

Minutes of the Meeting of Warwickshire County Council held on 12 December 2017

Present:
Councillor Clive Rickhards (Chair)

Councillors Mike Brain, Peter Butlin, Les Caborn, Mark Cargill, Richard Chattaway, Jonathan Chilvers, Jeff Clarke, Alan Cockburn, John Cooke, Andy Crump, Yousef Dahmash, Corinne Davies, Nicola Davies, Neil Dirveiks, Judith Falp, Bill Gifford, Pete Gilbert, Clare Golby, Seb Gran, Colin Hayfield, John Holland, John Horner, Andy Jenns, Kam Kaur, Keith Kondakor, Jeff Morgan, Bill Olnor, Maggie O'Rourke, Bhagwant Singh Pandher, Anne Parry, Dave Parsons, Caroline Phillips, David Reilly, Howard Roberts, Jerry Roodhouse, Andy Sargeant, Izzi Seccombe OBE, Dave Shilton, Jill Simpson-Vince, Bob Stevens, Heather Timms, Adrian Warwick, Alan Webb, Matt Western, Chris Williams, Pam Williams and Andy Wright.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Jo Barker, Margaret Bell, Parminder Singh Birdi, Sarah Boad, Jenny Fradgley, Dan Gissane, Keith Lloyd, Wallace Redford, Kate Rolfe and Dave Shilton.

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

Item 6 – Motion (4) NHS Sustainable Transformation Plan

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke declared a pecuniary interest as an employee of South Warwickshire Foundation Trust.

Item 6 – Motion (2) Funding of Adult social Care and Children's services – proposed letter to MPs.

Councillor Matt Western declared an interest as a Member of Parliament.

(3) Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017 be approved as a correct record.

(4) Announcements

Coventry City – City of Culture 2021

The Chair referred to the announcement on 7 December of Coventry City being awarded City of Culture 2021. The Chair agreed to write to the Lord Mayor of Coventry expressing this Council's congratulations.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, added her congratulations and looked forward to the 2021 programme being put into action.

Lawyers in Local Government Awards

The Chair congratulated Warwickshire Legal Services for their success in the Lawyers in Local Government Awards. The Service had been named Local Government Legal Team of the Year following a unanimous vote and the judges had commended the team for its outward facing approach and the impact it had made in terms of outcomes and savings for the council and for its public sector clients. The judges had been particularly impressed by the evidence of public service collaboration and how clients value the commitment of the team and the positive impact it had made on communities. In addition, the following individual officers were highly commended: Lara MacNabb for her work in protecting communities; David House for his support on child protection cases and the Business Team (including Tim Seedhouse, Alex Love and Mandip Sangha) for ensuring an effective legal practice.

The Council congratulated the team and all involved in achieving this prestigious award.

Severe Weather Road Gritting

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, expressed her thanks to all of those involved in gritting the roads over the weekend of heavy snow fall and icy conditions. 6000 miles had been gritted using 29 vehicles and 900 tonnes of salt. 46% of the total network had been cleared with teams working around the clock.

Councillor Richard Chattaway, Leader of the Labour Group, thanked those working in the health and care sector for getting into work in difficult circumstances and demonstrating their commitment to the care of the vulnerable in the County.

(5) Petitions

None.

(6) Public Speaking

None.

2. Education and Learning (Schools) Capital Programme 2017/18

Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning, presented the proposals for additions to the School Capital Programme and recommended that the Council approve the additional funding. Councillor Jeff Morgan, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, seconded the recommendation.

Councillors welcomed the schemes proposed for schools in their areas. During the debate, the issue of ensuring accurate forecasts of future pupil numbers was raised. Councillor Colin Hayfield reminded the Council that the School Sufficiency Strategy took account of the complex range of factors that impact on the demand for school

places and was as accurate as it was possible to be.
The recommendation was put to the vote and was agreed unanimously, as set out below:

Resolved

That the Council approves the addition of £14,956,085 to the capital programme to deliver the schemes outlined in section 3 of the report.

3. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy

Councillor Jeff Clarke, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment, presented the proposed strategy and recommended that Council approve the strategy as an addendum to the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026. Councillor Seb Gran seconded the recommendation.

Councillor Clarke highlighted how Warwickshire is ideally placed with the universities and key companies developing electric cars and battery technology. Councillor Clarke also outlined the key elements of the strategy and the work that the Council will undertake with District and Borough Councils to develop an integrated network as well as steps the County Council will take including providing work –based chargers for staff and the deployment of electric vehicles within the council’s pool fleet.

