

Minutes of the Meeting of Warwickshire County Council held on 6 February 2018

Present:
Councillor Clive Rickhards (Chair)

Councillors Jo Barker, Margaret Bell, Parminder Singh Birdi, Sarah Boad, Mike Brain, Peter Butlin, Les Caborn, Mark Cargill, Richard Chattaway, Jonathan Chilvers, Jeff Clarke, Alan Cockburn, John Cooke, Andy Crump, Corinne Davies, Nicola Davies, Neil Dirveiks, Judith Falp, Jenny Fradgley, Bill Gifford, Pete Gilbert, Dan Gissane, Clare Golby, Seb Gran, Colin Hayfield, John Holland, Andy Jenns, Kam Kaur, Keith Kondakor, Keith Lloyd, Jeff Morgan, Bill Olnor, Maggie O'Rourke, Bhagwant Singh Pandher, Anne Parry, Dave Parsons, Wallace Redford, Howard Roberts, Kate Rolfe, Jerry Roodhouse, Andy Sargeant, Izzi Seccombe OBE, Dave Shilton, Jill Simpson-Vince, Bob Stevens, Heather Timms, Adrian Warwick, Alan Webb, Chris Williams, Pam Williams and Andy Wright.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Yousef Dahmash, John Horner, Caroline Phillips, David Reilly and Matt Western.

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

None.

(3) Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2017 be approved as a correct record.

(4) Announcements

Beate Wagner- Head of Children and Families

The Chair announced that Beate Wagner, who had joined the authority as Head of Children and Families in October 2015, would be leaving the authority on 11 March to take up the post of Director of Children's Services at Wakefield Metropolitan Borough Council. The Chair congratulated Beate on her new position and thanked her for her invaluable contribution to children's services in Warwickshire.

Councillor Jeff Morgan, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, paid tribute to Beate for the stability and clear direction she had brought to the service and for her leadership of the transformation of the service. Councillor Morgan reminded the Council of the initiatives she had led. These included introducing systems and practices to ensure a consistent approach across the County; the creation of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and the Regional Adoption

Agency; as well as leading the service through two peer reviews and the Ofsted inspection. Councillor Morgan thanked Beate for her excellent service and wished her well for the future.

Councillor, Richard Chattaway, Leader of the Labour Group, and Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, added their thanks to Beate for her enthusiasm and commitment to improving the lives of children in Warwickshire. Councillor Dave Parsons added his thanks for the support Beate had given to overview and scrutiny and to the confidence that she had given to her staff.

Beate thanked councillors for their support and also expressed her appreciation for the work of the excellent staff in the Children and Families Team, in whom she was confident would continue the improvement of the service.

Glenn Fleet – Manager of the Waste Management Service

The Chair announced that Glenn Fleet would be retiring in March, following nine years as Manager of the Waste Service where he had led some ground breaking projects, including the award winning procurement project to franchise the 8 reuse shops to Age UK, which brings income, reduces waste and gives local people access to low cost household items. The Chair added that Glenn had also invested in campaigns to change behaviour so that Warwickshire's recycling rate continues to increase and on an international level had helped the government in Sierra Leone set up sustainable waste management infrastructure and practices.

Councillor Jeff Clarke, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment, referred to the many projects that Glenn had led which had resulted in reduced waste, the delivery of savings and national recognition. These include the partnership with Staffordshire (which includes the waste to energy plant in Cannock) and Lower House Farm complex near Dordon which includes second largest reuse shop in the country and the recruitment of a guide dog to the team to increase textile recycling whilst supporting charity. Other members joined in tributes to Glenn and the Chair, on behalf of Council, thanked Glenn for his service and wished him a very happy retirement.

Glenn thanked the Council and his staff for their support.

Leamington & Warwick Gurdwara Sahib 50th Anniversary Seminar

The Chair expressed his appreciation to the Leamington & Warwick Gurdwara Sahib for inviting him to their anniversary seminar that he had attended on 3rd February.

Civic Service

The Chair reminded members that he would be holding his civic service at St Mary's Church, Warwick from 10.30 am on Sunday 18 March.

John Whitehouse

The Council was sorry to hear that former councillor, John Whitehouse, had been unwell and members expressed their very best wishes for his recovery.

Edward's Trust

The Chair thanked members for their contributions to the on-line auction of soft toys, proceeds of which would be donated to the Edward's Trust, charity for those suffering bereavement. He added that the auction would end on 16 February.

(5) Petitions

None.

2. 2018-19 Budget and Medium Term Financial Planning Framework

A Conservative Group Proposals

Councillor Peter Butlin, Deputy Leader of the Council, proposed the Conservative Group's Revenue and Capital Budget for 2018/19 as set out at **Appendix A and Appendix A1** to these minutes. Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, seconded the proposals.

