressions of Theophrastus Such':

'Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving wordy evidence of the fact.'

(5) Petition: Home to School Transport - Warton to Polesworth School

Lynn Prestage presented a petition on behalf of parents of children attending Polesworth School and others who had expressed concern at the introduction of home to school transport charges for the route from Warton to Polesworth.

The issues raised by Lynn Prestage are summarised below:

- Although parents had been made aware of the consultation, there had been no indication of it impacting on Warton to Polesworth until parents were notified on 31 March 2016.
- There has been no change to the route since 2008/9 when it was deemed unsafe (and therefore qualified for home to school transport). Nobody has been able to provide that report.
- Parents consider the 2.5 mile walk dangerous.
- The recent assessment was undertaken from 4.30 pm – 5.30 pm on a summer evening and should have been undertaken from 7.30 am - 8.30 am in winter and take account of darkness, weather conditions including ice, rain and the frequent flooding of the single narrow path.(There is no path on the other side of the road)
- Traffic speed is 60mph (causing spray when the roads are flooded). There have been many accidents at the cross roads and the Church Road junction is a blind bend.
- There are open fields either side for one mile of the route, with no houses or lights and dark in winter. The children do not feel safe.
- Parents have been told children should be accompanied by an adult but this is not practicable for parents due to the time taken (4 hours a day) nor if there are other siblings to take elsewhere.
- It is not practical for children to have to carry, as suggested, fluorescent jackets and torches.
- The cost if have two children will be £750 per year which is unaffordable.
- Parents made decisions about which school for their children on the understanding that there was free transport.
- The DfE Home to School Transport Guidelines says that good practice is that changes should be phased in so that children who start on one set of transport arrangements should continue with this until they conclude their education/move school. Why aren't the guidelines being followed?

The petitioner expressed concern that there had been no correspondence from the Council in response to requests for free bus passes and that parents had not received replies to their letters or the evidence packs submitted.

The Chair thanked the petitioner for the presentation. Councillor Phil Johnson, Chair of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, advised the petitioner that this issue would be considered by the Committee at its meeting in September and that the petitioner would be welcome to attend the meeting.

(6) Public Speaking

None

2. Capital Growth Fund - A444 Coton Arches, Nuneaton and A46 Stanks Island, Warwick

Councillor Alan Cockburn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property, presented the report and moved the recommendations from Cabinet and was seconded by Councillor Peter Butlin, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning.

A444 Coton Arches

Councillor Keith Kondakor, Leader of the Green Group, expressed his opposition to the scheme for the A444 Coton Arches on the basis of cost (which could be otherwise used to support a number of smaller schemes); it being 'over engineered' with the possibility of adding time to journeys; lack of consultation and the months of disruption that will occur during construction. Councillor Johnathan Chilvers added that the scheme did not guarantee an inclusion of bus and cycle lanes.

Councillor June Tandy, Leader of the Labour Group, advised that she had been fully consulted and involved as the local member (as had the local members of neighbouring divisions) and that she had confidence in the Council's professional engineers who had worked on this scheme. Councillor Tandy added that, although there would be disruption, this was necessary but would be managed as well as possible. Councillor Bill Olnier added his support for this investment in Nuneaton.

Councillor Jeff Clarke, Portfolio Holder for the Environment, added that the scheme would be important in reducing journey times for people crossing the town and supported the engineers in producing this scheme.

Councillor Peter Butlin, in seconding the recommendations, stressed the importance of the scheme in stimulating economic growth in Nuneaton and reminded members that the incorporation of intelligent traffic light management system would greatly improve traffic flows. Councillor Butlin thanked the members from Nuneaton for their work and support for the scheme.

Councillor Alan Cockburn, in responding to the debate, referred to the need for the scheme in terms of economic growth for Nuneaton with the estimated added value to the local economy of £22.4m with 21 jobs created during the construction phase and 400 expected over the longer term.

A46 Stanks Island, Warwick

Councillor Jose Compton, local member for Leek Wootton expressed her support and thanked officers for their work on this, including presentations at the local forum. Councillor Holland referred to the extensive discussions that had taken place with officers in developing the scheme and reminded members that the initial driver for the scheme but has been developed and now fits proposals for Warwick Town Centre which are currently under consultation. The intention is to consult on the Stanks Island project later in the year after the results of this current consultation

are known.

Councillor Clive Rickhards, local member for Studley, welcomed this scheme as part of the expressway that will relieve congestion at the A435 in Studley.

Councillor Peter Butlin, in seconding the recommendations, commended the scheme in improving safety for drivers leaving the A46, keeping traffic moving and so helping improve air quality. Councillor Butlin thanked the Warwick councillors for their work and support of the scheme.

