

Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 9 February 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Chair)
Councillor Jonathan Chilvers (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne
Councillor Jackie D'Arcy
Councillor Jenny Fradgley
Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher
Councillor Tim Sinclair
Councillor Andrew Wright

Portfolio Holders

Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety
Councillor Kam Kaur, Portfolio Holder for Economy & Place
Councillor Wallace Redford, Portfolio Holder for Transport & Planning
Councillor Heather Timms, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate & Culture

Officers

David Ayton-Hill, Assistant Director for Communities
Isabelle Moorhouse, Democratic Services Officer
Moises Muguerza Espino, Senior Transport Planner
Victoria Mumford, Principal Transport Planner
Alison Robinson, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Economy & Skills)
Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities
Margaret Smith, Lead Commissioner for Transport Planning
Scott Tompkins, Assistant Director for Environment Services
Nigel Whyte, Principal Transport Planner

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillor Dave Humphreys

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Chair's Announcements

The Chair informed the committee that the electric vehicle chargers item will be brought forward so officers could leave for another meeting.

The Chair informed the committee that he had received correspondence from several parish councils regarding the '20's Plenty' scheme; these parish councils will be invited to attend and speak at Cabinet in April where the 20mph will be presented.

The Chair proposed that the committee have an online discussion on the on-street parking proposals before its implementation at March's Cabinet. This was seconded by Councillor Jonathon Chilvers, livestreaming the meeting online would be investigated. Councillor Jenny Fradgley requested that the on-street parking group be invited to the meeting too.

(4) Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

2. Public Speaking

None.

3. Questions to Portfolio Holder

In response to Councillor Fradgley, Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder – Environment, Climate & Culture) informed the committee that prices in country parks did not increase during the pandemic and the price did not increase in Stratford Greenway for five years. Kingsbury and Ryton will not be increased because they already have day rates, the other three parks and the Stratford Greenway charge will be increased by 50p. This increase would be a day rate for the parks, and it would be variable for the greenway but it would add up to the same amount as a day rate for the country parks. Councillor Timms concluded that the decision will be made on the 18th February and she was happy to receive comments from other members.

(1) Economic Development Update

Alison Robinson (Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Economy & Skills)) noted that the Omnicron variant had emerged since November's meeting so the economy in Warwickshire was mixed due to the restrictions impacting the hospitality industry over Christmas. Business confidence surveys showed that despite increased sales businesses were concerned about 2022. There was a strong demand for the council's business support and employability and skills programmes, especially skills because of the number of vacancies in businesses as they struggled to recruit. The Community Renewal Fund (£2.7 million of funding received at the end of November for three programmes within Warwickshire) funded a project through the employability and skills team to be delivered before July 2022. The Community Renewal Fund programme included the Brighter Futures Project that has five strands of activity that were delivered to help Warwickshire that struggled with the job market during the pandemic. The majority of the funding for the Brighter Futures Project was to support people with learning

difficulties and disabilities into employment and helping employers make these adjustments. There was a rural bus tour which took young people around Warwickshire to explain the jobs in more rural areas. There was an E-Sports programme which is a key area in Warwickshire because of the university and this was a trial project to be investigated. Alison Robinson's team were focusing on skills and helping people who were outside the job market to fill business vacancies. They also had a fair chance employer programme that was designed to cover both problems (help people who find it more difficult to get into work and help employers who are struggling to fill vacancies adjust and shape their roles to try and fill the gap between the two). A lot of work was ongoing with the growth fund and WRIF (Warwickshire Recovery Investment Fund).

Following a question from Councillor Chilvers, Alison Robinson stated that a lot of apprenticeships could not start due to the face-to-face training needed. Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder – Economy & Place) confirmed that there were 500 apprenticeship vacancies in June 2021.

In response to Councillor Sinclair, Alison Robinson stated that they had some work on their website including videos around hospitality businesses and encouraging careers in the hospitality industry; however, more work was needed to fill these gaps. Most people becoming displaced because of the pandemic were over 50s so the team's next focus would be training mature people which was the trend nationally.

