

Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 13 April 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Chair)
Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne
Councillor Jackie D'Arcy
Councillor Jenny Fradgley
Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher
Councillor Jan Matecki
Councillor Mandy Tromans
Councillor Martin Watson

Portfolio Holders

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

Officers

David Ayton-Hill, Assistant Director - Communities
Christopher Cresswell, HS2 and Community Engagement Lead
Gafoor Din, Section Manager - Traffic Control & Information Systems
Tristan Hall, Section Manager (Delivery Lead) Project & Programme Management
Isabelle Moorhouse, Democratic Services Officer

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillor Dave Humphreys who was substituted by Councillor Martin Watson
Councillor Andy Wright who was substituted by Councillor Jan Matecki
Councillor Tim Sinclair who was substituted by Councillor Mandy Tromans
Councillor Jonathon Chilvers
Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Economy & Place)

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Chair's Announcements

The Chair informed the committee that item 5 had been pulled due to officer illness.

Councillor Heather Timms stated that the key thing to note was that the Sustainable Futures Strategy will be brought forward with the Council's targets and the contents of this note will be covered in that strategy. This will go to Cabinet in October 2022.

(4) Minutes of Previous Meeting

i) 9th February 2022

The minutes were approved as a true and correct record.

ii) 3rd March 2022

The minutes were approved as a true and correct record.

2. Public Speaking

None.

3. Questions to Portfolio Holder

In response to Councillor Jenny Fradgley, Councillor Timms stated that she will obtain an update on the Planet Graduate scheme for those awaiting one.

In response to Councillor Jan Matecki, Councillor Wallace Redford agreed to get a briefing note on how the new demand response bus service will work. The Chair asked for it to be sent to all members of the OSC.

Following a question from Councillor Fradgley, David Ayton-Hill stated that following Warwickshire's unsuccessful B-SIP bid, Warwickshire were attempting to set up a meeting with the DfT (Department for Transport) to see how they could improve. There will be future bidding opportunities. Councillor Fradgley requested that members be kept up to date with this progress as they were receiving questions from residents.

(1) Economic Development Update

David Ayton-Hill highlighted that:

- The economy was doing ok as businesses had adapted to Covid-19, but they were struggling with supply chain shortages, labour shortages and energy price rises
- The latest quarterly economic survey done with the Chamber of Commerce showed that 95% of businesses said they struggled to recruit staff. To resolve this, the employability and skills team worked with groups of young people (including care leavers), people with specific needs, ex-carers and ex-offenders to bring them into the labour market
- People aged over 50 were struggling to re-enter employment so work was being done with them too
- The Council managed to obtain £3 million of funding for the Community Renewal Fund to be used on projects like employment skills which will run until December 2022
- The spring statement mentioned the 'Levelling Up Fund' (Round Two), bids for this were open until July 2022
- There were some changes in the classifications of Warwickshire's

districts/boroughs. They were labled '1, 2 or 3', 1 meant it needed most levelling up and 3 the least. Nuneaton was moved from 2 to 1 so the Borough Council was being worked with to develop a bid for the levelling up fund

- The Shared Prosperity Fund from central government was set up to replace European funding streams. There would be a focused work period when announcements and allocations were made
- Investment plans will be put forward in the Summer of 2022

In response to Councillor Martin Watson, David Ayton-Hill stated that they were working hard to get HS2 to employ more people from Warwickshire. Schools were being worked with too as HS2 would provide employment in the county for the long-term.

In response to the Chair, David Ayton-Hill noted that Nuneaton being moved into category 1 meant that they would more likely get funding from central government, but the underlining economic indicators showed that Nuneaton struggled during the pandemic. He agreed to get more information on this. The Chair noted that it was important to show that these issues were being addressed.