The recommendations were put to the vote and were carried as set out below.

Resolved

That Council:

- 1) Supports the use of a maximum of £1.700 million of the Capital Growth Fund to deliver improvements to the A444 Coton Arches roundabout in Nuneaton, as part of an overall scheme costing £3.700 million;
- 2) Supports the use of a maximum of £2.594 million of the Capital Growth Fund to deliver signalisation and capacity improvements at the A46 Stanks Island in Warwick, as part of an overall scheme costing £6.000 million;
- 3) Agrees to the funding allocated being reduced on a £ for £ basis if alternative sources of funding become available;
- 4) Subject to the approval of recommendations 1) and 2) above, adds the schemes to the capital programme; and
- 5) Subject to the approval of recommendations 1) and 2) above, authorises the Strategic Director for Communities to invite tenders and enter into the appropriate contracts and grant agreements on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources for these schemes.

3. Capital Funding Issues relating to the Disposal of 1 Northgate Street, Warwick

Councillor Alan Cockburn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Property and Finance, presented a report and recommendation from Cabinet that sought approval to earmarking money from the sale of 1 Northgate Street to provide accommodation for Unison who will be displaced from 1 Northgate Street. Councillor Izzi Seccombe seconded the proposal.

The recommendation was put to the vote and was carried as set out below.

Resolved

That Council approves that part of the capital receipt amounting to £32,000 received by the Council from the sale of 1 Northgate Street is earmarked for works required to re-provide accommodation for UNISON in the Council's Barrack Street building in with recommendation 3 of item 5 of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 May 2016.

4. West Midlands Combined Authority

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, presented an update on the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and was seconded by Councillor Peter Butlin, Deputy Leader.

Councillor Seccombe gave the following responses to points raised in the debate:

- The diversion caused by Brexit is unavoidable but she will continue to keep the conversation on WMCA live.
- There is a proposal to have scrutiny arrangements in place that will enable involvement of wider membership in challenging the WMCA.
- It is for the WMCA to decide on portfolio holders and if the WMCA invite the Leader to take a position she will do it to her best ability and for the people of Warwickshire and for the people of the combined authority.
- The availability of £36.5m per year for 30 years has been promoted but Warwickshire has asked that this be increased if Warwickshire is included, in view of the population and strong GDA of Warwickshire.
- The impact of Brexit on European Funding is not yet known but there will be an argument for that money to return to local authorities.

Councillor Peter Butlin added that, now that it has been confirmed that HS2 will go ahead, it is important to ensure that businesses in Warwickshire get the benefit during the construction phase, that the local economy benefits when it is completed and that communities are adequately protected. Much can be done through the WMCA.

The proposal to note the report was put to the vote and was carried.

Resolved

That Council notes the progress update provided in relation to the WMCA.

5. Cabinet Size

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, presented a report on the size of her Cabinet, as requested by Council at its meeting in May and highlighted that the report demonstrated that her Cabinet arrangements provided good value for money. Councillor Seccombe added that it would not be appropriate for her to put forward any suggestions for future administrations but given the current workload and challenges the Cabinet should not decrease in size.

Resolved

That Council notes the report.

6. Member Question Time

6.1 Questions on Notice (Standing Order 7.2)

(1) Home to School Transport

Councillor Dave Parsons put the following question to Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education & Learning

'Can the portfolio holder update the Council on progress with regard to the assessment of the home to school routes classified as "dangerous". As far as I am aware the only route declassified at present is the route from Warton to Polesworth High School. If this is the case and this route is the only one cut, what will be the saving and is this really going to make a significant contribution towards the overall required savings'.

Councillor Colin Hayfield replied that routes are being assessed as red (dangerous), amber (can be made safe with capital work) or green (considered safe). These are being independently assessed by Atkins according to Government criteria and we are being careful to ensure we are doing this correctly. The Warton route has been done first but more are being looked at and the review will be completed by September. Free transport will continue to be provided for those routes reclassified as green, until the end of the 2016/17 academic year. For those classified as amber, free transport will remain until the end of the academic year in which those works are completed.

Councillor Parsons asked why the routes had not all been considered together and the decision taken at the same time?

Councillor Hayfield confirmed that all will be completed by September and that free transport will remain for those attending Polesworth until the next academic year. He added that there are many pupils who fall within the 3 mile route and would be expected to make their way to school.

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke asked whether the Portfolio Holder agreed that, given the pressure on school places in Rugby, many pupils were attending schools out of their catchment area and that this will make it difficult to provide safe routes to school for all Rugby children.