Councillor Butlin thanked officers for their support through the budget process and in particular thanked John Betts, Head of Finance and Virginia Rennie, Strategic Finance Manager. Councillor Butlin also thanked the Conservative Budget Working Group for their work over the past months.

Councillor Butlin reminded Council that at the budget meeting in 2017 the Council had met the challenge of identifying savings of £67m, which followed on from a previous savings programme of £93m, and the budget for 2017/18 had marked the start of a three year radical service transformation and digitisation agenda. Councillor Butlin added that the budget proposals for 2018/19 continued the approach set in the 2017/18 budget, with changes only where necessary, and that this would provide certainty and clarity of direction to the Council's workforce and service users.

Councillor Butlin reminded Council that this supported the two principles of the Council's One Organisation Plan – to grow and encourage the economy of Warwickshire and to protect the most vulnerable in the community. Councillor Butlin added that the growth of the economy was essential in order to maintain good services and cited a number of indicators (including productivity and employment figures) that indicated that Warwickshire had a positive growing economy.

Councillor Butlin reported that the Council was on schedule to deliver the savings set out in the 2017/18 budget, using reserves where necessary to smooth transition and to meet pressures in adult social care and children services. During this period the Council had embarked on the transformation of children centres and of children services, (recruiting more social workers and reducing caseloads); and had seen an improvement in transfers from hospital to care. Councillor Butlin also referred to the improvements in education (in the number of school places and in school performance) and in transport and development projects (such as Kenilworth Station and Nuneaton Town Centre).

Councillor Butlin highlighted the following areas of the budget proposals (set out in

detail at Appendix A with the amendments at Appendix A1):

- £2.5 million in a Digital Transformation Programme to meet the high volumes of requests and meet the expectations around digital access. Improved infrastructure will help pinpoint those who need support and enable a seamless integration of services for customers.
- Additional Capital investment, including £200,000 in digital fibre optic hubs and £330,000 to convert six school based children's centres into specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- £100,000 to expand the capacity of the transport planning team to maximise funding from developers to deliver the infrastructure requirements associated with housing and business growth.
- £108,000 to maintain the library network, including Sunday opening.
- £150,000 (for two years) to work with partners on a joint project to integrate help for those in need of support due to mental health issues, homelessness and drug abuse.
- £100,000 to support the digitalisation of the heritage collection (to be a digital heritage festival and will link with the Coventry City of Culture and Warwickshire after World War One).
- £120,000 for the Year of Wellbeing.
- £50,000 for the refurbishment of the Veterans Centre in Nuneaton

Councillor Butlin concluded by explaining that the proposals included increasing the council tax at the government cap level of 1% on top of the existing 1.99% limit and acceptance of the 2% increase for adult social care. This would result in a council tax increase of 4.99% equivalent to £1.25 per week on a Band D dwelling. Councillor Butlin added that it was proposed to use £13 million of reserves for investment in one off projects and to smooth savings whilst retaining sufficient reserves for unseen events.

B Labour Group Amendment

Councillor Richard Chattaway, Leader of the Labour Group, presented the Labour Group's proposed amendments to the Conservative Group proposals as set out at **Appendix B** to these minutes. Councillor Alan Webb, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, seconded the proposals.

Councillor Chattaway explained that the proposals sought to give support to those services which were under particular pressure and to help ameliorate cuts and rebalance the priorities of the Council by focussing on people rather than council properties and communities rather than computers. Councillor Chattaway stated that he was not opposed to digital transformation but did not see this as affordable at present, particularly given the difficulty of ensuring IT projects are delivered on budget. Councillor Chattaway added that the money applied to some capital projects, in particular the funding of slippage such as that on Europa Way, would be better used to retain services and suggested that there be an independent review of the Council's approach to the capital programme. Councillor Chattaway also expressed concern that the Council, rather than central government, was allocating £500,000 to meet the cost of mitigation in relation to HS2.

Councillor Chattaway highlighted the following proposed amendments (the full amendments are set out at Appendix B to these minutes).

