

**Minutes of the Meeting of Warwickshire County Council
held on 15 October 2019**

Present:
Councillor Nicola Davies (Chair)

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

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Jo Barker.

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

With reference to motion number 1, Councillor John Holland and Councillor Bill Gifford declared an interest being impacted by proposals for changes to residents' parking permits.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2019

Council considered the draft minutes from the meeting of 25 July 2019.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2019 be approved as a correct record.

(4) Announcements

A series of announcements were made to Council.

1. The recent death of former Warwickshire County Councillor Doug Hall was announced. Doug Hall represented the Council from 1973– 1988. He also served for many years on Rugby Borough Council (serving Brownsover Ward) and as a Parish Councillor.

Councillor Alan Webb stated that he had known Doug Hall for many years. He was a truly committed public servant who worked hard to get things done for his constituents. Councillor Izzi Seccombe spoke on behalf of the Conservative Group recognising that when a person stands for public office, they put their lives on hold. Councillors Richard Chattaway and Councillor Jerry Roodhouse echoed these views.

2. The recent death of Bob Meacham OBE, Independent member of the Council's Audit and Standards Committee, was announced. Councillor Alan Cockburn stated that Bob Meacham sat as an independent member of the County Council's Audit and Standards Committee from May 2008 until August of this year. For 10 years between 1981 and 1991 Bob Meacham was Leader of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council being awarded an OBE in 1986 for services to local government. In addition to his public Service, Bob Meacham was a keen and talented motor racing driver campaigning Lotus, Jaguar and Volkswagen cars over the years.

Council stood in tribute to Doug Hall and Bob Meacham.

3. Councillor Nicola Davies (Chair of Council) informed the meeting that she had recently attended the opening of the Veterans' Centre in Nuneaton. This, she observed was a good example of the delivery of the Armed Services Covenant. Councillor Bill Olnor thanked the Chair for attending the event emphasising that military veterans have a range of experiences that can present challenges at any time in their lives. It would be good, he concluded if there was more than one such centre in Warwickshire. Councillor Bob Stevens explained that the Veterans' Centre had originally been established in the offices of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. That arrangement had come to an end and new premises were identified. The move to the new facility had been supported in terms of materials and labour by Balfour Beatty.

(5) Petitions

Dr Alex Jones presented a petition concerning the proposed K2L cycleway. She stated,

“Thank you for inviting me to present the petition for the K2L cycle route between Leamington Spa and Kenilworth, on behalf of three local cycling groups, Cycleways, Kenilworth Cycle Group and University Bicycle User Group. Our petition achieved over 3000 signatures this summer.

When signing the petition, people commented that they used to cycle between the towns but were now afraid because traffic has become faster and heavier, drivers expressed frustration that cyclists on the road hold up rush hour traffic, parents said how much they would like to have a safe cycle route particularly at weekends, students enthused that they would be able to visit the neighbouring towns more easily in the evening.

In addition to signatures, Warwick University has expressed its official support for K2L, in a letter to WCC from the pro-vice chancellor, Simon Swain, and we understand that Chiltern Railways will also write soon, since the southern end of the route could improve commuter access to Leamington rail station. K2L is supported by Leamington Spa Town Council and has received attention in local papers and was mentioned in a parliamentary committee by our MP for Warwick and Leamington, Matt Western. Jeremy Wright, MP for Kenilworth and Southam, also has expressed strong support.

The proposed K2L route is a segregated cycle path parallel to the A452 between north Leamington to Kenilworth via Rocky Lane. K2L would dramatically improve cycle access between these two towns, benefiting schools, the university, and business parks. Additionally, shop and restaurant owners in Kenilworth could expect more local business, similar to studies commissioned by Transport for London that show that traffic reduction in retail areas benefits local retail.

Our county suffers from some of the worst air pollution in the country and one third of UK's CO2 emissions come from transport (Dept Energy figure). These problems are caused by two different type of pollutants, but both can be improved by cleaner transport. Furthermore, cycling to school or work can enable people to increase their regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. Physical inactivity directly contributes to 1 in 6 deaths in the UK, the same number as smoking, creating a burden on health services. It is time to prioritise infrastructure for healthy sustainable transport.

