

County Council

Tuesday, 18 February 2020

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Nicola Davies (Chair)

Peter Butlin, Les Caborn, Mark Cargill, Richard Chattaway, Jeff Clarke, John Cooke, Peter Gilbert, Colin Hayfield, Maggie O'Rourke, Anne Parry, David Reilly, Jill Simpson-Vince, Andrew Wright, Bill Gifford, Kam Kaur, Izzi Seccombe, Jenny Fradgley, Clive Rickhards, Helen Adkins, Jo Barker, Margaret Bell, Parminder Singh Birdi, Sarah Boad, Mike Brain, Jonathan Chilvers, Alan Cockburn, Andy Crump, Yousef Dahmash, Corinne Davies, Judy Falp, Clare Golby, Seb Gran, John Holland, John Horner, Andy Jenns, Keith Kondakor, Bhagwant Singh Pandher, Dave Parsons, Caroline Phillips, Howard Roberts, Jerry Roodhouse, Andy Sargeant, Dave Shilton, Dominic Skinner, Bob Stevens, Heather Timms, Adrian Warwick, Alan Webb, Chris Williams, Pam Williams

1. General

(1) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from the following Councillors:

Neil Dirveiks
Dan Gissane
Jeff Morgan
Bill Olnier
Wallace Redford
Kate Rolfe

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

(3) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 17 December 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

(4) Chair's announcements

A series of announcements were made to Council.

- 1) The recent death of ex-County Councillor Peter Barnes was announced by the Chair. Peter served on the County Council between 2001 to 2013. As a member of the Liberal

Democrat Group he served his community of Bidford-on-Avon and in that time served on a number of committees including the Regulatory Committee and Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee. In addition, he sat on the Royal Shakespeare Company Community Forum and the Marsh Farm Liaison Group. For the 2009/2010 municipal year Peter was Chair of Council, a role he is known to have thoroughly enjoyed. Members who knew Peter may or may not know that he was a gifted maker of corn dollies.

Council was informed that Peter Barnes' funeral had been attended by the Chair and Monica Fogarty (Chief Executive). That the chapel at the funeral was full said much for the esteem that Peter Barnes was held in.

Members paid tribute to Peter Barnes and Council stood in silent memory.

- 2) Councillor Peter Gilbert informed Council that as it met so HRH Prince Charles was visiting locations in Warwickshire including Bedworth.
- 3) The Chair and Council thanked the Fire and Rescue Service for its very recent work dealing with the consequences of two major storms which had hit the UK.
- 4) Council was informed of a recent visit by 60 children from Thomas Jolyffe School in Stratford-upon-Avon. The children had debated matters in the Council chamber.

2. Council Plan 2025

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Leader of the Council) moved the recommendation and was seconded by Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation).

In introducing the Council Plan 2025 Councillor Seccombe expressed a common desire to make Warwickshire the best it can be. She noted that Warwickshire is in good shape but that, like other councils, Warwickshire County Council is required to manage reduced resources and increasing demand for services. The Council's finances are healthy, and this can be attributed to good financial management by officers. Savings of £58.5m will be required over the next three years but there will continue to be the need to protect the most vulnerable in society whilst working to stimulate the economy in the light of the upcoming government comprehensive spending review.

Council was reminded of many of its achievements. These include a 29% increase in the number of social workers, greater commercialism, the acquisition of the Pears Centre in Exhall for the delivery of special care services for young people, the success of the reablement service, the continuing delivery of safe and well inspections by the Fire and Rescue Service, support for the local economy and young people seeking to become work ready and the condition of the County's highway network.

Councillor Seccombe emphasised the need to take account of and mitigate against climate change adding that population growth and increasing demand for services will make it of greater importance that communities are able to support themselves.

It was emphasised that the new plan has a focus on enhancing service delivery and not on the need to make savings.

Amendment 1 – Liberal Democrat.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) moved an amendment, seconded by Councillor Sarah Boad (Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) who reserved the right speak, comprising 3 elements. This stated,

“Amendment 1.1

Page 7 Climate Change

In box ref UN amend to read as follows "we will make sure our work is in line with the Committee on Climate Change and UN Sustainable Development Goals".

<https://www.theccc.org.uk>

Home - Committee on Climate Change

The UK has committed to becoming a Net Zero economy by 2050. Meeting that goal requires a transformation in land use across the UK. Read our new report.

www.theccc.org.uk

Amendment 1.2

Page 3 Vision

Priority Warwickshire's Communities

Add extra section Work with partners to reduce the level of Child Poverty across Warwickshire.