- Reduce savings to retain a network of children's centres.
- £80,000 in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to increase capacity for on street parking enforcement
- £287,000 in 2018/19 and 2019/20 for additional grit bins and routes
- £270,000 in 2018/19 and 2019/20 for street lighting where local communities want it.
- Remove the requirement to deliver savings in the Fire and Rescue Service and home to school transport over the period of the One Organisation Plan.
- Redirect £2 million of capital highways maintenance budgets to double the capital area delegated funding and allocating £50,000 per member.
- Increase the councillor community grants by £1,000 per member
- £1 million in 2018/19 and in 2019/20 to help older people live independently
- £500,000 in 2018/19 and in 2019/20 to raise aspirations and opportunities for young people.
- £100,000 to support veterans organisations in Warwickshire
- £200,000 for mental health support services
- £2 million investment (each) for North Warwickshire and for Rugby and Bedworth town centres
- £1million for Warwick District priorities
- £4 million for new retail business centres for Nuneaton and Bedworth.

C Liberal Democrat Group Amendment

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, presented the Liberal Democrat Group's proposed amendments to the Conservative Group proposals, as set out at **Appendix C** to these minutes. Councillor Sarah Boad, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, seconded the proposals.

Councillor Roodhouse thanked the finance team (in particular John Betts and Virginia Rennie) and Heads of Service for their help throughout the budget process.

Councillor Roodhouse explained that his Group's amendments focussed on early years and families building on the One Organisation Plan and the priorities in the Council's Child Poverty Strategy. If adopted the proposals would put £7.4 million into early years and families in 2018/19.

Councillor Roodhouse highlighted the following:

- £500,000 in both years to strengthen family intervention and brokerage
- £300,000 to implement the Child Poverty Strategy.
- Reduce the savings target for Health Visitors and Family Nurse Practitioners by £200,000 in order to help support early years.
- £125,000 towards adult learning and literacy, recognising that there is a growing gap and a need to increase skills, which also links to the objectives in

the child poverty strategy.

- £400,000 to provide capacity to manage any issues in the implementation of the 0-5 strategy.
- £300,000 for public health for mental health, homelessness and drug abuse support services (i.e. a higher level than that proposed by the other Groups).
- £130,000 for financial and digital literacy skills.
- £45,000 towards Timebanking to develop community capacity.
- Increase councillor grants by £1,000
- £200,000 in both years to strengthen communities by developing the voluntary and community sector.
- £100,000 for one stop shops and retaining library services

Councillor Roodhouse noted that the issue of street lighting was due for review following the decrease in costs that had been anticipated through the LED replacement programme and the technology now available to vary lighting levels, and requested that the Cabinet Portfolio Holder bring a report back on this.

Councillor Roodhouse concluded by expressing his concern that there needed to be clarity from government on the future funding of adult social care, and on funding for local authorities generally. He recognised that the approach that was to focus was on growth and prosperity to help fund services but he was concerned that the slippage in the capital programme would undermine this.

D Green Group Amendment

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers, Leader of the Green Group, presented the Green Group amendment to the Conservative Group proposals as set out in **Appendix D** to these minutes and was seconded by Councillor Keith Kondakor, Deputy Leader of the Green Group.

Councillor Chilvers thanked John Betts and Virginia Rennie for their excellent assistance during the budget process.

Councillor Chilvers welcomed some of the Conservative Group's revenue budget proposals; in particular the 40 additional social workers and the support for the adoption agency.

Councillor Chilvers stated that the focus of the Green Group proposals was on two key areas - supporting early years and families and ensuring capital investment in infrastructure that improves wellbeing and physical health. He highlighted the following: *(The full set of amendments is set out in Appendix D):*

- £5.7 million investment in children social care services to meet the increase in looked after children and general increase in demands on the service.
- Remove the savings required of the Children's Centres (£748,000 in 2018/19 and £1.12m in 2019/20). This is not to stop the 0-5 redesign but recognises that the savings would result in taking out essential staff including those needed to support families in the key early years of a child's life.
- Remove the saving of £222,000 proposed for the Youth Justice Service in 2019/20.

- £150,000 for mental health, homelessness and drug abuse services and reduce saving to £100,000 on Housing Related Support Service in 2019/20.
- £150,000 ongoing revenue to expand the capacity of transport planning to maximise developer contributions to ensure sustainable developments, with responsibilities around air quality and cycling.
- £100,000 for cycle design projects.
- Ring fencing capital funds of £5.5 million per year as part of a commitment to meet the recommended level of investment in cycling of £10 per person per head for the next three financial years.

There followed a debate on the Conservative Group proposals and Group amendments.

The meeting adjourned at 12.45 pm and reconvened at 1.30 pm.

Two amendments were tabled and the Chair agreed to adjourn the meeting to enable members to consider these. The meeting reconvened at 1.45 pm.

- E** Councillor Peter Butlin moved the amendment to the Conservative Group proposals, as set out at **Appendix E**. The amendment increased the allocation to the Year of Wellbeing from £75,000 to £120,000. This was seconded by Councillor Izzi Seccombe.
- F** Councillor Jerry Roodhouse moved the amendment to the Capital Budget as set out at **Appendix F**. The amendment removed the £2,269,000 allocation for Bermuda Connectivity. This was seconded by Councillor Sarah Boad.