The provision of cycle routes makes good financial sense, as the Dept of Transport recently noted, investments in walking and cycling on average yield £5.50 of benefits for every £1 invested. This is excellent value for money, and a far higher benefit-to-cost ratio than many large road and rail schemes. Investment in K2L would be a useful contribution to WCC's strategy to move to a low carbon transport system.

On 25th July this year, the WCC declared a climate emergency. Warwickshire needs a coherent and comprehensive cycle network. Let K2L be the start of a bold and necessary new strategy in low carbon transport for the county. This is an ideal opportunity for you to demonstrate responsiveness to public opinion and take action to address the climate emergency.

To conclude, the proposed K2L cycle route between Leamington Spa to Kenilworth has strong public support and this a scheme meets all of WCC's policy objectives. We look forward to receiving your response and hope to publicise the construction of K2L on our social media accounts".

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) thanked Dr Jones for attending the meeting and presenting the petition. Councillor Clarke promised that a full response will be provided by the County Council to Dr Jones.

(6) Public Speaking

The Chair welcomed three members of the public to the meeting, namely Mrs Ellen Boylin, Mrs Mags Sinclair-Bailie and Mr Phil Gregg. All were present to address Council regarding potential changes to the residents' parking scheme.

Speaker 1 – Mrs Ellen Boylin

“Good morning Madam Chair and thank you for the opportunity to address you all on the problems we foresee with the proposed changes to our visitors permits.

We appreciate it doesn't involve Rugby, it's the whole of Warwickshire that is currently permitted. Firstly, we feel these proposed changes to the visitor permitting are very unfair, unjust and totally unworkable. At the moment the details are very sketchy to say the least. We also feel it been an invasion of our privacy to have to log each and every visitor.

And who will be registering with yourself? The County Council or NSL who it has been outsourced to, and to try and limit just to 50 visits per year is just unacceptable on so many levels. Is that 50 hours, 50 actual visits or 50 days? It is not clear and at what cost?

At the moment, we all feel it feels very much like “Big Brother” is watching us. I've queried this with the council and Mr John Rollinson assures me that the council has no interest in how many visitors we actually receive. So, in which case we are asking why are we having the register them at all?

We have a lot of minority groups within the Rugby borough and I'll leave my fellow neighbour here to address these issues in more detail when he speaks but I would like to give you a couple of examples from people who have contacted me.

Number 1 is a single mother with two children, and she is concerned because she only currently has a resident's permit which is £25 a year but she cannot afford a visitor's permit which is also £25 a year. But as under the current proposal she wouldn't be able to afford anything, but also as a single mum she occasionally needs help from her parents but has no visitor permit to give them. Equally her parents cannot risk the chance of getting a parking ticket. I'm sure those who are in the room who are parents and grandparents will acknowledge that children come with various risks i.e. they often need to be taken to a doctor's appointments, hospital appointments etc. so a car is a definite necessity.

My second example is an elderly neighbour who is very worried and upset, because she currently has a visitor's permit just so her son can visit her for one hour a week to bring her shopping. This group I'm very concerned about. The elderly are often very lonely as well and rely on visitors. This lady has no computer or smartphone so how is she meant to register her visitors under the new proposal? This question has been asked to the Council and I think I am right in saying that a phone line will be set up for those people with no internet access, but it will only be manned Monday to Friday 9-5pm.

Again, this is limiting people to when and how they visit and restricting one of the most vulnerable user groups. Also, there's the problem with people who are unregistered carers for their family members. Within our group we have a lady who visits her father four times a day every single day. Under these proposals are 50 visits. This lady would easily get through her entitlement very quickly and we also gather that once the entitlement is used up for that year there were no chance to buy any more, which we find totally unacceptable.

The parking situation has been made worse by the amount of HMOs in our area and I'm sure Rugby is no exception. One near to me has five cars. I raised this very issue with our local MP Mark Pawsey back last year and pointed out that no one was keeping track of how many permits were issued as opposed to how much space is available the space is not stretchable is not an elastic, the terraced houses on the streets are where we have to work with what we've got".

Speaker 2 – Mrs Mags Sinclair-Bailey

"I intend to speak about the service overall and the warden patrols. The service we are getting already, well we don't get the service we pay for. The existing system is inefficient in its costings and erratically enforced through both public and journalistic freedom of information inquiries I am informed that the scheme costs £2 million to administer.

