

# County Council

Tuesday 19 March 2024

## Minutes

### Attendance

#### Committee Members

Councillor Christopher Kettle (Chair), Councillor Jeff Morgan, Councillor Brett Beetham, Councillor Margaret Bell, Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi, Councillor Barbara Brown, Councillor Peter Butlin, Councillor Jonathan Chilvers, Councillor Jeff Clarke, Councillor John Cooke, Councillor Andy Crump, Councillor Yousef Dahmash, Councillor Piers Daniell, Councillor Jackie D'Arcy, Councillor Tracey Drew, Councillor Judy Falp, Councillor Jenny Fradgley, Councillor Bill Gifford, Councillor Clare Golby, Councillor Brian Hammersley, Councillor John Holland, Councillor Dave Humphreys, Councillor Marian Humphreys, Councillor Andy Jenns, Councillor Justin Kerridge, Councillor Sue Markham, Councillor Jan Matecki, Councillor Sarah Millar, Councillor Chris Mills, Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell, Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher, Councillor Caroline Phillips, Councillor Wallace Redford, Councillor Will Roberts, Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE, Councillor Ian Shenton, Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince, Councillor Tim Sinclair, Councillor Richard Spencer, Councillor Heather Timms, Councillor Mandy Tromans, Councillor Robert Tromans, Councillor Adrian Warwick, Councillor Martin Watson and Councillor Andrew Wright

### 1. General

#### (1) Apologies for Absence

Councillors Jo Barker, Richard Baxter-Payne, Sarah Boad, Sarah Feeney, Pete Gilbert, Kam Kaur, Dale Keeling, Daren Pemberton, Kate Rolfe and Mejar Singh

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

None.

#### (3) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 8 February 2024 were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair.

#### (4) Chair's announcements

##### (a) Vice-Chair of Council

The Chair informed Council that the Vice-Chairman had written officially to the Chief Executive and the Leader to advise them that he was stepping down as Vice Chair. The next

meeting was the annual council meeting on 14 May 2024 when appointment to the role would normally occur.

### **(b) Other Announcements**

The Chair remarked on the local occasions he had recently attended to recognise the important contribution of the voluntary sector.

### **(5) Petitions**

The Chair invited the presentation of a petition entitled “Demand 3 Warwickshire County Councillors Resign & SEND Funding is Prioritised” by Ellie Costello.

In presenting the petition, Ms Costello explained that she was speaking on behalf of SEND Crisis Warwickshire. SEND Crisis had been working with Mel Hawes, a parent/carer based outside the county who had started the petition which had reached over 30,000 signatures, demonstrating the interest in SEND and the plight of SEND families nationally.

SEND Crisis UK had also been approached by Disability Rights UK to draft a letter to the Leader of the Council to highlight concerns about culture and decision making in relation to the development of policy and practice about and for disabled children and young people and their families. Since culture was a driver for decision making which informed policy and practice, it was clear there had been a negative impact following comments made at the January meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Disability Rights UK letter had sought to address Warwickshire’s culture towards disabled children and their families and sought assurance that the proposed mandatory programme of disability rights and SEND awareness would be accessed by all county councillors and repeated at least every two years, with processes in place for Group Leaders to be notified if any members of their group delayed undertaking the training. She noted that the letter also called on central government to increase, prioritise and protect SEND funding.

Ms Costello reminded Council of a Motion in September 2020 to lobby the government regarding SEND funding provision and she requested an update from each group leader on their individual progress since this was agreed.

Ms Costello concluded her speech with hope for a new era of understanding, collaboration and care.

In response, Councillor Isobel Seccombe, on behalf of the Portfolio Holder, thanked Ms Costello for attending and took delivery of the petition.

### **(10)Public Speaking**

Elisse Novak, a local resident, was invited to speak in relation to the motion “SEND Training for Elected Members” (item 3).

Ms Novak, parent to a disabled child, welcomed the motion seeking mandatory training,

noting that this provided an opportunity for culture change following comments made at the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 January 2024 which she noted had weakened the relationship between the Council and the community. She requested that any training on SEND issues be coproduced between the Council and families, children and young people and include guidance about acceptable standards of conduct and discipline. She sought clarification on where the responsibility for maintaining standards and discipline for elected members lay, particularly around what actions constituted political censure and what was a council process. She concluded that proper implementation of the training would evidence a turning point to recent events and demonstrate a commitment to rigorous standards and the restoration of damaged relationships.