(2) EDS Dashboard Update

Tristan Hall informed the committee that the EDS (Engineering Design Services) Dashboard showed the biggest capital transport schemes that were being delivered in terms of development and construction. It also included smaller schemes with a high level of interest being delivered in the short to medium term. Since November 2021, the layout was changed to incorporate some of the larger Section 278 (S278) schemes as well as the capital schemes; these were added into the top 10 list of schemes. He noted that it was not a comprehensive list of all the schemes being developed by EDS and was just a 'snapshot' in time; the list would change when progress was made, and details changed. ICT colleagues were being worked with to determine the best way to make this information available electronically.

In response to the Chair, Tristan Hall stated that he would chase up with ICT when the list would go live online.

In response to Councillor Watson, Tristan Hall said he would try get an update from project managers when members could not get an update on their smaller schemes.

A discussion followed around delegated budgets.

4. HS2 resources and reimbursement

Christopher Cresswell stated that the note contained information on the main funding streams in terms of mitigating and adding benefits to the impact of HS2 in Warwickshire. These streams were the: Community & Environment Fund, the Business & Local Economy Fund, the Road Safety Fund and the Woodland Fund. The main funding streams were the Community & Environment Fund (CEF) and the Business & Local Economy Fund of which there were 29 successful projects in the county and close to £1.5 million had been paid out through this. The Road Safety Fund from the DfT allocated £8 million which was spent on applicable projects, and this was on the second tranche of funding.

In response to Councillor Jackie D'Arcy, Christopher Cresswell stated that the HS2 CEF was open until one year after the construction of HS2, therefore, there was no confirmed end date yet.

5. Climate adaption

This item was presented online before the meeting. Papers for it can be found on the public website.

6. Transport Scheme Evaluation

David Ayton-Hill informed the committee that this showed what kind of evaluation work was done with transport schemes and how it was used to ensure that schemes were developing/delivering what they should. The approach varied depending on the scheme e.g. DfT schemes have significant monitoring requirements in them and these would be set out in the grant conditions i.e. cost against travel time benefits, congestion, input into the economy and impact on carbon emissions. Some schemes will have a particular requirement like monitoring air quality.

Warwickshire County Council capital projects do not have such a structured monitoring evaluation framework, but the transport and finance teams were working on this to ensure a better evaluation. Larger schemes have a lot more evaluation compared to smaller schemes. A consistent evaluation scheme for all schemes will be sought.

The impact of casualty reduction schemes was always tracked in terms of KSI statistics (killed and seriously injured). These schemes were implemented where there was clear evidence/a cluster of accidents that were attributable to common factors. Once implemented, these schemes would be tracked over the next five years to ensure that injury collisions were reducing and any 'lessons learnt' were implemented.

The new cameras had enhanced monitoring capabilities that could track traffic using AI; this included cyclists and pedestrians. This would be fed into future monitoring arrangements for active travel schemes to ensure that these schemes were influencing active travel.

This item was due to come back in full with examples of these schemes including how schemes were presented and developed. This will include: a DfT scheme, a major capital investment scheme and casualty reduction scheme.

In response to Councillor Watson, David Ayton-Hill said that he did not think developer schemes were monitored individually. However, JLR (Jaguar Landrover) were worked with on their Section 278 schemes, and this would be tracked. All road safety schemes (including developer ones) went through a road safety audit.

In response to the Chair, David Ayton-Hill confirmed that there were three audits done with these schemes, one before, one during and one after. If things were not up to standard then they were changed.

Following a question from Councillor Bhagwant Pandher, David Ayton-Hill stated that for casualty reduction schemes, they looked at all accidents in an area and not just KSIs. All personal injury collisions were monitored countywide and every KSI had an in-depth review with the police, so they know what caused it. There had been five personal injury collisions within 100 sites in Warwickshire over three years; these were the priority areas. All decisions were evidence led where collisions could be seen.

Councillor Andy Crump concurred with this and added that most road accidents in Warwickshire were caused by people not paying attention or while they were under the influence of drink/drugs. Accidents in Warwickshire were too high, but they had decreased gradually. Road safety

education officers were planning to go into every school in Warwickshire to spread road safety education.