Everyone acknowledges the wardens are rarely seen, surely the question is how can this be run more competently or is it really necessary at all? Rather than just deciding to increase the costs across the board to some of the poorest homeowners in our area. Just this week a local resident had a conversation with an NSL warden who informed him that in Rugby there were three or four wardens patrolling with average street check between 1 per week, maybe more if they're lucky. He went on to say that if the scheme becomes paperless, the physical scanning of the registration plates would take longer than having a site of a paper permit in a window which would actually extend the time taken to check a full road full of vehicles resulting in the end in less roads been checked overall.

Concerning the wardens, they are not from our area. They drive in and out of our town using their vehicles adding to the congestion that the county claim they want to reduce. They do not know or understand the local people or their needs; when the scheme was run by Rugby Council the wardens knew the area and the nuances regarding each road.

Warden patrol times are always during the day time when a large majority of residents' vehicles are not in their streets but after 5pm there is not a sign of a patrol regardless of the fact that most of the streets are actually restricted until 8pm. The struggle to park in any terraced road whether permitted or not, is draining and frustrating at any time after 5 or 6 pm therefore having a permit is of no benefit.

Finally, the origin of the parking scheme. Historically the permits were introduced in an attempt to control parking near the Rugby railway station, specifically in and around Abbey Street.

This aspect of the suspected sale of visitors permits in this area is the reason that the Council are imposing changes to the whole visitors' scheme across the town. I'm told by John Rollinson that in some cases permits have been revoked when caught selling visitors passes.

In my opinion there should be a weightier penalty than that to pay for contributing to the hardship of their neighbours. Parking is already overstretched close to a rail service it will only become more fraught as our town is rapidly expanding.

I suggest the council re-evaluate the scheme and consider the precedent already set. In Elsee Road in Rugby each vehicle there has a permit specific to that one street. Could Abbey Road and its area benefit from this idea or be just be better served? Or you could shrink the size of the zones, reducing the number of streets where each permit is valid, this would alleviate spaces being taken in the station area by residents who maybe live further away but are using their permits to access the station".

Speaker 3: Mr Phil Greg

"I want to tell you about the effect of the Warwickshire County Council parking permit proposals on those who are less well off in Rugby. They are disadvantaged by income, by age, by ethnicity, by language barriers, by lack of education.

In Rugby these groups are more prominently represented in the areas where permits are required than in the more affluent suburbs where parking is free. These disadvantaged groups will experience several problems. One, the complex nature of the parking proposals, this scheme is unwieldy, difficult to understand. One of its requirements, has been said, is to predict an unknown level of future usage. I've been well educated, and I find this scheme daunting.

Problem two, remoteness of administration. The administration of this scheme is remote from these disadvantaged people in two ways. Firstly, because the scheme is a county scheme, and secondly because it's administered by a private company only reachable by electronic means. This renders it inaccessible to these groups. In Rugby the previous scheme was administered locally. Users could walk into a local office and talk to the person responsible. For people in these groups that would be a far more accessible solution.

Problem three, the lack of computer technology. The proportion of these groups in Rugby who do not have access to computers or smart mobile phones is higher than the 10% quoted for the general population. t, they will have great difficulty in complying with the new online system as my colleague has said even if the parking permit internet site were reliable which currently it is not.

Problem four. Cost. Many households, we predict, will be unable to afford the number of parking permits they need at the proposed prices. If they need two permits, they will only buy one and so on. They will then use up the small number of non-permit parking spaces causing greater chaos in our town.

To sum up, these disadvantaged groups need sympathetic treatment they do not need a faceless corporation riding roughshod over the difficulties in their everyday lives that they are already struggling to cope with. For a Council which prides itself on its standards of equality this scheme risks breaching those principles”.

The three speakers were thanked for their contribution. The issue would be raised again as a motion later on the agenda.

2. Warwickshire County Council Brexit Preparation

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Leader of Council) moved the report and recommendations. She was seconded by Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader – Finance and Property) who reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Helen Adkins (Deputy Leader – Labour Group) highlighted the possible impact of Brexit on social care and homelessness asking what actions were proposed to mitigate against these.