Amendment 1.3

Page 3 Vision

Priority Warwickshire's economy

Add extra section, become a leader by working with partners, Universities in creating a circular economy for Warwickshire.

Also Change box with UN goals (is in line with the Committee on Climate Change and UN Sustainable Development Goals).

In support of the Liberal Democrat Group amendments, Councillor Roodhouse expressed his general support for the plan but made the following points.

- The UN sustainability goals as cited in the plan are very aspirational. It is the Committee on Climate Change that undertakes work on risk. The Council should base its objectives on the targets of the Committee on Climate Change.
- The Council should consider establishing a Portfolio Holder role that focuses solely on climate change.
- Child poverty is a major issue that needs to be addressed through the plan.

- A circular economy is required if resources are not to be allowed to run out. A number of major companies now recognise the value of the circular economy recognising that a linear approach is not sustainable.
- Warwickshire should ensure that it does not become over reliant on a handful of industries. The automotive industry can be transient in nature.

Amendment 2 – Labour

Councillor Richard Chattaway (Leader of the Labour Group) moved an amendment being seconded by Councillor Maggie O'Rourke. This amendment asked that the recommendation be altered to say,

“That Council approve the Council Plan 2025 and asks Cabinet to ensure the development of appropriate metrics and performance management arrangements to underpin the Plan”.

In speaking to the amendment Councillor Chattaway made the following observations.

- It is wrong that the Plan before Council had been considered and agreed by Cabinet previously.
- A desire to make Warwickshire the best it can be has little relevance to a resident in a deprived area.
- There is no point in acknowledging projects that have ben completed for some time. The focus should be on addressing key areas of concern eg unequal educational attainment, backlogs in children's' mental health assessments and treatment, the uneven spread of economic growth, the struggling economy in some town centres and poor and expensive bus services.

Amendment 3 – Labour

A further amendment was presented from the floor by Councillor Helen Adkins who was seconded by Councillor Caroline Philips.

This stated,

“This Council will commit to the following targets on climate change.

- 1) For Warwickshire as a County Council to be Carbon Neutral by 2025, and
- 2) For Warwickshire as a county to be carbon neutral by as close as possible to 2030”.

Councillor Adkins stated that carbon neutrality is an increasing expectation of the public. In seconding the amendment Councillor Philips stated that the Labour Group did not consider that the recent task and finish groups had not gone far enough especially with transport planning.

Debate

A series of members spoke to the item. The following points were made.

Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning) –

- 1) the plan is high level and seeks to paint a picture for Warwickshire's future. It does not need to be highly detailed. For example, the Education Strategy provides the detail of how education will be delivered.
- 2) 30% of children leaving reception are not "school ready" whilst 33% leaving primary school are not at the level they should be.
- 3) The education gap between communities needs to be addressed.
- 4) Investment in early years can bring a ratio of return of 13 to 1.
- 5) All schools should be good or outstanding. The current figure is 86%.
- 6) A new education strategy focusing on Nuneaton is being created.
- 7) NEETs levels are not high in Warwickshire when compared to other areas. However, they should be lower.
- 8) The demand for services in the high needs area continues to increase.
- 9) The continuing backlog of children awaiting mental health assessments is of such concern that the Council may need to consider developing its own assessment service.
- 10) The Pears Centre in Exhall is an exciting development. There may be a case for developing a similar facility in the south of the County.
- 11) The Council has an extensive programme of school building an expansion.

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) –

- 1) Transport is key to getting people to school and work
- 2) A series of major road projects are underway across the county.

Councillor Dave Parsons –

- 1) The plan is aspirational but lacks detail on how results will be achieved.
- 2) People are not living longer, and child poverty continues to be an issue of concern with food bank usage increasing.
- 3) Private rented accommodation and universal credit have a negative impact on personal finance.
- 4) Children who go to school hungry tend to underachieve academically.
- 5) A "deprivation emergency" should be declared by the Council.

Councillor Keith Kondakor –

- 1) The plan fails to recognise the importance of buses.
- 2) 14 million bus journeys are made in Warwickshire every year.
- 3) Electric cars will take a long time to become mainstream. Enhancements to bus services could be introduced very quickly.
- 4) The pursuance of a circular economy should be encouraged.