Councillor Hayfield replied that the criteria will be the same and if a child's nearest available school is beyond 3 miles they will get free transport.

(2) Pupil Numbers

Councillor Keith Kondakor put the following question to Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education & Learning

'We keep getting told the birth rate keeps rising but it seems from real ONS data that the peak birth rate for Warwickshire was 5 years ago. The latest population data for Warwickshire is for the middle of 2015 when we had 6,608 children of 5 years old in the county but only 6,015 who are under one.

How many children are expected to start reception year in Warwickshire schools this year, how many started reception year last year and what is the county council assumption of the next 5 years and do we have any measure of how many children in Warwickshire are not in the official education system?’

Councillor Hayfield replied that birth data is only one factor that will affect the pressure on school places. I am not able to say how many children will take up places in September but there were 6449 on time applications for 2015 and 6345 for September 2016. Pressures also vary across the County and you need to provide places within an area even if numbers are falling in another area.

There are 443 children being electively home educated and approximately 30 described as missing from our figures. In most cases these will be children who have moved out of county and have not said where they have gone.

Councillor Kondakor asked whether there was a table showing projections over 5 years.

Councillor Hayfield replied that projections were set out in the School Sufficiency Strategy, which has been agreed by the Council.

Councillor Maggie O’Rourke referred to her question at Council in May regarding the number of pupils in Rugby receiving home schooling and asked why she had not received a written answer. Councillor Hayfield apologised for this oversight and stated he would provide a detailed answer in addition to the headline provided today.

(3) Coton Arches, Nuneaton

Councillor Keith Kondakor put the following question to Councillor Peter Butlin, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport & Planning:

‘What plans do you have to consult on the Coton Arches project before you go out to contract for the work?’

Councillor Butlin replied that there will be a communication strategy that will allow for the informing and engaging of neighbours, stakeholders and the media. It will take place before the contracts are let and during construction in conjunction with the appointed contractor.

Councillor Kondakor asked whether this will allow any modifications.

Councillor Butlin replied that local members have been engaged throughout and modifications made. This will be fine tuning on the final design.

(4) Education White Paper - Possible Impact on the Value of Council Assets

Councillor Philip Johnson put the following question to Councillor Alan Cockburn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance & Property

‘Could the Portfolio Holder please give an estimate of by how much the value of the County Council’s assets will decrease when the land currently occupied by maintained schools is compulsorily acquired by the Education Funding Agency and handed over to the successor Academy Trusts as set out in the Government’s Education White Paper. What effect will this have on Warwickshire County Council’s ability to borrow money for capital projects in the future?’

Councillor Alan Cockburn replied that when a local authority’s community schools convert to academy status, land held by the authority for those schools will transfer to the Secretary of State, who will then grant a lease (normally 125 years) to the academy trust.

The value of assets at 31 March 2016 was £1.3 billion. Of this £372 million relates to maintained schools and a further £321 million to voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and foundation schools. If all schools were to become academies this would reduce the value of our assets by 54%.

When a local authority school converts to academy status, we already remove the value of its land and buildings from our balance sheet. When/if the white paper is implemented any future conversions would be treated in the same way. It is just that the transfer may be to the Government rather than the Academy Trust.

As a local authority we borrow primarily from the Public Works Loans Board. The key criterion is whether we have the revenue resources to meet the resulting capital financing costs. This ability will not be impacted by any future transfer of school assets from our balance sheet.

If this position were to change and we were required to borrow from the money markets in the same way as the private sector, there may be an impact but, also from this year, we are required to implement a change in accounting policy on how we value our highway assets. This is expected to increase the value of our assets by £7.1 billion. As a result, from next year, school assets will be less than 10% of our assets base.’

(5) Civil Parking Enforcement

Councillor Philip Johnson put the following question to Councillor Peter Butlin, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport & Planning:

‘As the civil parking enforcement contract operated by NSL Ltd only operated during office hours and the police are reluctant to enforce parking restrictions now that they have been decriminalised, what advice can the Portfolio Holder give on how to deal with problems caused to council tax payers by rogue parking as a result of night time entertainment activities?’

Councillor Butlin replied that civil enforcement officers work outside of core hours but the core activity happens during the working day and a significant percentage of activity is intelligence driven, responding to public comments via the enforcement line or in response to member/officer requests. These include evening activities. Shift times Monday-Saturday are normally from 8.00 to 19:00 hours but this can be flexed and two officers are on rota until 22:30, usually deployed out of Stratford but they can be deployed wherever they are required. Sunday hours are 08:00 to 18:30 but these can also be flexed to meet specific concerns. The police retain responsibility for obstruction and moving traffic offences such as driving on the footway.