In response to Councillor Fradgley, Alison Robinson said that they engaged with career leaders at schools and colleges regarding career support. Councillor Fradgley noted the importance of young people making the career choices for jobs.

Following a question from Councillor Sinclair, Alison Robinson stated that the fair chance employer programme was designed to get employers to employ people who has been out of work including ex-forces and ex-offenders.

In response to Councillor Bhagwant Pandher, Alison Robinson stated that work through partners and online sessions were done to ensure as many people as possible accessed the community skills hub.

The Chair noted that all skills events should be advertised.

4. Update on Warwickshire's Bus Schemes

Nigel Whyte (Principal Transport Planner) stated that this note was an update on the note provided to the committee in September 2020 and was endorsed by Cabinet in October 2021. Bus patronage in Warwick was at 70% of the level it was pre-pandemic and the commercial sector in the bus market was supported by government in terms of the bus recovery grants. This funding was supposed to end in March 2022 but the local authorities were engaging with the DfT (Department for Transport) to extend this beyond April 2022 to help recovery. The West Midlands Combined Authority had been awarded nearly £50million from the DfT to become the first all-electric bus fleet in the country. Network West Midlands ordered 150 electric buses these will come online in the Coventry area and there will be further vehicle procurement which will include cross-boundary services into all Warwickshire boroughs and districts. This will be a five-year programme ending in 2024-25 and investment was expected into Warwickshire in 2023-25.

Warwickshire will receive £1.3million from the Capital Investment Fund to provide an on-street charging infrastructure for cross-county. The bus plan at the time of the meeting was to make improvements of the North-South corridor where cross-boundary services occur to reduce journey times. The mobility scheme was used to fund a demand travel service in rural areas west of Warwick like Budbrooke and parts of Kenilworth where you can book journeys on a mobile phone app like Uber; this will launch by the end of the financial year. The national Bus Back Better scheme was launched by central government in March 2021 to boost bus patronage to above pre-pandemic levels to push people to use buses instead of private cars. The National Bus Strategy committed the council work on an enhanced partnership which was implemented by Corporate Board in June 2021 and Cabinet in October 2021. The bus plan was done with the bus cross-party group who helped promote Warwickshire's bus survey which received 1600 responses. The next part of the bus strategy was to look at the 'hotspot' plan which was going out to consultation with the cross-party working group and bus operators, and this would change depending on the results of the public consultation which received 250 responses. A consultation for the enhanced Warwickshire Partnership Plan will be run next. The EP (enhanced partnership) scheme was recently launched by the council will be shared with bus operators and the working group. Defined minimum standards for bus/roadside information was being worked on and would be shared with the working group and bus operators before March 2022 and this define bus quality standards. Work was done with the borough and district councils to help buses deal with obstructive parking as well as where to spend money on bus improvements.

Maintenance of the network will be carried out as part of the annual bus service network review and this will look at gaps in the network and how they can be improved e.g. with feasibility studies, workplace parking levies and charging. These will be preliminary measures which could help improve bus services in terms of reduced journey times and the impact of congestion and to educate the public and members in terms of the benefits from these measures if they were delivered in the long-term. The approved us plan will have a three-year programme running until 2024/5 and cost £216million of which £152million will need to be provided by central government via bidding; £1.5million of which is for the national network and the rest will support the commercial bus network through the pandemic. The EP board is independently chaired, and the EP plan will be subject to minor revisions before submitted to the DfT in April 2022; Cabinet will receive the report in March 2022, it was reviewed by the legal team, and it will include the DfT's bus pass charter. The second the third EP schemes were being developed in partnership with bus operators and the working group, subject to the funding announcement from the DfT at end of February; the second EP scheme will include the bus priorities, demand responsive transport and the electric bus scheme. The EP schemes will include the first Warwickshire multiple bus ticket which will run like Oyster cards, and it will resolve the safety issue on the Leicester Road dual carriage in Rugby. The transport demand service is called 'Indigo' and currently runs in Aston Cantlow and Coleshill; these journeys were used for commuting, shopping and medical appointments. Both services were subject to a DfT bid to use transport to tackle loneliness and help promote social inclusion. There were waiting to hear from the DfT if they were successful in progressing this into the next stage.