Councillor Bill Olnier welcomed the work being carried out to assess the potential impact of Brexit. Regarding social care and the need to protect the vulnerable he stated that it will be of great importance to ensure these people are kept fed. In addition, Councillor Olnier observed that Brexit could have a significant impact on social care staffing as this area of employment relies heavily on those from the rest of Europe.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) reminded Council that it had previously discussed the potential impact of Brexit on small businesses. He reported that mixed messages concerning potential shortages of certain products have been circulated with people being particularly concerned over that possibility of shortages of medicines. It was reported that Rugby Borough Council is examining “settled status” and how it will impact on people in that area.

Councillor Richard Chattaway (Leader of the Labour Group) stated that some reports have suggested that 30000 people in Warwickshire could be directly affected by Brexit. He cited a school where the majority of the foreign language teachers are from mainland Europe. In addition, a significant number of County Council support staff are from outside the UK. Councillor Chattaway called for contingency arrangements to be made known adding that in his area reports of hate crime had increased. The threat of Brexit related scams was highlighted. Trading Standards will have a key role in tackling these. Finally, it should be recognised that many “ex-pats” will seek to return to the UK. A significant number of these will be elderly, having medical conditions requiring attention.

Councillor Dave Parsons supported the comments made by Councillor Jerry Roodhouse adding his concern that consideration could be given to a points-based immigration system.

Councillor Keith Kondakor welcomed the report but expressed a sense of not knowing what is happening. Warwickshire relies heavily on the motor and agriculture industries. A downturn in these could see a significant reduction in jobs. Reductions in the restaurant and building trades could lead to the failure of major contracts.

Councillor Sarah Boad (Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) noted that Coventry Airport at Baginton is classified as a port. She asked that information be provided on what actions are proposed for it. That a by election is scheduled for Warwick District was noted. Constituents are angry at the lack of progress and there is a risk that someone will be injured as a result.

Councillor Peter Gilbert called on politicians to support the democratic process. Councillor Maggie O'Rourke echoed concerns over the future of social care provisions adding that she was proud to be at a meeting that was well ordered.

Councillor Clive Rickhards requested a break down of how the monies provided by central government to assist the Council in its Brexit related work will be utilised.

Regarding the possible increase in Brexit related scams Councillor Peter Butlin informed Council that consideration is being given to adding additional resources to Trading Standards' budget. Regarding the potential impact on agriculture Councillor Butlin observed that these are unclear. He added that the key will be to ensure that people are kept informed. A major problem is the indecision that is being displayed.

Councillor Seccombe agreed with Councillor O'Rourke's observations on the behaviour of politicians. Regarding the status of Coventry airport as a port, Council was informed that officers are working with Warwick District Council on this. It was agreed that settled status is of major importance and that help and support should be provided. Extra efforts will be made to protect vulnerable people.

The recommendation was put to the vote and was agreed unanimously as set out below.

Resolved:

That Council notes the approach and progress made by the County Council in preparing for Brexit on 31 October 2019.

3. Warwickshire Youth Justice Plan 2019/20

Councillor Jeff Morgan (Portfolio Holder for Children's Services) presented the plan to Council explaining that it was something that the whole authority should be proud of. The document had been endorsed by Cabinet and sent to the Youth Justice Board. Councillor Morgan had visited the Youth Justice Team at their office in Nuneaton and spoken to most of the staff there. He had been most impressed by their work. It was noted that children in care and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are not overly represented in the data. This is contrary to what some people believe to be the case.

Councillor Pam Williams seconded the recommendation and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers (Leader of the Green Group) welcomed the stability of the budget available for the team and noted the low number of first-time entrants and reoffending. Councillor Gilbert suggested that the key is to find meaningful employment for young offenders thus breaking the pattern of criminality. This view was echoed by others.

Councillor Pam Williams observed that early intervention is important to avoid patterns of inappropriate behaviour developing.

The recommendation was put to the vote. It was agreed unanimously.

Resolved:

That the Warwickshire Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2019/20 be adopted by Warwickshire County Council 2018-19.

4. Addition of Two Developer-Funded Schemes to the 2019/20 Capital Programme.

Councillor Butlin explained that although some members may not necessarily agree with the proposals before Council, legal advice is that any refusal to cooperate and agree the schemes' addition to the Capital Programme would be unlawful.