Councillor Butlin added that NSL have been responsive to people's requests but undertook to look into the particular issues.

Councillor Richard Chattaway asked whether the Portfolio Holder would take measures to ensure the spirit and aims of the contract to provide a better service for Warwickshire residents (including a better evening service) in other parts of the County other than Stratford, are enforced as members were told it would be?

Councillor Butlin agreed to look into the specific concerns regarding the allocation from Stratford.

(6) Jobs Density

Councillor Keith Kondakor put the following question to Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council:

'The jobs density in Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough (that is the ratio of jobs in an area to the working population) is now just 60 in 100, down from 61 in 100 in 2011, The jobs density in Warwick is now 112.

The working age population in Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough has dropped by 2,000 in 4 years.

Can the Leader of the Council tell me whether creating jobs or even more housing is most important to Nuneaton and Bedworth?'

Councillor Izzi Seccombe replied that housing growth and employment growth should go hand in hand. It is recognised that, on a range of quality of life and economic performance indicators, Nuneaton and Bedworth performs below average for the County and as a result, the County Council works hard to support economic and employment growth within the Borough and targets activities to enable residents to become economically active.

Examples include:

- the Business Start-up programme (supporting 150 new businesses in the last four years). New businesses increased from 301 in 2010 to 505 in 2014. A further £3.4m is being invested in a countywide programme that includes dedicate support for disadvantaged individuals in Nuneaton and Bedworth.

- The council operates two of its three managed business centres in the Borough which are at 94% capacity.
- Support for investments including large companies and smaller businesses and supporting 880 new jobs.
- Close working with the Borough to develop applications for funding and a £80m Transforming Nuneaton programme.

Councillor Seccombe added that there is also a need for housing growth and respect the objectively assessed need of the provision of 10,040 new dwellings in the area by 2031 and the Council is working closely with the borough Council to ensure the necessary infrastructure is provided to enable the delivery of the local plan.

Councillor Kondakor referred to recent Government statistics that indicated a need for 6800 households and asked why the Leader supported 10,040 homes.

Councillor Seccombe replied that the 10,040 houses is the Borough's Local Plan which the County Council supports. The targets quoted do not take account of the collective national responsibility that each local authority is obliged to have. If Nuneaton and Bedworth is confined as suggest this would leave to lower growth and a disservice to residents.

Councillor Mike Perry asked how many people live in Nuneaton but work outside of Nuneaton?

Councillor Seccombe undertook to provide a written reply but noted that people move wherever the opportunity arises and the council helps to build the infrastructure to help.

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

(1) 116 Arriva Bus Service between Kingsbury and Birmingham

Councillor Brian Moss referred to the ending of this service and asked Councillor Peter Butlin, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, how much is spent on subsidised transport and would there be any funding available to subsidise this commercial service?

Councillor Butlin replied that £3.1m is paid in subsidy, £2.4m of which was direct from the Council and £0.7m from Section 106 contributions. He added that he had been unaware of withdrawal of this service but that normally the transport team explore other ways of filling any gaps caused by a withdrawal of service. Councillor Butlin undertook to look into this and provide a written reply.

(2) Bermuda Connectivity Project

Councillor June Tandy asked whether Councillor Butlin was aware that Conservative members of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council are publically opposing the progress of the Bermuda project.

Councillor Butlin replied that he was aware but the scheme is going forward and

a report will be back to Cabinet in the autumn.

(3) Traffic concerns related to Top Farm,Weddington

Councillor Jeff Clarke asked Councillor Butlin whether he could give his assurance to residents in St Nicholas, Nuneaton that there would be a full traffic plan that will mitigate any negative impact on junction capacities that will arise from the development of Top Farm

Councillor Butlin replied that this illustrates the need for a local plan so that a strategy can be applied that takes account of all the development. Officers are constantly looking at mitigating impacts and review junctions that are under pressure. They are very aware of the pressures and will look to Section 106 or other funding to do what can be done to mitigate pressures.

(4) Health Visiting Service Tender

Councillor Matt Western asked Councillor Izzi Seccombe whether it is true that the Public Health department would be putting the Health Visiting Service out to tender in September and whether she, as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, supported the tendering of NHS services that may end up in the private sector.

Councillor Seccombe replied that there is discussion with CCGs and provider organisations to move towards developing a commissioning unit to provide pathways to health and care. Councillor Seccombe recognised that they may disagree on whether there should be open tender or whether to keep with the service unchanged. She added that this did not mean a service would automatically go into private sector but it provides an opportunity to innovate, improve services and ensure a specification that provides a whole place offer.