Following a supplementary from Councillor Watson, David Ayton-Hill agreed to have a note stating how changes were driven for this would be useful to share with parish/town councils and residents.

In response to Councillor Matecki, David Ayton-Hill confirmed that the increase of costs was starting to affect schemes, but existing ongoing schemes should be covered by the contractors. New schemes would need rethinking if they were unaffordable. The DfT gives a specific amount of funding for their schemes to be delivered and if it went over the amount given, then the council would need to make the difference.

In response to the Chair, and delays or changes from schemes would need to be obtained from Scott Tompkins.

7. Pedestrian Crossings Criteria

Gafoor Din (Section Manager (Delivery Lead) Traffic Control & Information Systems) presented a PowerPoint and highlighted the following points:

- Maintenance on the crossings was done by a third-party company.
- The current policy was set out in the 2011 Local Transport Plan (LTP).
- Justification for crossings is done by looking at pedestrian movements, vehicle movement, the road's layout. This is done as part of a full evaluation.
- Pedestrian crossings are in high demand (a request every two weeks) so they need to be justified when implemented.
- The County Council criteria for a Puffin crossing requires an average of 1,000 two-way vehicle flow per hour and 90 pedestrians crossing the road per hour; over the four busiest hours of the day.
- The LTP formula was $P \times V^2 =$ or greater than 0.9×10^8
- Multiplying factors are used for pedestrians trying to cross the road for an example their age, disabilities, etc. This is the same with vehicles including bikes. The road's width, accident data and the average waiting time to cross the road. These factors are considered in the formula.
- P = the number of pedestrians crossing in an hour - weighted by age and ability. This was scored with the following multiplier factors: Adult=1, >16=1.5, Elderly=2, Disabled (including cane users) =3.
- V = the flow of traffic in PCUs (passenger car units), lorries had a bigger multiplying factor as they take up more road space. Bikes' (pedal and motor) multiplication factor is set at 1.
- Road speed limits are considered in the formula, higher speeds means that it more difficult to judge when it is safe to cross.
- The number of injuries for pedestrians in the last three years on a prospective road are considered.
- Roughly it takes crossings 20-26 seconds for the traffic lights to change so pedestrians could cross the road, so if they have to wait longer than 20 seconds to cross the road without a crossing then this would be a bigger factor for the implementation formula.
- If a site is approved, then more data is gathered with a 12-hour survey (7am-7pm) looking at the two-way traffic flow and any pedestrians that cross the road 50 metres

either side of the planned location. The average from the four busiest periods is obtained.

- All the data is worked out via the formula, and this provides a justification percentage. Any that are justified are put forward for the capital funding scheme.
- Crossings could also be implemented as part of: - safer routes to school schemes, casualty reduction schemes, developer funded schemes, facilities installed on key pedestrian/cycle corridors and funded by an area committee delegated budget.
- Roughly there are one injury accident annually on a pedestrian crossing in Warwickshire, which is lower compared to other authorities.
- New schemes can be assessed in four different Road Safety Audits stages, Stage 1 - feasibility stage, Stage 2 – detail design stage, Stage 3 - when it is open and used by the public and Stage 4 – 12 to 24 months after implementation.
- Some DfT schemes need to be monitored for five years after implementation
- Members could fund crossings from their delegated budgets in their specific areas, were there is significant demand but did not meet the criteria.
- In 2019 the DfT released new site assessment criteria, but Warwickshire was already doing this as part of their 2011 policy. This included: crossing difficulty, vehicle delay during peak periods, road capacity, local representations, costs, and vehicle speeds
- There were 266 crossings in Warwickshire and 147 traffic signals, 64 sites were over 15 years old which meant that the signal heads/poles needed replacing.
- The 2004 Traffic Management Act stated that anything on the network had to be work effectively/efficiently i.e. with vehicle detectors fully functional.
- The 1984 Traffic Regulation Act stated that all pedestrian crossings had to be properly maintained.
- The 2010 Equality Act stated that all crossings had to be accessible and usable for everyone. New ways of pushing the button to cross was implemented at some sites including apps to push the button within two metres of a crossing, and motion sensors.
- All crossings had Equality Impact Assessments were necessary.
- Feasibility studies for crossings were about £1, 1000 as this was done by a third-party company with motion sensor cameras
- New puffin crossings costed about £85,000 and were about £720 to maintain annually. Some crossings have BT connection lines to monitor them.

