

Minutes of the Meeting of Warwickshire County Council held on 19 March 2019

Present:
Councillor John Cooke (Chair)

Councillors Helen Adkins, Jo Barker, Margaret Bell, Parminder Singh Birdi, Sarah Boad, Peter Butlin, Les Caborn, Mark Cargill, Richard Chattaway, Jonathan Chilvers, Jeff Clarke, Alan Cockburn, Andy Crump, Yousef Dahmash, Corinne Davies, Nicola Davies, Neil Dirveiks, Judith Falp, Jenny Fradgley, Bill Gifford, Pete Gilbert, Clare Golby, Colin Hayfield, John Holland, John Horner, Andy Jenns, Keith Kondakor, Jeff Morgan, Bill Oler, Maggie O'Rourke, Bhagwant Singh Pandher, Dave Parsons, Caroline Phillips, Wallace Redford, David Reilly, Clive Rickhards, Howard Roberts, Kate Rolfe, Jerry Roodhouse, Andy Sargeant, Izzi Seccombe OBE, Dave Shilton, Jill Simpson-Vince, Dominic Skinner, Bob Stevens, Heather Timms, Adrian Warwick, Alan Webb, Chris Williams, Pam Williams and Andy Wright.

The Council stood in silent remembrance for those who had died during the shooting in Christchurch, New Zealand on 15 March.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mike Brain, Daniel Gissane, Seb Gran, Kam Kaur and Anne Parry.

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

None.

(3) Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2019 be approved as a correct record.

(4) Announcements

David Carter – Joint Managing Director

The Chair paid tribute to David Carter, Joint Managing Director, who would be retiring at the end of March after 36 years with the County Council. David joined the Council as a child protection solicitor in 1983 and was promoted every two years first to senior solicitor, then principal solicitor and then County Solicitor in 1989. In 1994 David became Deputy Clerk (retitled County Solicitor & Assistant Chief

Executive) and held a number of directorships including Strategic Director of Resources from 2011 before becoming Joint Managing Director in 2017.

Nationally David has been the Chair of the Law Society Local Government Group, President of the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors and Chair of the Executive Board of Lawyers in Local Government.

The Chair expressed his thanks to David for his excellent stewardship of the authority and in particular the clear advice and support he had given him over many years.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, paid tribute to David's support of the Council over many years and in particular his friendliness, generosity with his time, extreme fairness and equality, and the confidence he instils. Councillor Seccombe expressed her sincere gratitude for all that David had done to help both individuals and the authority become the best it can be.

Councillor Richard Chattaway, Leader of the Labour Group, referred to the many retired councillors who had asked that their good wishes be passed to David and thanked David for his loyalty to the Council, the clear impartial advice he had given over many years and for his efficient management of the authority.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, highlighted David's calm, confident and measured approach and in particular his skill with supporting and helping councillors 'keep on the right track'. Councillor Roodhouse added his thanks on behalf of his group, past members and the residents of Warwickshire.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers, Leader of the Green Group, added his thanks for the fair and insightful advice he had provided and for his safe stewardship of the council. Councillors Judith Falp and Dave Parsons added their thanks.

The Council wished David a long and very happy retirement.

David Carter thanked members for their kind words. David stated that it had been a privilege to work for Warwickshire County Council which is a Council that has always tried to do the best for the people of Warwickshire. David expressed his gratitude for the positive and constructive approach and that the relationship between members and officers has always been good which has enabled the Council to do its job effectively. David wished the council well for the future.

Andy Hickmott – Chief Fire Officer

The Chair paid tribute to Andy Hickmott who was leaving the authority at the end of the month after six years with the County Council. Andy had previously worked in a number of Fire Services, including the London Fire Brigade where he became Assistant Commissioner in 2011. Andy has attended many large fires and incidents often in the Gold Command role, and was Duty Assistant Commissioner during the riots in London in August 2011. Nationally, Andy is a member of the Chief Fire Officer Association Members Sounding Board and Director on the Firefighters' Charity Board of Trustees.

Councillor Andy Crump, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Fire and Rescue and Community Safety, thanked Andy for his work and in particular for his part in ensuring the service achieved a good rating in the recent Inspection of the Fire and Rescue Service which demonstrated his excellent strong leadership.