Members supported the strategy and the following issues were raised in debate:

- The benefits of electric vehicles for the environment and in particular in improving air quality.
- Many countries are aiming to phase out petrol vehicles by 2030, rather than 2040. Fast action is needed on this. There are many who are in the lead.
- Electric buses should be encouraged.
- Whether there could be a trial of residential street charging facilities.
- The need for infrastructure to be included as part of the planning process so that electric charging is included in new developments.
- Timescales are needed for the action plan set out in the report.
- Members should be kept updated on progress and those who are also district and borough councillors should be promoting action within their councils.
- Battery technology is developing and making electric vehicles viable.
- There are issues about chemicals used in battery technology and also in disposal/recycling of batteries.
- The role of local authorities is to drive forward opportunities for new jobs, skills and to encourage inward investment.

In responding to the debate, Councillor Jeff Clarke advised that authorities can bid for funding from the £200m that the Government has set aside for projects and gave his assurance that work is underway with districts and boroughs to get a consistent network and that the timescales will be made known in further updates to members.

The proposal to approve the strategy was put to the vote and was agreed unanimously

as set out below.

Resolved

That the Council approves the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy as an addendum to the Local Transport Plan 2011- 2026.

4. Warwick District Libraries

Councillor Kam Kaur, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation, presented the report and the Cabinet's recommendation that Council allocate £150,000 from the sale of the current library in Whitnash to the new library facility at the Whitnash Hub. Councillor Colin Hayfield seconded the proposal.

Councillor Judith Falp, local member for Whitnash, welcomed the proposal which would include a much needed new community hall and will also provide a cafe, which is currently lacking in Whitnash. Councillor Falp thanked Whitnash Town Council for their support in this. It was noted that the funding of £150,000 is the County Council's contribution to the scheme.

During the debate, members noted that the report to Council did not include the reference to Sunday opening of libraries that had been in the report to Cabinet. Members were advised that this report was only concerned with the addition of this project to the Capital Programme, which is a Council decision. Sunday opening of libraries is an issue and which could be considered as part of the budget setting in February.

The proposal was put to the vote and was agreed unanimously as set out below.

Resolved

That £150,000 of the capital receipt from the sale of the current library be invested in a new library facility at the Whitnash Hub facility at Acre Close, Whitnash.

5. Appointment of Proper Officer for Registration Services

Councillor Kam Kaur, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation, presented a report that sought Council formal approval to the appointment of the Head of Customer Service as the Proper Officer for Registration Services. Councillor Andy Sargeant seconded the proposal.

The proposal was put to the vote and agreed unanimously as set out below.

Resolved

That the Council confirms the appointment of the Head of Customer Service as the Proper Officer for Registration Services and authorises her to carry out the designated duties and powers of that position.

6. Motions to Council

The Chair agreed to take the motion set out at (4) at this point, following which the Council adjourned at 12.45 and reconvened at 14.05.

(1) Universal Credit

Councillor John Holland proposed the following motion and was seconded by Councillor Maggie O'Rourke:

'That the Council asks the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider what practical steps could be taken to support Warwickshire residents following the introduction of Universal Credit, including what the Council can do, working with partners and third sector agencies, to support claimants and how we can signpost information about the services and advice available to them. The Committee should report back to Cabinet by the end of the current financial year.'

Councillor Holland referred to the briefing that had been provided for members by speakers from the Department for Work and Pensions and from Rugby Borough Council who were a pilot authority for the roll out of universal credit.

Councillor Holland explained that the members at the seminar had suggested a number of areas that should be explored with a view to finding ways to assist those who were experiencing difficulties in the move to universal credit. These included:

- Provide a grant to repay any initial loan so that loan repayments by the client do not take the client's income below the minimum level which would otherwise be the case.
- Provide bus passes for clients who live further than the reasonable walking distance from appointments.
- Work with District and Borough Councils to ensure that Landlords receive rents on time, and provide assistance for deposits and rent in advance, as in the case of Rugby Borough Council.
- Provide a crisis provision grant to Citizens Advice where essential.
- Ensure the requirements of the Care Act are provided including vulnerable people such as people with disabilities and children.
- Provide computer literacy training for claimants.
- Closely monitor the effect on children with a report to Council including recommendations for action.
- Establish a Warwickshire wide database of all child care facilities for preschool children, and ensure that the information is made available for all claimants.
- Ensure that claimants with three and four year old children are helped to access the 30 hours per week free child care scheme. Ensure that those with two year old children are able to access the help scheme for low income families.