## **2. Director of Public Health 2023 Annual Report**

Councillor Margaret Bell introduced this report, the theme of which was the impact of domestic abuse. The theme was explored through the pathway of a fictional character, based on real life experiences, which enabled the far-reaching effects of domestic abuse to be highlighted. The aim of the report was to raise awareness and demonstrate the need for a partnership approach. Councillor Andy Crump seconded and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse welcomed the report and thanked the Director for Public Health for shining the spotlight on domestic abuse and the complexities of the subject. He noted the report also discussed the general health of Warwickshire and expressed continued concern regarding the figures for self-harm and mental health, which he considered were persistent issues that needed to be addressed. He looked forward to implementation of the recommendations and the positive impact that this would have.

Councillor John Holland echoed support for the report. However, he questioned the implementation of its recommendations as he did not consider that the recommendations of the 2022 report, in particular relating to free school meals for children had been effected. He also considered that the preventative and supportive actions were impeded by funding reductions to key service areas such as Sure Start Childrens Centres and School Nurses and a comparatively low number of police per capita of population.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe congratulated the Director of Public Health on her report and noted that the reports always generated interest. She particularly noted challenges around the use of social media by children and young people and the link to mental health. Responding to Councillor Holland, Councillor Seccombe explained the budget pressures of implementing free school meals, and noted that the recommendations in the report were not specific to the Council.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers welcomed the effective narrative approach to the report and applauded the inclusion of practical advice for individuals concerned about family members or friends. He asked Councillor Bell how she would like to see the second recommendation in the report, relating to Supporting child victims of violence and abuse, taken forward over the coming year.

Councillor Judy Falp reflected on her involvement in domestic homicide reviews and emphasised that abusive relationships were found in partnerships of all types not just husband and wife, and the number of instances of abuse, on average, it took for a victim to seek support. She requested

that the report be shared with district and borough representatives and suggested training for all council staff.

Councillor Millar echoed the comments of Councillor Holland regarding funding reductions to preventative services and what she viewed as the consequences being demonstrated in the report. She emphasised the importance of implementing the recommendations and funding the future of children.

Councillor Jackie D'Arcy also commented on the need for funding for free school meals which had been highlighted in the 2022 report. Turning to the 2023 report and the public health improvements and challenges, she noted the levels of alcohol admissions per 100,000 population and violence crime offences per 100,000 population which were higher in Warwickshire than the rest of England. She questioned if this was a pattern and if the reasons for this had been explored.

Councillor Barbara Brown remarked that the seriousness of the issues outlined in the paper was only matched by what she considered a paucity of funding for preventative services and early intervention. She suggested that the remedial focus should be on prevention and early help and support.

Councillor Marian Humphreys considered it would be helpful for councillors to have access to awareness raising materials for use in their divisions.

Councillor Brett Beetham also noted that domestic abuse was not exclusive to husband/wife relationships and welcomed the opportunity presented to highlight the help available.

Councillor Peter Butlin reflected on the changes that had taken place in society in recent years and the impact on mental health and wellbeing. He recognised the stress that was sometimes caused by financial worries and the impact this could have on households. He noted the work being undertaken by the council to secure high employment levels and affordable housing in the county but that work to alleviate the issues set out in the report needed to be done within budget.

Councillor Caroline Phillips emphasised the need for partnership working, particularly with the Police. She considered that sometimes the domestic homicides that were reported in the media could have been prevented and particularly highlighted the long-term impact of abuse on mental health and wellbeing for those growing up in abusive households.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Andy Crump thanked the Director of Public Health and her team for creating the report. He referenced recent television series which also sought to highlight the many facets of domestic abuse. He quoted statistics from the Police that 38% of recorded incidents against the person related to domestic abuse, which demonstrated it was a significant problem. Speaking as the Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety, which encompassed domestic abuse, he explained some of the work that was ongoing to raise awareness and change outcomes. He also noted the challenges faced by victims in reporting crimes and subsequently receiving appropriate support. Councillor Crump reminded Members of the work that the Council was undertaking to provide safe accommodation and support child victims, and the efforts of the Police through the creation of DART (Domestic Abuse Response Team) and further training. Councillor Crump also shared the details for national support helplines which he urged councillors to share widely.