(5) Home to School Transport

Councillor John Whitehouse asked Councillor Colin Hayfield, Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning, whether he would send a response to the points raised by the petitioner at this meeting regarding lack of response to their previous communications and the question regarding the phasing of changes and will he make it available to members?

Councillor Hayfield replied that, with regard the choice of school, Polesworth is the nearest for those in Warton and the question is the 3 mile rule which applies across the County. Councillor Hayfield undertook to ensure responses were sent and to try and tie the consultation process together for all schools.

(6) Response to Petitions

Councillor John Whitehouse asked the Leader whether she would agree to look at the process for receipt of petitions at Council to ensure there is a better and more responsive way of dealing with petitions coming before the Council.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe understood the concern and undertook to take this to Leaders Liaison Group for consideration.

(7) Childrens Mental Health Services

Councillor Kate Rolfe asked Councillor Les Caborn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Health, whether he would liaise with the South Warwickshire CCG to ensure that Government funding allocated for children's mental health in this financial year is on course to be spent for that purpose.

Councillor Caborn undertook to look into this and provide a response to all members.

(8) Home to School Transport

Councillor Peter Morson asked Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning, whether he would provide a list of the red green and amber schools being considered and why the Warton to Polesworth route is the only one undertaken so far and why they are being required to pay from September.

Councillor Hayfield gave his assurance that there will be no requirement to pay from September. He added that there are a number of routes that are being reassessed now and once all assessments have been undertaken the information will be made available which will be at the beginning of the academic year.

(9) Secondary Education in Rugby

Councillor Alan Webb asked Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning, whether there is anything that can be done to ensure school provision to the north of Rugby where it is required when the Secretary of State has ruled that a school be provided in the south.

Councillor Hayfield recognised that there is pressure for places in Rugby. The Free School has pupils signed up to it already so there is a need but there is also need elsewhere. Councillor Hayfield agreed to get a statement on school places in Rugby to all members.

(10) Projects in Nuneaton

Councillor Keith Kondakor asked Councillor Peter Butlin, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, whether he would provide a list of all the highways and rail projects coming forward in Nuneaton and Bedworth (with scoring) and whether if a project came in above the Bermuda Bridge project this would be stopped.

Councillor Butlin replied that the scoring process is not the Council's but is undertaken through a bidding process to the CWLEP Capital Growth Fund.

(11) Top Farm, Nuneaton

Councillor Bill Olnor asked Councillor Peter Butlin, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, whether there had been any commercial surveys undertaken to ensure traffic does not encourage residents going to alternative

sites for business rather than into Nuneaton.

Councillor Butlin replied that he would forward this information if it were available.

(12)WMCA Skills Agenda

Councillor Johnathan Chilvers asked Councillor Izzi Seccombe what action she had taken to ensure the skills agenda is a priority for the WMCA given that less than 4% of the combined authority funding is being allocated to developing skills.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe replied that there is a Skills and Productivity Portfolio led by George Duggins, Leader of Coventry City Council. The portfolio holder budgets will be pooled and allocated on a needs basis but Warwickshire is not yet in the pool as it is not yet a constituent member. Councillor Seccombe added that she will be interested in the differential skills across the WMCA and that within the overarching strategic view she will be pushing for a local place based approach as well.

(13)Home to School Transport – Warton to Polesworth

Councillor Dave Parsons asked Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning, for urgent clarification regarding the payment for home to school transport for pupils travelling on this route as residents of Warton believe they are paying from September.

Councillor Hayfield gave his assurance that parents will not be asked to pay for this coming academic year.

(14)Home to School Transport red routes

Councillor Julie Jackson asked Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning, for a list of all the schools within the three mile rule that the Council funds because they are classed as dangerous.

Councillor Hayfield undertook to ensure the information was circulated to all members.

7. Any other items of urgent business

None

8. Exclusion of Press and Public

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 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

9. Fire and Rescue Service Future Estate

Councillor John Horner, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, presented a report and recommendations from Cabinet regarding revisions to the Fire and Rescue Service Estate and capital programme. The proposals will enable the provision of new upgraded training facilities, refurbishment of the Leamington Spa Fire Station and upgrading of the headquarters at Leamington Spa. The recommendations were seconded by Councillor John Holland who supported the proposals and in particular the proposed training facilities.

Councillor Howard Roberts, as Chair of the cross party Fire & Rescue Working Group thanked members for their support and for their focus on the needs of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and the best interests of Warwickshire residents.

Members considered the project management that will be required to take the proposals forward and Councillor John Horner gave his assurance that the progress of the project would be closely scrutinised.

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed unanimously as set out in the exempt minutes of this meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.10 p.m.

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Chair