Councillor Richard Chattaway, Leader of the Labour Group, paid tribute to Andy's leadership of his staff and the confidence they had in him. Councillor Chattaway added that Warwickshire Fire and Rescue service is highly respected in communities and that this is due to the professionalism of Andy and his staff. Councillor Chattaway thanked Andy for the service he had given and for his leadership of his staff.

Councillor Sarah Boad, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, added her thanks, in particular for putting Warwickshire amongst the highest ranking of authorities in the recent round of Fire and Rescue inspections.

Councillors added their tributes to Andy and wished him well for the future.

Andy Hickmott thanked members for the support members had given to him and to the Fire and Rescue Service. Andy stated that it had been a privilege and pleasure to lead the service and that he wished the organisation well for the future.

Dr John Linnane - Director of Public Health

The Chair paid tribute to Dr John Linnane who was leaving at the end of the month after 8 years with the Council. The Chair reported that Dr Linnane had first become interested in ill health prevention during his time as an anaesthetist in Ireland and had come to the West Midlands to pursue this career. John worked for the Department of Health and Wolverhampton PCT and became a Consultant in Public Health for Walsall PCT and later Deputy Director of Public Health. It was during his time in Walsall that he was lead manager for Cancer and Palliative Care Services.

As Director of Public Health John has championed many initiatives to improve the health of Warwickshire residents and raised the profile of local government's critical role in preventing ill health and improving health inequalities.

Councillor Les Caborn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health, expressed his gratitude to John Linnane for his support and advice and paid tribute to the respect John had from his staff but also nationally, as recognised in his receiving the Faculty of Public Health's award for services to public health. Councillor Caborn also highlighted that John is a visiting lecturer and supervisor for people moving into public health, including staff within Warwickshire, and that his approach to developing engaging, accessible annual reports had attracted a national award. Most of all John had been an innovator, had supported the Health and Wellbeing Board and made progress in collaborative working around the STP and Place.

Councillor Caborn added that John, and his wicked sense of humour, would be missed by all of those who have had the pleasure to work alongside him.

Councillor Richard Chattaway, Leader of the Labour Group, added his thanks to John, in particular for making the health agenda accessible and for highlighting the key issues.

Councillor Peter Butlin, Deputy Leader of the Council, paid tribute to John's skills in collaboration and in commissioning for Warwickshire.

Councillor Wallace Redford, Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Committee, thanked John for his support to the Committee and for driving improvements in health and wellbeing.

Councillors added their thanks to John for his support, good humour and for Commitment to improving the health of residents in Warwickshire.

Dr John Linnane thanked members for their support and for how welcoming the leadership and council members had been to his joining the Council on the transfer of Public Health from the NHS. John added that it is right that Public Health is placed within local government as it is the work of local government to improve the wellbeing of citizens, be it economic, health or social wellbeing. John thanked the Council for its support for his recommendations over the years and added that he had highlighted Warwickshire's approach to NHS England.

Welcome to new senior officers

The Chair welcomed Kieron Amos who has joined the Council as the new Chief Fire Officer and also welcomed Scott Tompkins, the new Assistant Director for Environment Services.

(5) Petitions

None.

(6) Public Speaking

None.

2. Treasury Management Strategy Statement

Councillor Peter Butlin presented the Treasury Management Strategy Statement that had been approved by Cabinet and proposed that the Council adopt the recommendations set out in the report. Councillor Heather Timms seconded the proposal.

- A Councillor Jenny Fradgley moved the following amendment and was seconded by Councillor Kate Rolfe:

'That the County Council requires the Strategic Director of Resources to review in greater detail the Annual Investment Strategy to ensure that it is moving towards a more green and ethical investment framework and reports back to Council'

Councillor Jenny Fradgley explained that she considered her amendment would set the right direction for the Council in ensuring the council is not investing in industries that may undermine people's health and wellbeing, and that residents want tax payers' money to be in sustainable industries for the future of themselves and their children.

The following additional points were made in the debate:

- That consideration could be given to applying the approach taken by the Pension Fund managers in relation to responsible investment.
- A review could include exploration of why the Council does not have a policy of making investments primarily for the purpose of receiving a financial return (as stated at paragraph 8.2).
- There has been an increase in capital expenditure and in the level of borrowing for projects that have not then been delivered during the borrowing period.
- There are companies that local authorities have contracted with that have failed and care needs to be taken in choice of contractor.