Councillor John Holland –

- 1) The Council Plan and the budget could have been considered as a single item.
- 2) Public Health focuses on improving people's health. This should be at the forefront of everything the Council does.
- 3) Public Health initiatives and climate change initiatives are often linked. Eg cycling is good for people's health and benefits the environment.

Councillor Adrian Warwick

- 1) It is not possible to have a single work strand for climate change. Many are required.
- 2) A target around carbon neutrality would require costing out.
- 3) New data management tools like Power BI should be used to the full to get a comprehensive understanding of issues.
- 4) Recycle and re-use should be emphasised.

Councillor Pam Williams

- 1) Children's services currently face many issues but display much innovation in what they do.
- 2) Developments of note include the work of the MASH, housing projects in Nuneaton and the success by the Council of increasing the number of social workers it employs.

Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Heritage and Culture) –

- 1) The plan is high level and is aimed at the whole of Warwickshire.
- 2) The conclusions of the cross-party working groups on climate change have been captured in the plan.
- 3) For the successful delivery of this and other plans there is a need to work with partners such as district and borough councils and parish and town councils as well as the wider community.
- 4) The Portfolio for Environment and Heritage and Culture embraces climate change. There is no need to create a new one.

Councillor Andy Crump (Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety) –

- 1) The intention is that the plan will set the basis for greater work with communities.
- 2) The plan will enhance work around road safety, resilience and flooding, Trading Standards and intelligence led operations such as those aimed at tackling drug trafficking.

Councillor Peter Gilbert –

- 1) It is important that people take the time to read and understand the plan.
- 2) Issues and challenges should not be “glossed over”

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers (Leader of the Green Group) –

- 1) There is much in the plan to be welcomed especially around sustainable development.
- 2) Some of the targets contained in the plan could have been more ambitious eg 1% increase in composting annually.
- 3) There should be more ambition around the promotion of the circular economy.
- 4) Schools have the potential to be exemplars in terms of energy use. However, in a recent instance a school that was looking to install a ground source heat pump was eventually obliged to use a traditional gas boiler for want of a small amount of additional funding.

Councillor Bill Gifford -

- 1) The targets proposed by the Labour Group regarding carbon neutrality are not unreasonable.
- 2) There is a case for creating a Portfolio that is solely responsible for climate change.
- 3) It would have been useful to have had sight of the Labour Group amendments prior to the meeting.
- 4) The pension fund should give consideration to carbon neutral investment.
- 5) Warwickshire is fortunate having two excellent universities that are working on the green economy.

Councillor Dominic Skinner -

- 1) Recycling and reuse are examples of the circular economy.
- 2) There is a real need to make commitment to meeting targets.
- 3) Climate change should be the overarching consideration and for this reason a dedicated Portfolio Holder position should be created.

Councillor Jenny Fradgley -

- 1) Agree that a dedicated Climate Change Portfolio is required.
- 2) Too much time has been spent debating and agreeing the need for cycleways. It is action that is now required.
- 3) Tree planting is to be commended but parish councils require larger partners such as the County Council to enable this to happen.

Summing Up

Councillor Sarah Boad –

- 1) There is a lot of talk around supporting young people. However, services have been cut and there is less money available to support them.
- 2) School budgets are under pressure, children's centres have been cut and whilst babies are often taken to those that remain, fewer toddlers are attending.
- 3) Child poverty continues to grow, and life chances are seen to be slipping away.
- 4) Firmer targets are required for climate change. Warwick District Council is leading the way with its proposed additional £1 a week charge to support climate change schemes.
- 5) It is not possible to create a zero-carbon vehicle as manufacturing has an environmental cost.
- 6) Regarding bus services Stagecoach continue to present problems, changing services and stopping them when subsidies cease. Pensioners etc have bus passes but do not use them as the services are poor.
- 7) People are now returning to car usage having tried rail services from Kenilworth station and found them wanting.
- 8) Electric vehicles are in their infancy. There is not enough material to provide everyone with one.

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke –

- 1) It is important that the plan is delivered and that target dates are set.
- 2) Partnerships are key to success.