Seconders and summing up

Green Group

Councillor Keith Kondakor, Deputy Leader of the Green Group, in seconding the Green Group amendment set out at **Appendix D**, emphasised the need to take a different approach to transport infrastructure in order to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Warwickshire. Councillor Kondakor highlighted the Group's proposals to invest in the development of safe cycle and pedestrian routes to work, retail and schools, and the expansion of rail transport to relieve road congestion. Councillor Kondakor added that the move away from large road schemes (such as Bermuda Connectivity Project), was also needed in order to reduce air pollution and create a safer environment.

Councillor Kondakor also highlighted the Group's proposals to invest in improving schools (£0.2 million in the revenue proposals and £330,000 for improving facilities to keep SEND pupils local) and a proposed £200,000 investment for LED street lighting. Councillor Kondakor explained that a comprehensive coverage of LED lighting was needed to enable the introduction of intelligent lighting systems that respond to the environment to provide the level of lighting required. This would lead to energy savings and make people feel safer.

Councillor Chilvers summed up by stating that, although Conservative proposals included funding for family support workers, the total level of workers would reduce

and he urged the Council to reverse the savings on children's centres and ensure the retention of the maximum number of workers. He added that investment was required for cycling in order to kick start behaviour change.

Liberal Democrat Group

Councillor Sarah Boad, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, in seconding the Liberal Democrat proposed amendments, emphasised the need to allocate £400,000 for the children's centres redesign to enable a managed transition.

Councillor Boad also welcomed the retention of Sunday opening of libraries, the proposal to increase the level of councillor grants and supported investment in the cycle network.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, summed up by emphasising the importance of investment in the Child Poverty Strategy but also asked whether the strategy would be extended beyond 2018. Councillor Roodhouse observed that there would need to be a decision on the future of the Fire and Rescue Service and also looked forward to consideration of how the Council will operate in future when RSG is removed.

Labour Group

Councillor Alan Webb, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, seconded the Labour Group proposals (set out at **Appendix B**) but expressed regret that the Council was again required to make savings and urged that strong representations be made to government regarding the pressures on local government. Councillor Webb added that he was supportive of investment to tackle the levels of homelessness but observed that this should have been tackled at an earlier stage.

Councillor Richard Chattaway, Leader of the Labour Group, summed up by welcoming the Conservative Group support for funding veterans but requested that the higher level proposed by the Labour Group be accepted as this would enable the extension of support to other veterans groups. Councillor Chattaway explained that the Group's proposals included investment in local services that communities have said they want (such as improved on-street parking enforcement; more enforcement against unauthorised gypsy and traveller encampments;) and also a £1million to pump prime a Community Asset Investment Fund to provide access to loan funding for community groups. Councillor Chattaway welcomed the suggestion that a working party be established to consider Bedworth Town Centre but observed that this would be needed in other towns as well and that money was needed (as proposed in the Labour Group proposals) so that action can be taken in these areas.

Conservative Group

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, seconded the Conservative Group proposals as amended and responded to points raised in the debate as follows:

- The Council is taking the skills agenda seriously and is one of only three councils recognised nationally for its young apprenticeships scheme.
- The Digital Transformation Programme is about improving access to services, improving their outcomes and providing customers with a seamless service. It

will also increase the productivity of the workforce.

- The concern regarding savings in the Youth Justice Service was recognised and this would be reviewed.
- The proposal that a working group of members be established to look at Bedworth Town Centre was welcome.

Councillor Peter Butlin, Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group, made the following points in response to the debate and in summing up his Group's proposals:

- The saving proposed in 2019/20 for the Youth Justice Service would be revisited in the light of member concerns.
- Members' support for investment in a strategy to tackle homelessness was welcomed and progress on the strategy would be reported to Overview and Scrutiny.
- The Local Transport Plan was under review and would include a focus on cycling.
- The £2.5 million for Digital Transformation was in the budget agreed last year and needed to be included.
- The approach to capital investment agreed in 2017 (through the Capital Investment Fund) should continue as it ensures investment, delivers savings and growth of jobs.
- The methodology for calculating child poverty was poor and the approach should be to target those most in need.

Councillor Butlin undertook to ensure members were informed of the final financial settlement for Warwickshire as soon as it was available.