In response to Councillor Sinclair, Nigel Whyte stated that the bus services TFG would dictate what they want funding to be spent on if the council receives a fraction of what they applied for.

In response to Councillor Fradgley, Nigel Whyte stated that the Indigo service could be used to transport people into town centres, this service will soon be available in Stratford and Rugby. Councillor Fradgley noted the importance of making buses accessible.

Nigel Whyte added that they received money from the Capital Fund towards the improving on-street charges on provisional voluntary charging infrastructure cross-county in the town and rural areas. Warwickshire had to do their own electric bus work for Rugby and North Warwickshire and the North South corridor didn't cover these areas.

Councillor Chilvers praised the strategy so far and concurred that the North-Couth corridor needed prioritising to enable travel between Nuneaton and Stratford via Coventry/Warwick University. In response to Councillor Chilvers, Nigel Whyte stated that the multi bus ticket would not be ready in time for the Commonwealth games because of distribution issues; the ticket should be rolled out by next financial year, subject to DfT funding and consultations with distributors.

In response to Councillor Pandher, Nigel Whyte stated that the Indigo bus service would replace buses running all day and would only be sent out when booked. Nigel Whyte agreed to circulate a note on how saving would be achieved. Scott Tompkins (Assistant Director – Environmental Services) added that they combine people's journeys together by working out a time of the day that works well for all the different journeys so it ran like a normal bus service and not like taxi.

In response to the Chair, Nigel Whyte said that the EP scheme would look at trying to level out bus tickets prices cross-county; bus services on the North South corridor will be the first to have a unified price on its route. Scott Tompkins added that there was a cross-boundary issue in the north of the county so some of the services that come out of Coventry are affected by the Combined Authority subsidising some of these services. Therefore, the service prices are cheaper than in Warwickshire, resolving this issue was being investigated.

The Chair noted the work being done and that should provide a better service for Warwickshire's residents.

5. Electric Vehicle Chargers

Margaret Smith (Lead Commissioner - Transport Planning) informed the committee that central government set a ban for the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles from 2030; therefore, her team had been working on understanding what needs to be done for the public to have the relevant charging infrastructure to feel confident to be able to switch to electric vehicles. There had been significant changes in terms of the level of charging infrastructure that will be needed; this was done as a phased approach by 2025 initially and then by 2030. The modelling work done considered that a lot of people will have the availability to charge at home. This looked at the publicly available charging network that will need to be available for the public which was very high level, and it set out the amount of charges needed as well as the types of charging points so people are aware of the range of different charging point types (rapid and slow chargers). It was estimated that these charging points would cost £6million to implement in Warwickshire so the team were investigating the level of involvement needed from a local authority and what the private sector will provide. In the interim period, the team looked at how they could bring forward an initial roll out phase for Warwickshire's town centres and car parks; the county partnered with the districts and boroughs to do this. The private sector was being worked with for on-street provision who do not control highway space; local authorities would step in here but the private sector would only provide these charging points if they are commercially attractive. Local authorities must look at this on a more equitable scale and ensure an even distribution. An uptake of electric vehicles is predicted following the ban, at the time of the meeting <1% of vehicles on roads were electric, this was expected to increase to 15% by 2025 and 40% by 2030. An increase in electric vehicles should lead to a decrease in emissions which will help Warwickshire achieve net zero carbon. It

was assumed Warwickshire's vehicle fleet will grow by 1.5 so measures would be needed to try and achieve net-zero, like active travel for short journeys, public transport, car share etc. The council successfully obtained just over £800,000 in funds, including 25% from the private sector. The council partnered with BP Pulse who rolled out 160 charging points cross-county over the last 18 months. With rolling out charging points, Warwickshire is now 'above average' country wide as of January 2022. Work had been done to see how many charging points the private sector would provide and how many the local authority needs to provide. Initial data following the first rollout will show, the length of time that people are charge at charging points, the most used charging points, total energy used, and the carbon savings made; this data will be reportable on a quarterly basis cross-county and this data would be used to work on the next steps i.e. identify areas with the highest demand for public charging which would help to prioritise the roll out of charging points going forward. The options for procurement were being reviewed for delivery of further phases of roll out and bidding opportunities for further funding through central government were being investigated. A pilot scheme using streetlights as charging points was being investigated as a way to provide a slow overnight charge in residential areas that do not have off-street parking. This technology had been rolled out and worked successfully in other areas so whether this was possible in Warwickshire was being investigated.