Councillor Kam Kaur –

- 1) For years there has been pressure to reduce the number of Portfolio Holders. Now there are demands to create more.
- 2) Members need to be prepared to do more to address climate change.
- 3) It is important to remember the other elements of the plan. Climate change is important but not the only issue to be managed.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse –

- 1) That the Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning recognises the challenges being faced in education is welcomed.
- 2) It is essential that the Child Poverty Strategy is reinvigorated.
- 3) The work being undertaken by the two local universities on the circular economy should be explored. Certain Nordic countries are more advanced in their thinking on this than the UK.
- 4) The work on climate change that Councillor Timms has undertaken to date is to be commended. She cannot, however, hope to do it all.
- 5) Consideration of the Council Plan prior to the budget made sense. Decide what needs to be done and then ensure that the financial commitment fits.
- 6) The Labour Group's amendment proposing target dates for carbon neutrality are to be welcomed.

Councillor Richard Chattaway –

- 1) Strategies are no good without action plans to back them up.
- 2) Strategies on early years, transport and capital expenditure are not regarded as working form communities.

Councillor Helen Adkins –

- 1) Plenty of authorities have set target dates for carbon neutrality. It is hard to understand why this council should be reluctant to do so.
- 2) Decisions made by the County Council should not hinder Warwick District Council in delivering its climate change agenda.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe –

- 1) The Council Plan 2025 has been in development for some time. The development process has involved many stakeholders being a plan for the County Council and the people of Warwickshire.
- 2) The Council is already working with Warwick District Council on its climate change initiatives. It hopes to work with other district and borough councils.
- 3) The circular economy is untried. It is not at a stage where it could be incorporated into the plan.
- 4) Evidence from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicates that child poverty has not grown as some members would suggest.

VOTE

A vote was taken on the Liberal Democrat Group amendment (Appendix A) which was lost, the vote being 9 for, 32 against and 8 abstentions.

A vote was taken on the first Labour Group amendment (Appendix B1) which was lost, the vote being 8 for, 39 against and 2 abstentions

A recorded vote was taken for the second Labour Group amendment (Appendix B2) in accordance with standing order 31.4 as set out below:

For (17) Councillors Adkins, Boad, Chattaway, Chilvers, C.Davies, N. Davies, Falp, Fradgley, Gifford, Holland, Kondakor, Parsons, Phillips, Rickhards, Roodhouse, Skinner, Webb.

Against (32) Councillors Barker, Bell, Singh Birdi, Brain, Butlin, Caborn, Cargill, Clarke, Cockburn, Cooke, Crump, Dahmash, Gilbert, Golby, Gran, Hayfield, Horner, Jenns, Kaur, Pandher, Parry, Reilly, Roberts, Sareant, Seccombe, Shilton, Simpson-Vince, Timms, C. Warwick, P. Williams, Williams, Wright.

For (17) Adkins, Boad, Chattaway, Chilvers, C.Davies, M.Davies, Holland, Kondakor, Parsons, Phillips, Rickhards, Roodhouse, Skinner, Webb.

A vote was taken on the substantive motion as set out in the report. This was agreed 32 for, 8 against and 11 abstentions.

Resolved:

That Council approve the Council Plan 2025.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12.15.

The meeting re-convened at 13.00.

3. 2020/21 Budget and 2020-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader – Finance and Property) moved the motion and was seconded by Councillor Izzi Seccombe. (See appendices A1 and A2 to these minutes). Councillor Butlin thanked officers for their hard work as well as thanking Councillor Seccombe for her leadership. Council was informed that the whilst the medium-term financial context was less certain the authority was a strong resilient position. Investment is required in services for residents, high streets, vulnerable adults and the creation of a commercial property company.

Unlike the position in some neighbouring local authorities, reserves, Councillor Butlin stated, are healthy. Value for money allied to high quality outcomes are constantly sought with the Council building on work that has already been done.

Further investment will be required in children with special educational needs as well as in assistive technology for vulnerable adults. In addition, there is a need for spending on superfast broadband, road safety and cycleway provision.

The Council plans to invest in the provision of digital services, a reduction in its accommodation requirements, the maximisation of the benefits of land ownership and support for small and start up businesses.

Two further areas for investment were highlighted. These were the possible development of an equivalent to the new Pears Centre for the south of the county and 5G.

Amendment 1 – Labour Group

Councillor Richard Chattaway proposed the amendment as set out in appendix B to these minutes. Councillor Helen Adkins seconded the amendment.

Councillor Chattaway made the following points.