Councillor Heather Timms suggested that there is already sufficient consideration given to the type of investments but that she would be willing to have this considered by the Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Peter Butlin, in responding to the debate, referred to the list of organisations at 3.3 of the report, and highlighted that ethical considerations are taken into account but that the amendment would not allow the Council enough flexibility. Councillor Butlin added that capital slippage is being addressed and also that the Council has avoided contracts with companies that have met with difficulties and will continue to be exercise care in choice of contractor.

VOTE

The amendment at A was put to the vote and was LOST, the vote being 11 for, 31 against and 10 abstentions.

The recommendations as set out in the report were put to the vote and were AGREED as set out below, the vote being 41 for, 1 against and 9 abstentions.

Resolved

- 1) That the Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy for 2019/20 (Appendix A-I of the report) be approved and their provisions have effect from 1st April 2019;
- 2) That the County Council requires the Joint Managing Director (Resources) to ensure that gross borrowing does not exceed the prudential level as specified in Appendix B of the report, taking into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in the budget report;
- 3) That the County Council delegates authority to the Joint Managing Director (Resources) to undertake all the activities listed in Appendix H of the report; and
- 4) That the County Council requires the Joint Managing Director (Resources) to implement the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy as specified in Appendix I of the report.

3. Constitutional Review

Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, presented a report and recommendation proposing changes to the Council's Constitution to reflect the changes brought about by the Council's Transformation programme and changes at senior officer level. Councillor Peter Butlin seconded the recommendations and highlighted that the opportunity had been taken to update thresholds in contracts which have not been updated for a number of years.

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

Resolved

- 1) That the revised Contract Standing Orders attached as Appendix 1 of the report are approved with effect from 1 April 2019;
- 2) That the revised Officer Delegations (non-executive functions) attached as Appendix 2 of the report are approved with effect from 1 April 2019;
- 3) That the revised Financial Standing Orders attached as Appendix 3 of the report are approved with effect from 1 April 2019;
- 4) That Council authorises the Joint Managing Director (Resources) in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer to make any additional minor amendments to the Constitution necessary to update it, including updating job titles and similar necessary amendments as a result of the implementation of the new operating model; and
- 5) That from 1 April 2019 previous individual delegations to the Joint Managing Director (Resources) and to the Joint Managing Director (Communities) in respect of specific decisions are interpreted as delegations to the Strategic Director (Resources) and to the Strategic Director (Communities) as appropriate.

4. Appointment of Statutory Officers

Councillor Izzi Seccombe presented a report setting out proposed appointment of statutory officers as required to reflect the changes in officer structure. Councillor Peter Butlin seconded the proposals which were put to the vote and agreed unanimously as set out below.

Resolved

- 1) That the Strategic Director of Resources is appointed as the Chief Finance Officer and S 151 officer.
- 2) That the Assistant Director of Governance and Policy is appointed as the Monitoring Officer.
- 3) That the assistant Director of Finance and ICT is appointed as the Deputy S151 Officer.
- 4) That the Legal Services Manager is appointed as the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

5. EU Exit - Warwickshire County Council Impact Assessment

- A Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council, presented a report to the Council and moved the recommendation and was seconded by Councillor Peter Butlin:

‘That the Council notes the approach taken and assurance given to date in preparing the County Council for the UK’s exit from the European Union’

- B Councillor Richard Chattaway, Leader of the Labour Group, moved the following and was seconded by Councillor Bill Olnier:

Add:

- (2) ‘That the Council acknowledges the overall position regarding Brexit and recognises the role we have to play in supporting, in so far as we can, the interests of Warwickshire residents and businesses in light of the implications of Brexit. In pursuit of this we call on central government to provide this Council with additional financial assistance to ensure that we can fulfil our role effectively. ‘

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

‘That the County Council uses the £175,000 that has been allocated by Government to support the SME sector who do not have the resources available unlike larger companies.’

DEBATE

Councillor Izzi Seccombe drew attention to the Government allocation of £175,000 to each county council and £35,000 to each district and borough council to support Brexit preparations with half of this being issued in the 2019/10 financial year.