Councillor Margaret Bell responded to the debate noting that the report addressed a complex issue which required all partners to work together and provided a focus for that work. She went on to :

- Acknowledge the key role that the Police had to play;
- Point out that progress against the recommendations of the 2022 report was included at Chapter 3 of the 2023 report which had resulted in an investigation into, and pilot for, the provision of free school meals;
- Note the importance of identifying child victims and providing them with appropriate support in order to break the cycle of domestic abuse; and
- Advised on the work of the Drug and Alcohol Partnership to address the statistics set out in the report.

**Vote:**

A vote was held. The recommendation was unanimously agreed.

**Resolved:**

That Council supports the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023.

**3. Notices of Motion**

**(a) SEND Training for Elected Members**

Councillor Barbara Brown moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Jerry Roodhouse:

“We recognise as a Council that all children have the right to an education that meets their needs and helps them to flourish. As a Council we recognise that there is now greater knowledge of the support needs of children and families. We also recognise that these needs have changed over time with greater understanding of the issues and will continue to grow especially around needs associated with health and mental health.

This Council and Councillors have statutory duties and make judgements and influence decisions about how Special Educational Needs provision is implemented within Warwickshire. Our decisions always have an impact, and can have a life-changing effect on children and their families.

Considering the growing pressures, it is vital that our knowledge and understanding is current. This needs to include increasing our shared understanding of the challenges facing parents and children, alongside looking towards best practice to improve what we do.

Therefore, the County Council resolves itself to the upskilling of Councillors by providing annual mandatory training for all elected members. Before serving on any panels, scrutiny committees and other bodies that handle the provision of Childrens Services members will need to have attended the training and development sessions. These sessions will be co-produced in partnership between Warwickshire County Council's SEND services and

families of children with SEND. This training and development should be delivered as soon as possible, and no further than three months away.”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Brown stated that the decisions made by Council had a profound effect on the life chances of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. She shared her personal circumstances and experiences of SEND and stressed the importance of all councillors having knowledge and understanding of the issues being faced. She emphasised the need for mandatory training that was co-produced with parents and carers and an enhanced level of training for those sitting on scrutiny bodies with a remit that covered SEND.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

**Amendment:**

Councillor Tim Sinclair proposed the addition of the words “subject to the business of scheduled Council panels, scrutiny committees and other bodies continuing in the interim whilst the training of councillors is undertaken” to the end of the final paragraph of the original motion. Councillor Brett Beetham seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak.

The amendment was accepted as friendly.

**Debate:**

Councillor Bill Gifford welcomed the motion and considered it important for all members to attend training, not just those on committees whose remit included SEND, in order to better support and understand residents seeking assistance. The training, therefore, was not only about decision-making but also about being equipped to support parents or signpost them to appropriate sources of assistance. He also reflected on the benefits of previous training opportunities and the positive benefits that children with SEND brought to school culture and the wider community.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe thanked the public speakers and those who had engaged with her in recent weeks. She noted the commitment of the Council’s officers to SEND and the Council’s positive track record on delivering development opportunities and continuous learning for its Members. She welcomed the proposed training which she considered to be a step forward and noted that three dates for training had already been circulated and she urged councillors to accept them. This training was being developed with input from Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice and IMPACT (the Young Person’s Forum for SEND). Councillor Seccombe also informed Council that she had been exploring opportunities to develop a workshop with input from parents/carers, young people, teachers and other professional in order to create a lasting resource and record of the Warwickshire journey.

Councillor Judy Falp recognised the additional challenges of being a parent to a child with special needs. She also reflected on previous training opportunities and acknowledged that some committees already required a regular training commitment specific to their remits so she welcomed the broadening of this practice that would result from the motion.

Councillor John Holland supported the motion and noted the sanction of exclusion from the specified committees and panels in the event of non-attendance at the training. He supported the

approach to the training and urged for the involvement of Councillors Brown and Roodhouse in the co-production efforts.

Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell welcomed proposals for training and urged councillors to book their places as soon as possible. She supported the proposal for annual training as she recognised that the terminology associated with SEND changed regularly. She particularly appreciated co-production efforts as this would give a voice to communities not normally heard.

Councillor Brett Beetham welcomed the proposed approach to the development of training and emphasised the need to listen to and learn from Warwickshire residents. He shared his personal experience of caring for an individual with autism and explained that even with this experience, he understood his knowledge was not complete as individual needs differed.

Councillor Tracey Drew also welcomed the motion and the co-production for training to draw on the expertise of those with lived experience. She considered it would be important to draw on the wealth of expertise available and emphasised the importance of understanding terminology and the use of language to focus on the support individuals required rather than the health issues involved as there was a clear difference between physical or learning difficulties and ill health.