1. The budget set should be aimed at providing services.
2. The Council has been required to make £33m of cuts over the last 5 years. A further cut to the local government budget is expected.
3. Reserves are currently around £9m. A further £80m – £90m of savings will be required over the next 6 years.
4. Redundancies are being made that undermine the ability to deliver services.
5. The Council needs to be clear on what its requirements will be around property/accommodation.
6. Expenditure on IT does not always enhance service delivery.
7. The capital programme has seen a degree of slippage.
8. Domestic abuse, whether mental or physical, requires further investment.
9. Public transport should be green, cleaner and cheaper.
10. The Labour Group would commit to turning street lights back on at night once LEDs are more prevalent.
11. Regarding the Fire and Rescue Service resources for an additional 21 firefighters are included in the Labour Group proposals.

12. Car parking charges should be limited in order to protect town centres by not deterring people from visiting them.
13. More trees should be planted. Many of these could be put on County Council land.
14. Electric vehicle charging points should be installed and to reduce single use plastic bottles water fountains be provided.
15. Waiting times are too long for special education assessment and more should be done to promote men's health, address drug and alcohol addiction and domestic violence.
16. Capital should be used to enhance town centres, sustainable transport, flood defences and small highway schemes.
17. The cuts in funding to children's centres have been harmful to communities.

Amendment 2 – Green Group

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers moved the Green Group amendment as set out in appendix C. Councillor Keith Kondakor seconded the amendment.

In introducing the amendment Councillor Chilvers made the following points.

1. The three main areas for attention should be transport, climate change and young people.
2. The Green Group budget is designed to link capital and revenue. This is so as to aid the relationship between planning and design and the delivery of a project.
3. The government has recently announced additional funding for bus services but there is a risk that there will be no resources to submit any bids.
4. Cycling investment is to be welcomed but the Council continues to pursue an expensive road building programme. The aim should be to reduce polluting journeys.
5. The electric vehicle charging strategy does not feature a sufficient number of charging points.
6. Action plans aimed at addressing climate change should be produced soon.
7. People consider that central government should be doing more to address climate control. If this does not happen then local government should do more.
8. More investment is required in flooding and drainage.
9. More investment is required in the skills agenda.
10. The 0-3 age bracket should be targeted using initiatives such as "Smart Start".

Debate

Members were invited to contribute to the debate.

The following points were made.

Councillor Judy Falp –

Whitnash residents consider that they are paying more money for fewer services. The Council is not managing to maintain that which it already has.

Councillor Dave Parsons –

Child poverty continues to grow. The amount in the proposed budget will not be sufficient to address this.

Councillor John Holland –

1. There is a need for the creation of a Portfolio Holder position that is aimed solely at addressing climate change.
2. There is concern for children in deprived families following the reduction in the number of children's and sure start centres.
3. The Police should be supported in the enforcement of speed and weight limits.

Councillor Adrian Warwick –

1. Council spending must be undertaken in a sensible way. It needs to be consistent with every opportunity for savings being considered eg paperless committee meetings.
2. Before additional investment can be made in services eg additional firefighters, proper costings need to be considered.

Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) –

1. £40m of savings will be delivered by the Council over the next five years. This will be achieved in part through digital working and flexible working.
2. Libraries have entered the digital age. Although 2019 saw around 1.4m visits to libraries there were many "virtual visits" via digital means.
3. Government is providing £5.7m to support superfast broadband roll out. In addition, work is progressing on 5G.

Councillor Colin Hayfield (Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning) –

1. Education services will see capital investment of £63m over the next 3 years.
2. It would be a retrograde step to re-introduce passenger transport assistants on school buses.
3. The Council is seeking to right size school transport and SEN transport.
4. Demand for support for special education needs continues to increase. The government has made it clear that schools must make adequate provision for children with high needs.
5. Many schools are facing deficits. A report on this will be presented to Cabinet in July 2020.

Councillor Les Caborn (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health) –

1. Climate change is not on the top of people's agendas. It is services such as health care that dominate.
2. Providers of social care must ensure that their staff receive the living wage.
3. Delays to discharge from hospital must be reduced.
4. The Fire and Rescue Service hospital to home service is welcomed.
5. The SARA scheme aims to promote self-help.
6. Despite not being a statutory service, the County Council is working to reduce homelessness. Mental health nurses and practitioners are working on the streets to help the homeless.