- That all Warwickshire residents moving onto UC will be offered a Foodbank voucher at the time of making their claim.

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke, in seconding the motion, commented that in Rugby Borough the introduction of universal credit had seen an increase in unpaid rent and rent collection costs and increase in hardship with more people using foodbanks and having financial difficulties.

Councillor Heather Timms, Chair of the Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee, stated that suggestions for the Committee's work programme should be raised at the Chair and Group Spokespersons work programming meetings. Councillor Timms added that she did not consider the topic appropriate for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (as work was already underway with the district and boroughs, who were the appropriate authorities for this) but agreed that the seminar had been very useful and that a further seminar should be held to keep members informed of progress on this issue.

Those who spoke against the motion expressed concern that the motion would lead to a duplication of the work of districts and boroughs. Those who supported the motion were of the view that it was an appropriate motion for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee given that the County Council was taking part in initiatives, for example through its work with the Financial Inclusion Partnership.

VOTE

The motion was put to the vote and was LOST, the vote being 15 for and 29 against.

(2) Funding of Adult Social Care and Children's Services

- A Councillor Dave Parsons moved the following motion and was seconded by Councillor Corinne Davies:

'The funding gaps, along with the rising demand for our adult social care and children's services, are threatening the vital services which Warwickshire County Council provides in support of our elderly and disabled, our children and our families. The Conservative Government Budget did not offer any measures to address these issues. With the money local government has to run services running out fast, resulting in devastating cuts, the Council writes to the Warwickshire MPs calling on them to make strong representations to the Government to use the upcoming Local Government Finance Settlement to set out its plan for funding local services both now and in the future.'

Councillor Dave Parsons explained that this motion sought to add weight to the work already undertaken by the Leader of the Council in lobbying for adequate funding for social care. Councillor Parsons referred to a newspaper article in which the Leader of the Council had expressed concern that the Government's lack of action meant that social care would remain in crisis. This view had been supported by Lord Porter who had added that extra powers for councils to raise council tax would not bring in enough funding to alleviate the pressure on social care and that services supporting elderly and vulnerable are at breaking point. Councillor Parsons supported these statements and expressed concern that the

future funding for local government still remains uncertain and urged the Council to agree to make strong representations to the Government.

Councillor Corinne Davies, in seconding the motion, highlighted that the Government had not given any additional money for social care in its budget, or made mention of it, despite the representations by local authorities ,NHS and partners regarding the funding situation. Councillor Davis added that it was not right to put pressure on council tax payers, and an increase in council tax would not be adequate to meet the pressures.

- B Councillor Les Caborn moved the following amendment and was seconded by Councillor Adrian Warwick:

‘delete the following words in the second sentence:

‘The Conservative Government Budget did not offer any measures to address these issues. With the money local government has to run services running out fast, resulting in devastating cuts,..’

Councillor Les Caborn supported the sentiment of the motion, but he did not consider it appropriate to blame the Government for what is a long term issue and did not think the approach was one that was likely to get support of MPs. He added that his amendment was therefore a ‘friendly amendment.’

- C Councillor Richard Chattaway, Leader of the Labour Group, moved the following amendment and was seconded by Councillor Alan Webb, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group:

‘add the following words in the second sentence:

‘The Council supports Lord Porter’s view that the Government’s Budget did not offer any measures to address the issues. With the money local government has to run services running out fast, resulting in devastating cuts,..’

Councillor Chattaway commended the Leader of the Council for being a champion for adult social care and for her work with the LGA in lobbying the Government for funding, and urged members to support the motion with the Labour amendment.

Councillor Alan Webb, in seconding the amendment, expressed his view that it was important to include reference to the Government as they need to be addressing this issue.

VOTE

A vote was taken on the amendment at C, which was LOST, the vote being 10 for, 31 against and 2 abstentions.

A vote was taken on the amendment at B, which was CARRIED, the vote being 33 for, none against and 7 abstentions.

A vote was taken on the substantive motion which was **AGREED** unanimously as set out below:

Resolved

That the Council agrees that the funding gaps, along with the rising demand for our adult social care and children's services, are threatening the vital services which Warwickshire County Council provides in support of our elderly and disabled, our children and our families. The Council agrees to write to the Warwickshire MPs calling on them to make strong representations to the Government to use the upcoming Local Government Finance Settlement to set out its plan for funding local services both now and in the future.