In response to Councillor Fradgley, Victoria Mumford (Principal Transport Planner) stated that they were working through legal agreements to get lamppost charging points in Stratford, but this was taking longer than desired. Victoria Mumford agreed to share an installation date for these when known.

Councillor Tim Sinclair suggested a task and finish group (TFG) to monitor the rollout of electric charging points; the Chair seconded this subject to officer capacity. The group would look at rollout including sites and involve public user groups.

In response to Councillor Sinclair, Margaret Smith confirmed that they had a webpage that provided answers to FAQs from residents, the rollout had been problematic due to finding the correct sites, how time intensive this work was and the need to review the delivery model going forward. Margaret Smith added that they will look at having a panel of electric car users to see what the public wanted/needed.

In response to Councillor Chilvers, Victoria Mumford stated that paying for charging would either be paid with a subscription service (paying a set amount each month and having unlimited charging) or 'trickle charges' would be generally cheaper than rapid charging. A charger in a lamppost would cost roughly £1200 each or £10-£12,000 per car park, but this varied depending on price, site, hardware and connecting to the grid.

Following a question from Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne, Margaret Smith said that they would have more of an idea with rolling out the charging points after three to five months of assessing what needs to be done for it to work.

Following a question from Councillor Sinclair, Mark Ryder (Strategic Director – Communities) agreed to consult with Rob Powell (Strategic Director – Resources) to look at the Warwickshire Pension Fund investing in the private sector companies that rolled out the electric charging points as this was a question from the treasury management team.

6. Road Space Allocation review

David Ayton-Hill (Assistant Director – Communities) stated that this work focused on the reallocation of road space that was done during the pandemic to create more space for social distancing in town centres. Part of this process included new monitoring measures and work will be done to improve monitoring equipment on the transport network. Artificial intelligence monitoring equipment within town centres was used to get this information. In early summer 2020, central government wrote to local highway authorities asking them to see if they could take urgent steps to improve social distancing space within town centres and provide space for active travel. People went back into town centres and shops in the summer of 2020 which would have caused crowds; central government asked for this space to be created within six to eight weeks of local authorities being asked in line with lifted restrictions were being lifted. The Road Safety and Road Engineering teams came up with temporary plans for the town centres to effectively create more space for pedestrians and cyclists. The district, borough and town councils were engaged for this to agree on what should be done to provide space. When installed these measures were monitored to see if they worked and adapted if they needed changing. In Stratford a one-way system was implemented on Bridge Street with a cycle lane cycle and a 20mph speed limit. There was a part-time closure of Holly Street in Rugby to increase cycling and walking space, but this was criticised by the residents, so this was quickly changed. A similar incident happened in Atherstone as it did not work for the area. Kenilworth had a small closure and a temporary 20mph limit as did Nuneaton and Bedworth which did not need any roads closed. Warwick needed several road closures and cycle lanes were implemented. Opinions of these measures were diverse with residents liking the closures and businesses not due to the lack of through traffic; these different views would happen with every scheme. The AI monitoring equipment was brought in before the road closures to help with other work. The cameras were small and put in areas like Leamington to monitor issues; sensors were put on the parade which was completely pedestrianised during the project. The sensors monitored how people used the space, interacted and whether social distancing was being observed; the sensors did not take any personal data. The equipment could tell if people were in groups and monitored the areas for four weeks. The sensors showed that people moved more freely and interacted more when the roads were closed/the area was pedestrianised. Weather condition did not affect these interactions and people mainly stayed on the pavement even when the road was closed. The AI could also monitor footfall and how many pedestrians come through a space in a set amount of time which would help resolve town centre issues in the future as the AI sees how space is used. In Leamington when the roads reopened, footfall and cycling on the parade, and other town centres, drastically decreased on weekends and weekdays. This AI monitoring was more accurate and cheaper than other methods. Providing these spaces was a good trial for towns that want these areas who want their town centres pedestrianised permanently; but there was the clash of interests between residents and businesses. A levelling up bid was put in for Stratford to install a scheme that was like the Bridge Street closure. Work was done with the Stratford Strategic Partnership to implement this. The AI monitoring was being invested in to work on safer sustainable active travel around schools; schools are worked with to try to encourage students and parents to use a more active and sustainable mode of transport. Schools are given guidance, information, and training education to encourage this behaviour change; the monitors were being used to see if they were successful in changing this travel behaviour and what needs changing/improving if they were not. The monitors also showed the routes pupils and parents used and whether they used designated crossings or not. Jaguar Landrover (JLR) did a lot of work to increase their employment space and they had several section 278 agreements to make changes to the road network because of their impact on the local road network. They contacted the council regarding transport movements and the sections 278 agreements as they were now 'hybrid-working'; the council were using the AI