Councillor Seccombe explained that the Council is working closely with the Chambers of Commerce and colleagues in the Growth Hub to support businesses and that the focus was largely on the small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) as the larger companies are more likely to have capacity within their own information networks. A recent edition of Warwickshire Means Business includes an article on Brexit and the Council is actively engaging with businesses to help them with advice on areas such as EU credits, export licenses etc.

Councillor Seccombe referred members to the range of areas being looked at as set out in the paper, including the possible role of regulatory functions such as Trading Standards, but emphasised that it was not possible to know the role or responsibilities or what cost there may be. It is for this reason that she would not support the Labour Group amendment requesting extra funding as there was not the evidence at present to put before the Treasury on what sum of money may be needed.

Councillor Peter Butlin in seconding the recommendation later in the debate, emphasised that it is uncertainty that is causing difficulties at present and that Warwickshire has a strong economy.

Councillor Richard Chattaway, in moving his amendment at B, welcomed the report for its clarity and for covering the range of issues, but considered that it is evident that the money allocated by government will not be enough to meet the impact on the council, for example to meet the impact on care services. Councillor Chattaway considered that the cost of Brexit should not fall on residents of Warwickshire and that a marker should be put down to Government that more money will be needed.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse thanked the authors for a very good report. Councillor Roodhouse explained that support was needed to support SMEs who do not have time or capacity to consider Brexit issues and added in his summing up at the end of the debate that the amendment referred to the SME sector as a whole, which may include Council staff in supporting them, including Trading Standards. He added that he did not consider CWLEP had provided the support Warwickshire deserves.

Councillor Sarah Boad welcomed the report but considered it is too late and did not include reference to Baginton Airport. Councillor Boad added that there was a lack of appreciation of how industry operates to 'just in time' and that there are many SMEs who will be impacted by Brexit so it is important that they are supported as they are essential for Warwickshire.

DEBATE

The following points were made:

- A number of EU citizens do not understand the need to apply for residency and this needs to be addressed.
- There needs to be action to ensure there will be qualified people to fill vacancies in the care sector.
- The report refers to potential increase in demand for Trading Services but does not say what is the basis for this assumption. (Councillor Andy Crump, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Safety undertook to provide more detail).
- There is uncertainty which is impacting in particular on SMEs therefore the Liberal Democrat amendment should be supported.
- There is likely to be an impact on everyone and therefore the Labour amendment should be supported.
- There is no evidence or indication of an appropriate level of cost in the Labour Group amendment to present to the Treasury.
- The report recognises the possible negative effects on community cohesion and hate crime.
- The work of the Warwickshire Resilience Local Forum and Chamber of Commerce Growth Hubs was welcomed.
- The County Council has a good track record of looking after the economy.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe thanked members for their contributions and made the following points in responding to the debate:

- The Council has been engaging with social care providers for a long time. This includes ensuring there is information on how to apply for settled status.
- The work with the Local Resilience Forum is on a regional basis and Nick Page, Chief Executive of Solihull MBC provides weekly updates to Westminster on the status in Warwickshire. Each department has undertaken a risk analysis of all areas of their work.
- Uncertainty for SMEs is recognised and work with SMEs has been part of discussions for the last two years and advice to them has been given.
- Trading Standards is just one of the regulatory areas that may be impacted.
- There may be a time to ask for more money but it needs to be on an evidence basis.

- We have been giving confidence to businesses over the years and will continue to.

VOTE

The Labour Group amendment at B was put to the vote and was LOST, the vote being 12 for, 31 against and 8 abstentions.

The Liberal Democrat Group amendment at C above was put to the vote and was LOST, the vote being 9 for, 39 against and 4 abstentions.

The original proposal at A was put to the vote and was AGREED, the vote being 42 for and 10 against.

Resolved

That Council notes the approach taken and assurance given to date in preparing the County Council for the UK's exit from the European Union.

6. Police and Crime Commissioner Representation on the Council

Councillor Izzi Seccombe left the chamber during the discussion and vote on this item.

- A Councillor Andy Crump, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Fire and Rescue and Community Safety, proposed that Council agree the recommendations set out in the report and appoint that the Police and Crime Commissioner's as a co-opted member of the Council in accordance with the Policing and Crime Act.