Councillor Matecki praised the presentation and said the formula should 'equal or greater than' as it would never be 'equal to'. In response to Councillor Matecki, Gafoor Din agreed regarding the formula and added that the current council policy takes into account 'suppressed demand' (when there are residents either side of the road) and this is considered as part of the formula. It was important to do a site visit to ascertain what the difficulties are at any specific location and the local member would be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

In response to Councillor Watson, Gafoor Din said that a crossing would be implemented if it was 90% justified but sometimes if a site was around 80% justified it would be considered and it would be built if members put some of their budget towards. Crossings could be removed if they were no longer justified, like in Barford but a full consultation would be done under the Equality Act before this is removed. Simi cards are being considered for remote monitoring crossings rather than BT lines (where there was good coverage). The Highway Code was considered in the policy and its impact was considered at specific sites.

Following a question from Councillor Bhagwant Pandher, Gafoor Din confirmed that the approximate period of 1 year for a scheme to be implemented after all the data is collected and everything is designed and assessed, there was still the legal requirement to advertise it; objections to it need to be reported to the Portfolio Holder and addressed. There were a lot of schemes that needed to be implemented but this was restricted because of road space; this caused three schemes in Leamington to be delayed because of the Commonwealth Games. If a scheme was redesigned, then this would need to go out again for consultation. If a crossing scheme is justified but cannot be funded by the Council or S278 funding, then members would be asked if they wanted to fund it with their delegated budget.

Councillor Fradgley thanked Gafoor Din for his quick responses when she had crossing issues raised. In response to Councillor Fradgley, Gafoor Din clarified that the 'greenman' period was an invitation to cross period and not the time to cross the whole width of the road after this period the red light for cars should stay on for a maximum period of approximately 20 seconds and during this period the lights will not change until the pedestrian are still crossing the road, their movements are detected by the sensor mounted on the traffic signal poles.

In response to Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne, Gafoor Din confirmed that the Council tells developers where crossings should be as part of their development. They would push for S278 funding as this meant developers would pay the fully cost for the implementation of the scheme plus a commuted sum of £36,750 to the Council for maintaining the crossing for 15 years plus one upgrade.

In response to Councillor Matecki, Gafoor Din stated that there was no set distance that was needed between crossings, but this would be subject to a Road Safety Audit. There were two crossings close together on Bowling Green Street because one was for the school and the other one for the car park. However, they try to limit the number of crossings they put on the network near each other.

The Chair thanked Gafoor Din for attending the meeting.

8. Quarter 3 Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarterly Progress Report (April 2021 to December 2021)

David Ayton-Hill informed the committee that all the details in the report were found on Power BI. Crime rates had decreased, and more businesses had been supported through the business skills support service post-Covid-19. Delays caused by Covid-19 impacted some of the performance measures e.g. waste collections and residual waste increases. Warwickshire was slightly off the UK average for unemployment.

In response to Councillor Matecki, David Ayton-Hill stated that it depended on the subject matter whether the arrow going up/down was a good thing. Warwickshire was historically better than the England average for unemployment rates (normally there would be 6% more and this was a 'positive gap').

Councillor Matecki said that he was more concerned with Warwickshire than the national statistics. He suggested that for the future, the report should just include Warwickshire's statistics. The Chair suggested that this be replaced with the differential within Warwickshire.

Councillor Crump informed the committee that legally, Warwickshire had to compare their local information to other forces by HMICFRS (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services).

9. Communities OSC Work Programme

The Chair informed the committee that an adult education item will go to the committee in June.

Members of the committee noted work programme.

10. Urgent Items

None.

The meeting rose at 15:37

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Chair