monitors to measure road movements to create an evidence base to see what an appropriate mitigation approach with the developer was. The council's capital schemes were being used to try and reduce congestion and improve active travel and the AI sensors were used to monitor the success of this. ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) was being deployed to monitor air quality and car emissions in areas.
about how people use spaces

The Chair noted that every town centre was different to road space allocation was tailored for each area. He reiterated that the monitors cannot pick up personal information.

In response to Councillor Sinclair, David Ayton-Hill stated that they struggled to get data from businesses because the views were so differing. Moises Muguerza Espino (Senior Transport Planner) added that they were going to start analysing the impact on businesses by cross-referencing the collected data and ask big businesses directly how the road closures impacted them so the council can correlate this data. For health data, the team analysed car emissions which reduced during road closures so this would have positively impacted resident's health; this data could be provided if requested.

Following a supplementary from Councillor Sinclair, David Ayton-Hill stated that road closures were removed when there were excessive complaints and when the increasing traffic was causing hazards or excess congestion.

In response to Councillor Fradgley, Moises Muguerza Espino stated that cyclists used the pedestrianised areas when the roads were closed e.g. on Leamington Parade, cycling increased by 35% during the road closures.

In response to Councillor Chilvers, David Ayton-Hill confirmed that JLR was helping the council build an evidence base for the road usage agreements with the new technology. Anecdotally the hospitality and leisure industries were against the road closures as this affected their deliveries as well as independent businesses, however, this data needed to be cross-referenced. The team will share bid information and they found out that if people are cycling/walking in town centres then they were 12 times more likely to spend money in businesses there. Moises Muguerza Espino added that the AI systems could also calculate journey times over 24 hours which will be used to inform future schemes e.g. section 278 agreements. Discussions with businesses and the correlated data will be shared with town councils.

Following a question from Councillor Sinclair, David Ayton-Hill stated that central government gave local authorities temporary traffic regulation orders so they would have the power to implement these road closures. These plans were worked on and assessed before a short-term implementation to see if the plan worked. The AI technology would be useful to help improve the plans before the trial implementation.

Following a supplementary from Councillor Sinclair, Moises Muguerza Espino confirmed that the technology could monitor pedestrians and cyclists separately as well as different types of vehicles, it will soon be able to classify e-scooters and mobility scooters.

In response to Councillor Pandher, David Ayton-Hill stated that as the collected data was anonymised it would be difficult to use it to enforce parking regulations outside schools to stop congestion. However, they could use the new civil parking enforcement contract to try to tighten parking regulations outside schools, as well as cameras on cars who monitor parking issues.

In response to Councillor Baxter-Payne, Moises Mugerza Espino stated that data already provided a sample to calibrate microsimulation models and predict how schemes and development mitigations would pan out. The new AI technology provides a more accurate continuous data over a longer period that will help to calibrate the microsimulation models more accurately. After five years, the developers' implications can be assessed to see if they came true to their assumptions and recalibrate the models accordingly. Air Quality models requires ANPR data and is calibrated with emissions information from the districts and boroughs. Air Quality can be forecasted depending on the mitigation scheme.