Councillor Adrian Warwick seconded the proposal and speaking later in the debate explained that the request from the PCC was the minimum he could ask for and reminded members that the PCC had not asked to become responsible for the Fire and Rescue Service as had occurred in other parts of the country. Councillor Warwick supported this proposal as it provides an opportunity for a closer relationship between the services. Councillor Warwick added that it was for the current PCC only as the next PCC may not wish to take on this role.

- B Councillor Maggie O'Rourke moved the following amendment and was seconded by Councillor Richard Chattaway:

'That the Council declines the request for co-option from the Police and Crime Commissioner at this time given the issues facing Warwickshire Police, particularly following the separation from the Alliance and the need for the Police and Crime Commissioner's attention to be fully focused on policing matters. However, the Council extends an invitation to the Police and Crime Commissioner to attend and speak at Council meetings on appropriate fire related matters.'

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke expressed concern that, whilst she appreciated the legal basis for this request, there had not been an opportunity for a prior discussion on this proposal before it had reached Council and that she was uncomfortable with the appointment of someone who had not been elected by Warwickshire residents to speak on issues relating the Fire and Rescue Service. Councillor O'Rourke also expressed concern that, although the report excludes the PCC from voting on the Council overall budget, national reports say that the PCC does have an influence on budgets and staffing.

Councillor Richard Chattaway, in seconding the amendment, stated that this is a fundamental question about democracy and added that the PCC is elected to oversee the Police not the Fire and Rescue Service and that it is important given that he focusses on Police at this current time.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers, Leader of the Green Group, suggested that he welcomed more blue light collaboration although it would be more useful to have collaboration between Fire and Rescue and Ambulance services. Councillor Chilvers expressed concern that, if there was to be any co-option, it should be of the office holder not the individual.

Councillor Nicola Davies (Chair of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel) understood the concern that the PCC should be focusing on Policing issues but recognised that the legislation does allow for this role on the County Council. Councillor Davies observed that the Labour Group's amendment is potentially more wide ranging and open than that proposed in the report which sets clear parameters and term of office. She added that the current political make-up of the Council would mean that the vote of the PCC would not be pertinent but may be so if a future Council had no overall control, hence the limitation of the term of office is appropriate.

Following a debate Councillor Crump responded to points raised as follows:

- The reasons for declining the request in the amendment are contradictory as the amendment invites the PCC to attend.
- The Act came in 2017 which was after the election of the PCC and therefore it would not have been possible for the PCC to include this as an intention in his election manifesto.
- Other authorities have had their PCC take over Fire and Rescue service but this is not being proposed here.

VOTE

The Labour Group amendment at B above was put to the vote and was LOST, the voting being 12 for, 29 against and 7 abstentions.

The recommendations as set out in the report and referred to at A above were put to the vote and were AGREED, the voting being 32 for, 11 against and 5 abstentions.

Resolved

- 1) That Mr. Philip Seccombe, the current Police and Crime Commissioner, be invited to become a co-opted member of the Council for the purposes of section 7, Policing and Crime Act 2017; and
- 2) That the period of co-option shall expire at the end of his term of office or the normal retirement of Councillors following the quadrennial elections, whichever is the earlier. Should Mr. Seccombe cease to be the Police and Crime Commissioner for any reason, the period of co-option will expire on the same date.

7. Notices of Motion

(1) Healthy Refreshments

Councillor Helen Adkins moved the following motion and was seconded by Councillor Adrian Warwick:

‘This council will aim to provide healthier refreshments at meetings of Full Council and other Council meetings, in the interest of promoting healthier lifestyles for Councillors and visitors. This motion reflects the intention of WCC to promote Health in the Year of Well-being’

Councillor Helen Adkins explained that the motion was brought to ensure the Council is leading by example in promoting messages regarding healthy eating and the importance of tackling obesity. Councillor Adrian Warwick added that the intention is to provide some healthy choices for members but also visitors to meetings.

Following a debate the motion was put to the vote and was agreed as set out below.

Resolved

That this council will aim to provide healthier refreshments at meetings of Full Council and other Council meetings, in the interest of promoting healthier lifestyles for Councillors and visitors. This motion reflects the intention of WCC to promote Health in the Year of Well-being.