Councillors Marion Humphreys, Andy Crump and Tim Sinclair also shared their personal lived experiences and encouraged councillors to attend any training offered.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Jerry Roodhouse explained that the essence was about respecting individual difference and creating awareness. He noted the funding challenges faced in the SEND arena and associated campaigning by the Local Government Association and County Councils Network. He considered that co-production was important to create a culture of information and engagement and an understanding of the lived experience in relation to SEND. He considered that it would be helpful for training sessions to be held away from Shire Hall and suggested that the audience could be widened to colleagues at district and borough councils. He concluded that it was imperative for councillors to understand the societal change that was happening and the demand for SEND services.

Responding to the debate, Councillor Brown thanked the chamber for its support for the motion and considered that efforts in co-production would provide an initiative and opportunity that could be revisited to maintain a level of expertise and evaluation of ongoing performance.

**Vote:**

The motion was unanimously supported.

**Resolved:**

We recognise as a Council that all children have the right to an education that meets their needs and helps them to flourish. As a Council we recognise that there is now greater knowledge of the support needs of children and families. We also recognise that these needs have changed over time with greater understanding of the issues and will continue to grow especially around needs associated with health and mental health.

This Council and Councillors have statutory duties and make judgements and influence decisions about how Special Educational Needs provision is implemented within Warwickshire. Our decisions always have an impact, and can have a life-changing effect on children and their families.

Considering the growing pressures, it is vital that our knowledge and understanding is current. This needs to include increasing our shared understanding of the challenges facing parents and children, alongside looking towards best practice to improve what we do.

Therefore, the County Council resolves itself to the upskilling of Councillors by providing annual mandatory training for all elected members. Before serving on any panels, scrutiny committees and other bodies that handle the provision of Childrens Services members will need to have attended the training and development sessions. These sessions will be co-produced in partnership between Warwickshire County Council's SEND services and families of children with SEND. This training and development should be delivered as soon as possible, and no further than three months away, subject to the business of scheduled Council panels, scrutiny committees and other bodies continuing in the interim whilst the training of councillors is undertaken.

### **(b) WM Investment Zone**

Councillor Martin Watson moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Peter Butlin:

“The Investment Zone represents a multi partner project that has the potential to bring very large-scale inward investment to the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region. Over recent years, the proposition has advanced to the point of national support being imminent. The potential to bring forward such a large-scale project was recognised some time ago as beyond the scope of just Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Council in whose Authorities most of it resides. We therefore recognise the value of this becoming a West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) priority and the ability for them to bring the large-scale investment into the region to realise this project. Jobs for a new generation and wider opportunities for businesses will undoubtedly flow should this move forward, bringing growth that we should all welcome.

This Council wholeheartedly welcomes the project and would wish to place on record its thanks to all those partners and wider agencies for their support, including Warwick University and our Business Community through their various agencies.

This Council resolves to write a letter of support to the Secretary of State for BEIS (Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy) and to invite Coventry City Council, Warwick District Council and the WMCA to co-sign the same, endorsing our full support and backing as partners wishing to deliver this project for the region and the country.”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Watson emphasised the role of the WMCA in making the initiative a reality and the importance of the opportunity that was being presented in terms of job creation and growth.

Councillor Peter Butlin seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak.



**Debate:**

Councillor John Holland commented on the differing forms of governance at regional, county and district levels and the importance of working together. He emphasised the importance of creating highly skilled job opportunities and the involvement of local universities to educate individuals who were suitable candidates to take up those roles. He also commented on the environmental impact in terms of increased traffic and the application of the Local Transport Plan.

Councillor Sinclair noted the county's success in the region and encouraged partners to focus their attention on the overall achievement that was being sought.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers welcomed the motion and the opportunity presented by the creation of the WM Investment Zone and extended his thanks to the previous administration of Warwick District Council for their role in bringing this initiative together, and also to WMCA and Coventry City Council.

Councillor Jenny Fradgley noted the positive impact that the initiative would bring but expressed caution and the need to maintain scrutiny on the development.

Councillor Bill Gifford recognised the negotiations that had happened behind the scenes. He considered that there were learning opportunities for other regions in terms of the level of growth that had been generated in Warwickshire and Coventry; particularly noting that there were more industrial jobs per head in Warwick District than in Birmingham. Councillor Gifford hoped that this would prove to be a beneficial initiative for all involved.

Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi welcomed the proposal and the partnership working that had taken place.

Councillor Peter Butlin emphasised the opportunity that the WM Investment Zone offered to the region, not just in terms of jobs but in the potential to attract other industries to the area, and cited the example of the MIRA Technology Park. The highways infrastructure to support the Gigafactory was already in place and there were clear links with Devolution and the skills agenda with local universities being key to the development. The initiative was for the people of Warwickshire and improving job prospects going forward.

Councillor Martin Watson emphasised the outcomes of the initiative in terms of employment, attracting highly skilled jobs to the region and future proofing technologies. He welcomed the addition of Warwick District Council as a non-constituent member of the WMCA to support governance of the WM Investment Zone and ensure that Warwickshire voices were heard.

**Vote:**

The motion was carried by a majority (one abstention).

**Resolved:**

The Investment Zone represents a multi partner project that has the potential to bring very large-scale inward investment to the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region. Over recent years, the proposition has advanced to the point of national support being imminent. The potential to bring

forward such a large-scale project was recognised some time ago as beyond the scope of just Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Council in whose Authorities most of it resides. We therefore recognise the value of this becoming a West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) priority and the ability for them to bring the large-scale investment into the region to realise this project. Jobs for a new generation and wider opportunities for businesses will undoubtedly flow should this move forward, bringing growth that we should all welcome.

This Council wholeheartedly welcomes the project and would wish to place on record its thanks to all those partners and wider agencies for their support, including Warwick University and our Business Community through their various agencies.

This Council resolves to write a letter of support to the Secretary of State for BEIS (Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy) and to invite Coventry City Council, Warwick District Council and the WMCA to co-sign the same, endorsing our full support and backing as partners wishing to deliver this project for the region and the country.

#### **4. Member Question Time (Standing Order 7)**

(a) Question from Councillor Caroline Phillips to Councillor Andy Crump:

“Can the Portfolio Holder confirm what steps are being taken to ensure that the DPH recommendation on working together to reduce domestic abuse will be delivered jointly with Warwickshire Police?”

Councillor Crump responded that domestic abuse affected all parts of society and everyone had a role to play in its reduction. He explained that the Police were putting significant resources into this issue, including the creation of the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART). The Director of Public Health’s report acknowledged that everyone had a role to play in tackling domestic abuse and partnership working was a key approach. Partners were taking the issue very seriously.

(b) Question from Councillor Jerry Roodhouse to Councillor Martin Watson

“With the UK in recession and last year marking the weakest year for economic growth since the financial crisis there needs to be a focus on providing investment and levers to facilitate growth. The Institute of Directors have revealed that 73% of its members lack confidence in the ability of local authorities to provide effective business support. What assurances can be provided that decision makers at WCC will support organisations like CW Growth Hub who have built an excellent reputation over the last decade and provide them with the tools needed to ensure that the necessary levers are used to maximum effect to stimulate and maintain growth at a local level.”

Councillor Watson responded that he was proud of the Council’s work to support businesses and the reputation it possessed for business support. The landscape of business funding had changed over the previous 18 months with European funding changing and the disbanding of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). However, the Warwickshire LEP had performed well and had been restructured and retained and developed with the Growth Hub which would continue to be funded in partnership with Coventry City Council for another two years. Programme funding of £3.6m had supported over 770 businesses in the region across 19 industries.

By way of supplement, Councillor Roodhouse asked for assurances that there was no reduction to funding for the Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub over the next three years. Councillor Watson expressed the view that although there were changes to the structure, the additional funding from the UKSPF and other funding opportunities had led to an increase in funding not a reduction. He agreed to provide specific figures.

(c) Question from Councillor John Holland to Councillor Peter Butlin

“There is a Court Order in place regarding surface water run off from the Cape Road car park. Will Councillor Butlin stay involved until the Order is discharged?”

Councillor Butlin responded that he had received regular briefings following the flooding issues affecting Cape Road residents. The Council had undertaken to conduct flood alleviation work and was working with Severn Trent to develop a futureproofed solution for any future development schemes for the Cape Road car park.

(d) Question from Councillor Tracey Drew to Councillor Jan Matecki

“Now the new Kenilworth School and Sixth Form is open, a significant number of issues remain unaddressed, in particular around nearby road safety and active travel. What is happening and when can residents, students and councillors expect to see the long-anticipated action on the ground. Please see list of concerns in the letter you received today from Kenilworth Town Council.”