The Chair noted that this information would be useful to resolve future issues in town centres. In response to the Chair, Moises Mugerza Espino stated that they were using AQMAs data for their modelling, but the information was slightly outdated. They were working with the districts and boroughs to be able to get "real time" collection of data.

7. Quarter 2 Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarterly Progress Report (April 2021 to September 2021)

Scott Tompkins stated that there were 54 key business measures in the report, 11 of which are covered by the committee. Five were on track, four were not and two are not reported on until the end of the year. One of these two areas is road conditions which was expected to be on track as the council received good results from the recent National Highways Survey. The other one of the two is journeys on public transport which is not on track but this was following the national trend of fewer bus passengers cross-country due to Covid-19. Crime rate figures, especially burglaries, remain below expected levels due to home working and they were below the 2021 levels. Not on track was the unemployment rate which rose to 4.4% due to the pandemic and labour market issues which was in line with national figures, the national average was 5.2%; the percentage of residents in work aged 16 to 64 was 4.7% higher than the national average due to Warwickshire's high tourism rate. Household waste being recycled/reused dropped from 51% to 47%; this was likely caused by the introduction of the green waste charging in North Warwickshire and Stratford. The percentage of biodiversity net gains in Warwickshire remained static.

In response to Councillor Fradgley, Scott Tompkins could not confirm but believed cybercrime in Warwickshire would have followed the national trend and increased. However, cybercrime officers within the Trading Standards team had been doing a lot of work on online scams. Councillor Fradgley requested statistics on these figures.

Councillor Andy Crump (Portfolio Holder – Fire, Rescue & Community Safety) added that the Trading Standards team has cybercrime advisers that provide regular updates, and they issue these updates on social media to spread awareness. He stated that councillors have a duty to protect the vulnerable who are more likely to be exploited. Community Safety will realign resources to tackle serious crime and there will be a new duty under the Serious Crime Bill and money will be set aside to try and discourage people young people being enticed into county lines. Domestic violence was another concern and it was important that people know the hotline number (0808 2000 247 and 0800 408 552). He concluded that violence impacts all aspects of life and more work was needed despite numbers being down.

In response to Councillor Sinclair, Scott Tompkins stated that the 54 key business measures were brought in in the Council Plan and these replaced the initial 73. Councillor Sinclair asked for information on how these measures were changed¹.

Following a supplementary from Councillor Sinclair, David Ayton-Hill stated that the waste team run several promotions on a waste composting and run courses telling people how to do it. Discounted compost bins are offered everything is pushed via social media and waste education work.

Councillor Chilvers informed the committee that he was informed by officers that purchase of home composters increased a lot and they were happy with the progress.

In response to Councillor Chilvers, Scott Tompkins said that he would get someone from the ecology team to write a briefing note on biodiversity.

In response to Councillor Pandher, Councillor Crump stated that the Warwickshire Safety Partnership get details on where the money has been spent what has been achieved. A community safety survey is done annually to see how safe residents how safe they feel and what improvements were needed. Money is received from central government so the successes from this money being spent is reported back to them. This feedback could be shared with the committee if requested. Councillor Sinclair supported this idea. The Chair suggested that this be a briefing note. Scott Tompkins suggested that the minutes from the Safer Warwickshire Partnership meeting be shared with the committee as this would cover the update on the Safer Streets Funding.

8. Communities OSC Work Programme

In response to Councillor Sinclair, it was confirmed that a briefing note in April will provide information on the successes of schemes implemented. A full report will come back to a future meeting date when completed.

Councillor Pandher requested that a note on average speeds picked up by speed cameras in Warwickshire and speed camera policies.

9. Urgent Items

None.

The meeting rose at 16:18

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Chair

¹ The 73 measures presented were part of the State of Warwickshire report which is the evidence base for the New Council Plan and not a new set of KBM's. The 54 existing KBM's are currently being reviewed as part of bringing the Performance Management Framework in line with the new Council Plan and these are due to go to Corporate Board and then onto Cabinet in March.