(2) Nursery Funding

- A Councillor Caroline Phillips moved the following motion (deleting the second paragraph as printed on the agenda) and was seconded by Councillor Corinne Davies:

‘That this Council writes to Mr Nadhim Zahawi, the Secretary of State for Early Years, expressing its concerns regarding nursery funding and the impact that a lack of a long term plan is having on Warwickshire’s maintained nurseries.’

Councillor Caroline Phillips explained that she brought this motion as the future viability of Warwickshire’s six maintained nurseries is at stake. These nurseries are in areas of deprivation and are essential in getting children school ready. Councillor Phillips added that the interim funding had been welcome but there has been no commitment from the Secretary of State for long term funding and this was concern to those who were taking part in a national campaign on this issue. Councillor Corinne Davies, in seconding the motion, added that the nurseries have specialist provision that needs to be retained.

Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning, gave his assurance that this issue had been raised with Nadhim Zahawi on several occasions and the importance of these nurseries, recognised by Ofsted as good, had been emphasised, particularly as a part of the Council’s commitment to early intervention. Councillor Hayfield added that the gap in funding up until the comprehensive spending assessment was recognised and was being looked at.

VOTE

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

Resolved

That this Council writes to Mr Nadhim Zahawi, the Secretary of State for Early Years, expressing its concerns regarding nursery funding and the impact that a lack of a long term plan is having on Warwickshire's maintained nurseries.

(3) Police Response

- A Councillor Dave Parsons moved the following motion and was seconded by Councillor Alan Webb:

'That, in view of the significant rise and increase in the severity of the nature of crime in rural areas of Warwickshire, the Council writes to the Chief Constable requiring that, working with the Police and Crime Commissioner, he urgently considers and introduces measures to reduce emergency response times in rural areas and to ensure that control centres have a thorough knowledge of the areas they cover.'

Councillor Parsons explained that crime had increased in his area and he had brought this motion as he was concerned that criminals were aware that police response times had reduced and were taking advantage of this. Councillor Parsons cited a particular incident where delay was caused due to call centre lack of knowledge with a response time of 23 minutes rather than within the minimum national target of 20 minutes. Councillor Parsons expressed concern that there were not enough officers to ensure response times are met and that although aware that police numbers were down, was concerned that there would also be a number coming up to retirement or off sick.

Councillor Alan Webb in seconding the motion, stressed the importance of not just having more police but also one of smarter working and ensuring that call centres do have the appropriate information to avoid adding to response times.

- B Councillor Adrian Warwick moved the following amendment and was seconded by Councillor Dave Reilly:

'That, in view of the rise in crime in rural areas of Warwickshire, the Council writes to the Chief Constable, requiring that, working with the Police and Crime Commissioner, he updates the Council on the Commissioner's proposal to establish a rural crime team with a thorough knowledge of the rural area they cover and the types of crime often unique to these areas and on intended measures to reduce emergency response times in rural areas and to ensure that control centres have a thorough knowledge of the areas they cover. '

Councillor Adrian Warwick explained that there had been a rise in rural crime but he

viewed the increase as comparable to the rate of population growth. He added that the Labour Group motion did not take into consideration the work that is being done to address crime with a target to increase police officers to 962 and a number of initiatives focused on rural crime including 3 rural crime coordinators and a dedicated team of 5 to support rural areas.

Councillor Dave Reilly, speaking later in the debate, advised that the average response time to each emergency incident is 13 minutes and 5 seconds. He agreed that the incident cited by Councillor Parsons was serious and very frightening for those involved but added that this was one incident and that an assessment of community safety in North Warwickshire showed that rural crime levels have not increased over the year and that there has been an increase in severity in crimes. The increase in crime overall is in incidents of theft from motor vehicles

Councillor Keith Kondakor suggested that there is a need for better technology that will enable Police to intercept criminals before the crime is committed and a need to tackle the rate of staff turnover in call centres. He added that the probation service and criminal justice system needed to be looked at to bring the level of reoffending down.

Councillor Nichola Davies, Chair of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel, reported that the performance data coming before the Panel this week show that 86% of emergency calls were attended within the 20 minute minimum response target over the last quarter. This is comparable to the rate in the previous year but is off target and there is not a breakdown between urban and rural. Councillor Davies added that the key issue is having an adequate number of police officers to respond to calls and that the recruitment that is currently occurring is not additional officers but replacing those who are retiring or who have moved to another position. Councillor Davies assured the Council that this is an issue that the Panel is scrutinising.