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning) seconded the recommendation and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Judy Falp acknowledged the position the Council was in but expressed her disappointment that major planning applications that result in major disruption are being approved on appeal. With reference to the A425 Councillor Chilvers expressed his dissatisfaction at the mitigating measures proposed adding that for future schemes more consideration should be given to them.

Councillor John Holland stated that the knowledge that the County Council has little control over the schemes in question served to strengthen his resolve to vote against them. He added that Warwick District Council had refused the development sites to the south of Warwick, but its decision had been overruled. In addition, it was noted that none of the major development sites in the local plans is close to a railway line. The A452 development will draw traffic off the M40 motorway and into Leamington Spa. The only hope, he concluded, is to work to improve air quality in Warwick town centre. Regarding the A452 Councillor Adkins noted that the development had resulted in the loss of many trees. She challenged whether this had been necessary.

Councillor Kondakor suggested that it is important to consider how to move people sustainably with minimal additional infrastructure for cars. The evolving local transport plan should focus on public transport and cycle way provision. In addition, it is important to consider lifetime maintenance costs when assessing the suitability of proposed schemes.

Councillor Alan Webb called on the Portfolio Holder to provide a report on examples of schemes that have encountered problems in their implementation and the impact that these have had on tax payers. In response, Councillor Clarke noted that as all such schemes are fully funded by developers there is no cost to tax payers.

In concluding, Councillor Butlin reminded Council that the time to challenge major developments is the planning stage. It is the district and borough councils that are the planning authorities. Developers are required to enter into a bond agreement so that if they face financial difficulties the Council is protected.

The recommendation was put to the vote. It was agreed with five members voting against it. There were no abstentions.

Resolved:

That Council gives approval to the addition of the following two schemes to the Capital Programme for 2019/2020:

- A425 Banbury Road and A452 Europa Way, Warwick. Developer – Barwood Land. Approximate value £3.5 million.
- B4632 Campden Road, Long Marston. Developer – CALA Homes. Approximate value £2.5 million.

5. Notices of Motion (Standing Order 5)

1) Revisions to Permitting for On-Street Parking

Councillor O'Rourke proposed the motion as set out on the agenda. This stated,

“This Council regrets the proposals that have been the subject of recent consultation which would, if approved, see increased charges to the current resident parking schemes across Warwickshire.

This Council therefore asks that a select committee be established to consider the implications of maintaining the current charging base and what if any changes need to be made to the current parking permit schemes and parking enforcement arrangements.

The findings of the Select Committee shall be included in a report to Cabinet with clear recommendations”.

In proposing the motion Councillor O'Rourke made the following points.

- 1) When Rugby Borough Council had recently considered the proposals for parking as put forward by the County Council, they unanimously rejected them.
- 2) Local residents are concerned to have their views heard.
- 3) The proposed system will rely heavily on a digital interface. Many residents do not have access to computers or struggle to use them.
- 4) Many of the streets where permitting is proposed have houses of multiple occupancy. These require more than one parking permit and have a very limited number of parking spaces along their length.
- 5) Shift workers struggle to find parking spaces when they return from work. Having to walk any distance at unusual hours of the day can leave people feeling vulnerable.

Councillor Dave Parsons seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Amendment 1

An amendment was tabled by the Conservative Group. This was proposed by Councillor Clarke and seconded by Councillor Seccombe. This stated,

“The Council supports the timetable in respect of the recent consultation on parking charges. The timetable allows the analysis of the consultation to be assessed and presented to Overview and Scrutiny to give Members time to consider and comment on. The report will then be presented to Cabinet with any recommendations that may be made by Scrutiny”.

Following some discussion over the nature of the amendment the Chair confirmed that it was acceptable.

Amendment 2

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Roodhouse. This stated,

“This Council regrets the proposals that have been the subject of recent consultation which would, if approved, see increased charges to the current resident parking schemes across Warwickshire.

This Council therefore asks that a select committee be established **and takes evidence from Bed & Breakfast owners, community and business groups from across Warwickshire. The select Committee should consider an impact analysis on** the implications of maintaining the current charging base and what if any changes need to be made to the current parking permit schemes and parking enforcement arrangements.