7. There is a need to look at the link between drugs, alcohol, gambling and homelessness.
8. The incidence of suicide is a major concern.
9. Consideration should be given to how to give more small grants to communities.
10. The Year of Wellbeing was a success. The initiative has moved on to "Wellbeing for Life".

Councillor Peter Gilbert –

Any commitment to additional funding for the Fire and Rescue Service should be linked with the new Council Plan 2025.

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) –

1. There is an ongoing need for investment in transport.
2. An increase in gully cleaning is underway.
3. The Council has resources to mitigate the impact of HS2.
4. There is a strong desire to support all road users, hence the investment in the road network.
5. Work will continue to the development of cycle routes making travel safer for cyclists and pedestrians.
6. Traffic growth is a major challenge.
7. The Council will continue to work to encourage an increase in electric vehicle charging points.
8. There is an intention to bid for government funding for bike and bus schemes.
9. Casualty reduction continues to be a priority.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) –

1. Child poverty is on the increase. There is a need to review the child poverty strategy.
2. It is reassuring to see Cabinet and Corporate Board working together.
3. The Dedicated Support Grant is overly complex. Government needs to address this. The arrangements regarding the DSG and Schools Forum should be reviewed.
4. The amendment proposed by the Green Group leaves questions around transport and resources already spent.
5. The amendment proposed by the Labour Group contains many inconsistencies.

Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Heritage & Culture) –

1. Part night lighting has led to a 53% reduction of CO2 emissions over 5 years.
2. There is scope to reduce paper use for Council meetings.
3. It is planned to submit bids for funding to support sustainable transport and electric vehicle charging.
4. Tree planting will be encouraged.
5. The move of the museums collection to Hawkes Point is to be welcomed.
6. The Coventry City of Culture and Commonwealth Games will bring exciting activities to the region.

Councillor Corinne Davies –

1. It is important to ensure good special education needs services for disadvantaged families.

2. Autism diagnoses are taking too long as are those for mental health support for young people.

Councillor Caroline Philips –

1. The Labour proposals would lead to improvements to roads and footways.
2. The Council has not kept up with demand regarding highways.

Councillor Andy Crump (Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety –

1. The County Council invests extensively in fire protection.
2. An inspection of the Fire and Rescue Service is expected in 2020.
3. Any decisions on further expenditure on Fire and Rescue needs to be evidence based.
4. Investment is required on the funding of core staff in Fire and Rescue to ensure appropriate cover in all parts of the County.
5. Additional funding has been provided for casualty reduction.

Councillor Yousef Dahmash –

1. There has been an increase nationally in the number of children in care.
2. The Children's Change Programme now takes account of domestic abuse issues and has incorporated the Strengthening Families Programme.
3. It is important to stop young people from offending and re-offending.

Councillor Sarah Boad –

1. The additional funding provided in the proposed budget to address climate change amounts to only £800k per annum. This should be increased significantly.
2. Consideration should be given to the use of electric or hydrogen buses.
3. It is not possible to be carbon free as every process involves carbon.
4. Warwick District Council is showing leadership by proposing a £1 per week levy on residents to tackle climate change issues.
5. More funding is required to address child poverty.

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke –

1. There is a need to focus on what people really want.
2. People have major concerns over air pollution, but the Council has no working transport plans.
3. The local plans are presenting challenges as development is permitted that places pressure on the infrastructure. Eg the number of parking places at hospitals.

Councillor Clare Golby –

1. The desire to be carbon neutral can impact on the less well of. I.e. those who can least afford it.
2. At the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting it was stated that although waiting periods for services by RISE appear to be long, people do receive attention and care whilst on the waiting list.

3. Regardless of how much money is put towards supporting RISE there is still an issue regarding a national shortage of practitioners/clinicians.
4. In instances where additional road maintenance is required, this can be supported through members' delegated budgets.

Response of Seconders

Those who had seconded the original motion or amendments were invited to speak.

Councillor Helen Adkins (Secunder of the Labour Group amendment) stated:

- The original motion and the amendments all contain good points. It would be useful in the future if there were more collaboration on the preparation of the budget.
- The amendment by the Labour Group presents a balanced budget.
- In order to meet carbon neutral targets, it will be necessary, amongst other things, to review transport plans, introduce zero emission zones, incentivise businesses to be more environmentally friendly and recognise the link between healthy activities (eg cycling) and the environment.
- Schools need additional counsellors to support young people.
- Streetlights should be turned on if people, with particular circumstances, request it.