Councillor Jan Matecki replied that officers had engaged with Kenilworth Town Council and Kenilworth School over the course of the previous year and held meetings on site to discuss concerns. He had requested officers to write a full response to the Town Council’s letter. Councillor Matecki pointed out that the decision to relocate the school was made by the school and Warwick District Council and therefore improvements to the highway infrastructure to accommodate the school were the responsibility of the school, rather than the County Council. The Council would continue to work closely with the Town Council and the School on this matter and the safety of school children would be a top priority when considering the safe access to school.

(e) Question from Councillor Sarah Millar to Councillor Jan Matecki

“Could the Portfolio Holder provide an update on the budget available for mending potholes in the county. How much additional budget is Warwickshire expected to receive from the repurposing of the HS2 budget between now and 2032 (from the £1.2bn allocated for the West Midlands)? How much does this breakdown at per year between now and 2032?”

Councillor Matecki responded that Warwickshire was to receive additional funding of £2.056m each year for the next eleven years for highway maintenance as part of the money being repurposed from HS2. This funding was specifically for maintenance works on highway assets including roads, footways, street lighting, bridges, traffic signals and highway drainage. Whilst none of the funding would be used to directly repair potholes, a substantial proportion was likely to be spent on road surfacing schemes which would prevent pothole formation over the long term. It was to be determined exactly how the funding would be spent but the team was looking at and prioritising some high-cost maintenance schemes that were typically not affordable from the annual government grants for maintenance. A significant proportion of the following year’s funding

would go towards three long stretches of resurfacing works on the A444. A data-led approach would be used to target the areas of worst road condition for future years.

Councillor Matecki explained that potholes were repaired using a combination of revenue funding, as well as capital funding. Generally, the revenue funding was used for reactive repair, and the capital funding was used for pro-active repairs to larger areas where potholes would likely form. For 2023/24 the budget for revenue defect repair gangs was £1.970m. In addition, approximately £1.75m of capital would be spent on small patching works.

In the current financial year 7,890 potholes had been repaired across the network. Warwickshire had a strong reputation for making repairs and was ranked 4th out of 30 peer authorities in the National Highways and Transportation Survey for overall highways maintenance, condition of highway and how quickly potholes and damaged roads were dealt with.

(f) Question from Councillor Jonathan Chilvers to Councillor Isobel Seccombe

Councillor Chilvers asked the following question without notice:

“The public speaker, Elissa Novak, asked about the distinction between actions of political parties or groups in regard to their members being separate to the actions of the Council which she stated had caused confusion in the context of events since the Children & Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in January. In a situation like we’ve had, could you clarify the distinction between the role of the political party/group and the role of the council’s own procedures.”

As Councillor Seccombe was not in the chamber at the time the question was posed, Councillor Butlin agreed that a written response would be provided.

## 5. Any Other items of Urgent Business

None.

The meeting rose at 12.19pm

.....  
Chair

## Appendix

**COUNCIL – 19 MARCH 2024****ITEM 4 - MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

**In response to a question from Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Councillor Martin Watson provided the following written response:**

The C&W Growth Hub's total income last year from all sources (including central government grant, local authority contributions and contracts) was £798,024, against costs of £732,640, thus creating a surplus of £65,384. The forecasts for 2024/25 and 2025/26 are for income of £790,560 and £776,560 respectively, which should allow the Growth Hub to have a balanced budget with a small surplus.

If we look specifically at funding for Warwickshire (recognising that funding provided is often ring-fenced geographically, including the grant from central Government), the level of funding has actually increased significantly. In 2022/23 the funding available for delivery in Warwickshire was £383,500. In 2023/24, this increased to £496,500 (a 29% increase), and for 2024/25 and 2025/26 will be £481,000 and £451,000 respectively. The funding for delivery in Warwickshire at the end of the current business plan period is 18% above that which was available in 2022/23.

It is of course important that this funding generates effective and appropriate outputs and outcomes, and we work closely with the Growth Hub to review and manage performance against a set of Key Performance Indicators (focused on business engagement and effective referrals into appropriate business support programmes), and provision of funding is linked to this performance.

**In response to a question from Councillor Jonathan Chilvers, Councillor Izzi Seccombe provided the following written response:**

Any decision on the whip is for me to consider reflecting of course on all evidence available.

This page is intentionally left blank