(3) Public Sector Pay

Councillor Bill Olnor reported that he wished to withdraw the motion, in the light of the pay settlement, but added that he may wish to return to this issue at a subsequent meeting.

(4) NHS Sustainable Transformation Plan

This motion was debated prior to motion (1) above.

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

'That, in the year since a motion was passed concerning the Coventry and Warwickshire Sustainable Transformation Plan, little has happened. Given there was unanimous support for the Council's decision in December 2016, (agreeing that it would not consider signing up to the STP until there had been full public engagement, co-production with partners and the plan written in accessible language), the Council calls on the STP's leadership to urgently provide its proposals and explain the purpose and form of the Accountable Care System that it is proposing and what implications such a system will have on local GP surgeries and other primary services. The Council calls on them to also provide absolute clarity on real-term per capita budget changes and to confirm that it is still working to a £267m deficit in funding.'

Councillor Western expressed concern that the new Accountable Care System, which has been described as the most significant change to health and social care since the 2012 Health and Social Care Act, was being introduced without parliamentary consideration and approval. Councillor Western explained that it will facilitate further private sector involvement in health provision and that, although described as accountable care, they will operate under company law, outside of control of elected public representatives. Councillor Western added his concern that this is at a time when the NHS is under pressure and needs additional funding. The OECD states that only 6.8% of Gross Domestic Product is spent on the NHS, which is one of the lowest proportions of western European countries.

Councillor John Holland, in seconding the motion later in the debate, stated that there needs to be transparency and that if there is secrecy this can lead to false rumours. He added that he was not aware that the workshop was public or that the information that £400m is to be saved over Coventry and Warwickshire over 5 years was public.

DEBATE

The following points were made in support of the motion:

- Full transparency and public engagement is needed, which has been assured by the Chief Executive of the Coventry and Warwickshire STP.
- The motion fits with the motion previously agreed by the Council.
- There is a lack of public transparency on what changes are happening and what will be the impact of the Accountable Care System.
- The system is not accountable or being driven by public need.
- Transformation needs to be done publicly.
- Proper funding is needed for the NHS rather than a system of managed deficits.
- The motion is asking for clarification on what the health picture is in Warwickshire.
- The concordat agreed between Warwickshire and Coventry Health and Wellbeing Boards referred to making around £400m in savings and efficiencies and it is unclear how this relates to the current STP/Better Care Better Health plan.
- There are changes happening, for example the reduction in GP surgeries, which may be part of a wider plan but there is a need for a debate to understand what that is.

The following points were made against the motion:

- The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health advised that Warwickshire is 'in the room' on discussions on this and is working jointly with Coventry, including working with their Health and Wellbeing Board and joint scrutiny meetings.
- Progress is being made (for example the new discharge from hospital contract with South Warwickshire Foundation Trust).
- The £267m is a figure that could be the deficit if there is not collective working.
- A member reference group has been established and will consider how to engage with the public. A seminar will also be established for all members.
- Comments on the STP can be made through Health Overview and Scrutiny.
- The Health and Wellbeing concordat is about ways of working.
- Relationships have been built over the last year. The respective directors of Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council are members of the STP Board, but there are no councillor representatives. Reports come back to the Health and Wellbeing Board which has cross group representation.

VOTE

The motion was put to the vote and was **LOST**, the vote being 15 for and more against.

7. Member Question Time

(1) School Term and Holiday Dates

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers asked the following question of Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning:

"As we approach Christmas our Warwickshire children and teachers are coming to the end of a very long half term (40 days). Yet later in the year there will be a half term of only 24 days. In 2018/9 the discrepancy is bigger. In September and October 2018 there will be a 40 day half term and in the first half of the summer term there will be a 19 day half term. Very long half terms exhaust pupils, (especially younger pupils) and reduces the amount that they can take in and learn.

Please will you ensure that every avenue is looked at to make the distribution of holidays more equal in 2019/20 and beyond to maximise the learning of Warwickshire's children?

Councillor Colin Hayfield replied that there are 195 term days, five of which are training days, which would equate to approximately 33 days per half term if the days are divided up equally. Unfortunately this is not often possible when trying to ensure holidays cover complete weeks, align with as many of our neighbouring authorities as possible and with the fall of Easter. Following the six week summer holiday model and starting the school term in the first week of September, means that the autumn term will be longer (approximately 75 term days up to start of Christmas holiday, and 60 between the start of the spring term and Easter). For 2019/20 the proposed autumn half term split is 40/35 and for 2020/21 it will be 39/35. It is unusual for a half term to drop below 20 days but in 2018/19 this is caused by a late Easter. The equivalent half term for 2019/20 and 2020/21 is to be 24 days and 29 days respectively.