Councillor Keith Kondakor (Secunder of the Green Group amendment) stated:

- Stagecoach does not appear to want integrated transport.
- Any tree planting that is undertaken should use environmentally sound methods. Eg cardboard sleeves to protect saplings.
- The increase in the number of small vans on Warwickshire's roads is a cause for concern.
- Traffic levels have increased as people living in Warwickshire commute into Coventry.
- The NUCKLE scheme is important.
- As climate events become more extreme so greater investment is required. For example, storm drains should be made bigger.
- Investment is required to reduce crimes such as knife crime and drug related crime.
- Investment should be made into road safety.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet) stated:

- The Fire and Rescue Service is to be thanked for its work during the recent flooding.
- Regarding the £4m provided for climate change; This is a start. It will necessary to work with district and borough councils. The Warwickshire Climate Change Group must all work together.
- Additional funding is required for skills for employment.
- Investment is required in school improvement.
- Concerns over Stagecoach and RISE expressed by other members are shared.

Councillor Richard Chattaway (Leader of the Labour Group) stated:

- There is a case for committee meetings to go paperless.

- The Council has a resilience network. There is a case for an additional fire appliance in the county.
- It would be useful if the Liberal Democrat Group produced its own budget.
- The proposal to enhance expenditure on gully cleaning is welcomed but it is unclear when it was allowed to tail off.
- It is increasingly difficult for people to obtain places in care homes. In addition, hospitals are at their limit.
- The County Council pays less to foster carers than the private sector. This is unreasonable.
- The widescale introduction of electric vehicles will present major logistical problems.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers (Leader of the Green Group) stated:

- The commitment shown to the growth of the skills agenda by the Leader of the Council was to be commended.
- In order to develop bus services and work with service providers it will be necessary to expand the Council's public transport team.
- HS2 is a waste of money that is leading to destruction of the environment and communities.
- Work being undertaken to address homelessness is to be welcomed. However, more should be done to tackle the factors that lead to homelessness such as addiction.
- Gully cleansing initiatives are to be welcomed.
- Environmental issues can increase inequality. Climate change will affect all people but major climate events tend to have the greatest impact on the less well-off.
- Good government is about managing change well.

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader – Finance and Property) stated:

- Globally the incidence of absolute poverty has reduced over time. The direction of travel is good.
- Child poverty is exacerbated by family break ups, poor housing and unemployment.
- The Council is underspending, but the time of redundancies has now passed.
- The rate of inflation varies depending on the matter under review. For example, highways have witnessed inflation rates of around 28%.
- Right sizing will lead to a reduction of underspends as greater control is taken of budgets.
- The key concerns for people are adult social care and children's services.
- It may be possible to add more money to climate change initiatives if the government provides more.
- 5G is a new technology that offers a great deal of potential.
- HS2 is a problem that will use all the spare energy capacity in the area. This will leave little for charging points etc.
- The Council will support the establishment of an arm's length property development company which, it is expected, will build extra care housing and social housing.
- More money should be spent on skills development.
- More should be done to tackle addictions including gambling.
- The ultimate desire of the Council is to make lives better.

Vote

The meeting voted on the Labour Group amendment, which was lost 29 against, 8 for and 11 abstentions.

The meeting voted on the Green Group amendment, which was lost 29 against, 2 for and 17 abstentions.

A vote was taken on the Conservative Group budget proposals. A recorded vote was taken in accordance with standing order 31.4 and the proposals agreed as set out below:

For:

Councillors Barker, Bell, Brain, Butlin, Caborn, Cargill, Clarke, Cockburn, Cooke, Crump, Dahmash, Gilbert, Golby, Gran, Hayfield, Holland, Horner, Jenns, Kaur, Pandher, Parry, Reilly, Roberts, Sargeant, Seccombe, Shilton, Simpson-Vince, Timms, Warwick, C Williams, Wright

Against:

Councillors Adkins, Boad, Chattaway, Chilvers, C. Davies, N.Davies, Falp, Fradgley, Gifford, Holland, Kondakor, O'Rourke, Parsons, Philips, Rickhards, Roodhouse, Skinner, Webb.

Resolved

That Council agrees the 2020/21 Budget and authorises work to continue on ensuring the 2020-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy is aligned with and supports the delivery of the Council's ambitions as set out in the Council Plan 2025.

4. Any Other items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items.

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Chair