VOTE

B Labour Group Amendments

Councillors Chattaway, Dirveiks and Webb called for a recorded vote on each of the Labour Group amendments (Amendments 1-4 in Appendix B). The amendments were **LOST**, the vote being:

Amendment 1

For (9): Councillors Chattaway, C Davies, Dirveiks, Holland, Lloyd, O'ner, O'Rourke, Parsons and Webb.

Against (33): Councillors Barker, Bell, Birdi, Brain, Butlin, Caborn, Cargill, Clarke, Cockburn, Cooke, Crump, Gilbert, Gissane, Golby, Gran, Hayfield, Jenns, Kaur, Morgan, Pandher, Parry, Redford, Roberts, Sargeant, Seccombe, Shilton, Simpson-Vince, Stevens, Timms, Warwick, C Williams, P Williams and Wright.

Abstentions (10): Councillors Boad, Chilvers, N Davies, Falp, Fradgley, Gifford, Kondakor, Rickhards, Rolfe and Roodhouse.

Amendment 2

For (17): Councillors Boad, Chattaway, C Davies, N Davies, Dirveiks, Falp, Fradgley, Gifford, Holland, Lloyd, Olnor, O'Rourke, Parsons, Rickhards, Rolfe, Roodhouse and Webb.

Against (33): Councillors Barker, Bell, Birdi, Brain, Butlin, Caborn, Cargill, Clarke, Cockburn, Cooke, Crump, Gilbert, Gissane, Golby, Gran, Hayfield, Jenns, Kaur, Morgan, Pandher, Parry, Redford, Roberts, Sargeant, Seccombe, Shilton, Simpson-Vince, Stevens, Timms, Warwick, C Williams, P Williams and Wright.

Abstentions (2): Councillors Chilvers and Kondakor.

Amendment 3

For (17): Councillors Boad, Chattaway, C Davies, N Davies, Dirveiks, Falp, Fradgley, Gifford, Holland, Lloyd, Olnor, O'Rourke, Parsons, Rickhards, Rolfe, Roodhouse and Webb.

Against (33): Councillors Barker, Bell, Birdi, Brain, Butlin, Caborn, Cargill, Clarke, Cockburn, Cooke, Crump, Gilbert, Gissane, Golby, Gran, Hayfield, Jenns, Kaur, Morgan, Pandher, Parry, Redford, Roberts, Sargeant, Seccombe, Shilton, Simpson-Vince, Stevens, Timms, Warwick, C Williams, P Williams and Wright.

Abstentions (2): Councillors Chilvers and Kondakor.

Amendment 4

For (8): Councillors Chattaway, C Davies, Dirveiks, Holland, Olnor, O'Rourke, Parsons and Webb.

Against (34): Councillors Barker, Bell, Birdi, Brain, Butlin, Caborn, Cargill, Clarke, Cockburn, Cooke, Crump, Gilbert, Gissane, Golby, Gran, Hayfield, Jenns, Kaur, Kondakor, Morgan, Pandher, Parry, Redford, Roberts, Sargeant, Seccombe, Shilton, Simpson-Vince, Stevens, Timms, Warwick, C Williams, P Williams and Wright.

Abstentions (10): Councillors Boad, Chilvers, N Davies, Falp, Fradgley, Gifford, Lloyd, Rickhards, Rolfe and Roodhouse

C Liberal Democrat Group Amendments

The Council voted on the amendments as set out at **Appendix C** incorporating the Capital Budget amendment at **Appendix F** and the vote was LOST, the vote being 10 for, more against and one abstention.

D Green Group Amendments

The Council voted on the amendments as set out at **Appendix D** and the vote was LOST, the vote being 10 for, more against and one abstention.

G Conservative Group Proposals

The Council voted on the proposals set out at **Appendix G (Appendix A** incorporating the amendments at **Appendix A1 and Appendix E)** and the vote was CARRIED, the vote being as follows:

For(33): Councillors Barker, Bell, Birdi, Brain, Butlin, Caborn, Cargill, Clarke, Cockburn, Cooke, Crump, Gilbert, Gissane, Golby, Gran, Hayfield, Jenns, Kaur, Morgan, Pandher, Parry, Redford, Roberts, Sargeant, Seccombe, Shilton, Simpson-Vince, Stevens, Timms, Warwick, C Williams, P Williams and Wright.

Against (19): Councillors Boad, Chattaway, Chilvers, C Davies, N Davies, Dirveiks, Falp, Fradgley, Gifford, Holland, Kondakor, Lloyd, Olnor, O'Rourke, Parsons, Rickhards, Rolfe, Roodhouse and Webb.

Resolved

That the Council agrees the 2018-19 Budget and the refresh of the 2017-2020 Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in **Appendix G**.

3. Other Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 3.13 p.m.

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Chair