Councillor Chilvers asked whether the Portfolio Holder would consider changing to another model?

Councillor Hayfield replied that he would look into other options but a key objective is to keep in line with neighbouring authorities if possible.

(2) Behavioural Insights Programme Funding

Cllr Richard Chattaway put the following question to the Leader of the Council:

'The Leader recently approved a bid to the LGA (Behavioural Insights Programme) for funding to help change business behaviour to ultimately improve the online presence and digital resources of our town centres and town centre businesses. The bid was for £25k with match funding from WCC of £25k if

successful. Can the Leader give her assurance that, should the bid not be successful, she will ensure the full funding of £50k will be made available for this initiative, from reserves if necessary.'

Councillor Izzi Seccombe replied that the bid had not been successful but the CWLEP had indicated their support before the outcome was known and therefore this will be pursued with them.

(3) Cycling

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers asked Councillor Jeff Clarke, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment, approximately how much did Warwickshire County Council spend on cycling per head of population in 2016/17.

Councillor Jeff Clarke replied that £486,800 was spent which was approximately 88p per head of population. There are approximately 4% who cycle on a regular basis. The following breakdown of spend was given:

£100,000 - feasibility studies

£18,000 - design of cycle schemes Myton Road extension and Rugby gateway

£75,000 - cycle scheme Chesterton Drive

£79,000 - new footway/cycleway in Southam

£138,600 – M40 Junction 12 scheme

£76,200 - Cycle training

There are also cycle schemes within the highway infrastructure schemes such as Stanks A46, A444 Coton Arches, Avon Mill, Rugby. In addition, there is officer time on these projects.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers commented that the planned cycling infrastructure proposals at a cost of £42m would take 86 years to complete at the current rate. The cross party parliamentary committee has recommended spend of £10 per head - about £5.5m per year for Warwickshire. Andy Street, West Midlands Combined Authority Mayor has made a commitment to this and Councillor Chilvers asked Councillor Clarke if he would speak to Andy Street to see how he is going to do that for the West Midlands and feed back to us.

Councillor Clarke agreed to speak to the Mayor.

(4) Gritting

Councillor Richard Chattaway asked Councillor Jeff Clarke, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment, what the policy is on gritting roads not on the gritting routes and whether grit bins will be provided to more streets and residential areas?

Councillor Clarke replied that there is a policy, around 1500 miles of road is gritted and it is not possible to grit all roads. Any proposals can be looked at when reviewing the policy but funding would have to be made available in the budget. There are criteria in relation to provision of grit bins and requests are assessed against these.

(5) Snow wardens

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse asked the Leader whether she would pass on thanks to the snow wardens for their work in the recent bad weather.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe agreed that the snow wardens have provided a great service in getting people to doctor appointments and helping their communities and the Council should put on record its sincere thanks to them.

(6) West Midlands Combined Authority

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse asked the Leader what benefits the Combined Authority was bringing to Warwickshire.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe responded that it would be helpful to look at what Devo2 meant for Warwickshire and that she would ensure there is a member seminar.

(7) Pedestrian Crossing

Councillor Keith Kondakor asked Councillor Jeff Clarke, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment, why it was taking so long to open a pedestrian crossing at the new supermarket in Weddington which will not open until Easter and what went wrong to cause the delay.

Councillor Jeff Clarke undertook to get a written reply to Councillor Kondakor.

Councillor Keith Kondakor asked that Councillor Clarke ensure development happens sequentially. Councillor Clarke undertook to cover this in his written response.

(8) Integrated transport

Councillor Keith Kondakor congratulated Coventry in being awarded City of Culture 2021 which could provide the opportunity to ensure improved transport and asked the Leader of the Council whether she would press for integrated transport between Coventry and the rest of Warwickshire.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe replied that she would.

8. Other Business

There were no items of urgent business.

9. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chair moved, and was seconded by Councillor John Cooke, that the public be excluded from the meeting. This was agreed as set out below.

Resolved

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for this agenda item on the ground 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.

10. Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017

The Chair moved, and was seconded by Councillor John Cooke, that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017 be approved as a correct record. This was agreed as set out below.

Resolved

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017 be approved as a correct record.

The meeting closed at 3.32 p.m.

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Chair