Councillor Andy Crump, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Fire and Rescue and Community Safety, undertook to pass on the comments from this meeting to the Police Constable and PCC at the Safer Partnership Board that week, in particular the issues in relation to call centres. He added that burglaries in residential properties had decreased by 3% since last year and business crime was down 27%.

VOTE

The Conservative Group amendment at B was put to the vote and was AGREED, the voting being 27 for, 12 against and 7 abstentions.

The amendment became the substantive motion and was put to the vote and was AGREED as set out below, the voting being 37 for, none against and 9 abstentions.

Resolved

That, in view of the rise in crime in rural areas of Warwickshire, the Council writes to the Chief Constable, requiring that, working with the Police and Crime Commissioner, he updates the Council on the Commissioner's proposal to establish a rural crime team with a thorough knowledge of the rural area they cover and the types of crime often unique to these areas and on intended measures to reduce emergency response times in rural areas and to ensure that control centres have a thorough knowledge of the areas they cover.

8. Member Question Time

(1) Primary School Provision in Nuneaton

Councillor Keith Kondakor asked Councillor Colin Hayfield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning:

‘why additional capacity was not put in place for September 2018 and why so little capacity is being added in time for September 2019 when it was clear from the school sufficiency work that we would have no spaces to cope with the in-year admissions from the new housing and people trying to move away from failing schools?’

Councillor Colin Hayfield responded that there was not a capacity issue. There had been no additional capacity required for reception in 2018 with capacity remaining once offers had been made. Reception offers for September 2019 will be made in April.

The Council does take account of new developments and work is underway to provide a new 2 form entry primary school for September 2019 as part of the current housing development. This will provide 30 reception places in its first year.

Councillor Kondakor asked why years 1-3 are only getting offers at a distant school.

Councillor Hayfield replied that there will always be an issue with in year placements and he was not aware that the issue is any greater in Nuneaton than in other areas.

(2) Design of Cycling Schemes

Councillor Keith Kondakor put the following question for Councillor Jonathan Chilvers to Councillor Jeff Clarke, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning:

"At the moment there is not sufficient capacity in the cycling team to work up the design of priority schemes in a reasonable timeframe. How much of the extra transport planning capacity agreed at the budget will be directed towards the working up of these schemes?"

Councillor Jeff Clarke stated that there had been good progress in development of schemes £60k has been allocated. The Council has been successful in getting external funding towards development of schemes on the Birmingham Road, a scheme in Stratford upon Avon and Hinckley Road, Nuneaton. Bids for funding will continue and the Council has agreed funding in the budget and officers are working up schemes. In addition there are a number of road safety projects that include improving safety for cyclists.

(3) Increasing cycling

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

"Is the Council planning to host a stage of the women's or men's tour of Britain this year? If so will you will you commit to including a legacy plan which focuses on using the event to increase long term use of bikes in Warwickshire?"

Councillor Izzi Seccombe responded that the men's tour would take place on 13 September and would start from Warwick and end in Burton Dassett. Discussions are taking place regarding the arrangements for the women's tour which it is hoped to host on 12 June. All stages of the races will focus on raising awareness of cycling in the County and there will be televised live and form part of ITV highlights. There will also be a number of events raising awareness.

Councillor Kondakor asked, with the closure of cycle shops, more could be done to increase signage of routes as part of the legacy.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe agreed to take this back.

(4) George Eliot Centre

Councillor Richard Chattaway asked Councillor Dave Reilly, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment that progress on the centre be given to the George Eliot Fellowship.

Councillor Dave Reilly responded that he had undertaken a site visit and that options were being looked at and that this may result in a reduced cost. Councillor Reilly agreed to provide an update at if not before the next council meeting.

9. Any other items of urgent business

None

10. Exclusion of Public and Press

Resolved:

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items 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.

11. Land at Crick Lane, Rugby

Councillor Peter Butlin presented a report and recommendations approved by Cabinet and requested that council agree an allocation from the Capital Investment Fund to purchase land.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe seconded the recommendations which were agreed as set

out in the exempt minutes of this meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.30 p.m.

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Chair