The findings of the Select Committee shall be included in a report to Cabinet with clear recommendations”.

(Amended wording in bold).

In introducing the second amendment Councillor Roodhouse made the following points.

- 1) The proposed scheme appears to be ill thought out having been driven by a need to replace the current scheme.
- 2) Permit prices have not increased for years but to increase them by such a large amount in one go is unfair.
- 3) The proposed scheme would have a negative impact on the vulnerable.
- 4) If the proposals are to be considered by overview and scrutiny committee a special meeting will be required.
- 5) The political composition of overview and scrutiny committees mean that there is a risk that impartiality in their proceedings is lost.
- 6) The implementation of the new scheme should be deferred pending the procurement and commissioning of a new computer system.
- 7) Detailed figures have previously been requested from officers, but these have not been forthcoming.

Councillor Jenny Fradgley seconded the amendment and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke accepted amendment 2 as a friendly amendment.

Debate

A series of elected members addressed Council on this matter.

Councillor Webb recognised that services have to be paid for but noted that parking charges take no account of affordability. Thus, any increases will impact most on those who can least afford to meet them. He added that there is evidence of abuse of the current scheme but regardless of which scheme operates there remains a shortage of parking spaces for those who need them. Increasing the cost of parking will not resolve this issue. A full review of parking is required.

Councillor Olnier stated that when parking permits were initially introduced in Nuneaton there was resistance from people who considered it was wrong to have to pay to park on the road. Nevertheless, whilst they were unable to have a dedicated parking space, they did receive some priority. The division represented by Councillor Olnier is dominated by terraced housing. As a consequence, around 80% of car owners must leave their vehicles on the road.

Councillor Bill Gifford expressed concern that it was the need to replace an obsolete computer system that appeared to be driving the new permitting system. This he suggested is not what businesses and residents want. He added that when new parking arrangements were introduced in Leamington Spa decisions were based on a street by street analysis. This approach should be taken now across the County.

Councillor Gilbert noted that many small businesses are currently struggling financially. Increases such as those proposed may provide the tipping point leading to the closure of the business. He agreed that examination by overview and scrutiny would be appropriate.

Councillor Kondakor highlighted the shortage of car parking in many urban areas. Regardless of parking arrangements it would be preferable to examine why people are choosing to drive. Improvements to public transport systems could lead to reductions in car ownership and usage. He noted that bed and breakfast businesses in Scarborough are issued with localised permits for use of their guests.

Councillor Fradgley raised the interests of bed and breakfast business owners explaining that in Stratford upon Avon proposals for three new hotels are already presenting a threat to bed and breakfast businesses. She reported instances where people have been reluctant to use their cars knowing that on their return, they would be unable to park.

Councillor Kate Rolfe spoke in support of the friendly amendment.

Councillor Boad agreed that a street by street analysis of parking need and solutions would be preferable to a blanket, County-wide approach. She added that the income from parking should be directed to helping town centre businesses at a difficult time for high streets.

Councillor Chattaway observed that all members receive complaints regarding parking. Residents are disappointed with the proposals and a full review by scrutiny is required.

Councillor Dominic Skinner considered that the quality of parking enforcement is in need of improvement adding that abuse of permits is known about but there are insufficient resources to follow up on these cases.

Councillor Caroline Phillips expressed reservations over the potential for overview and scrutiny to make a positive contribution.

Councillor Chilvers stated that he had been waiting for a considerable time for financial figures concerning car parking. He noted that there have been media reports stating that around £2m of income comes from car parking. However, this is largely from parking infringements and not from parking charges. Councillor Chilvers stressed that income from car parking should be reinvested in parking related issues. He suggested that some of the income could be used to subsidise permits for those less able to afford them.

Support for a scrutiny meeting to review the proposals was expressed by Councillor Dan Gissane.

Councillor Parsons (Seconder of Labour amendment) reiterated the need for a special scrutiny meeting that would provide local residents with the opportunity to share their views.

Councillor Seccombe (Seconder of the Conservative amendment) reminded Council that there has been no decision agreed. There are however options to be considered. Councillor Seccombe observed that eight years has elapsed since charges for parking permits were increased. There is no proposal to stop residents from being able to park.

Councillor O'Rourke (Proposer of Labour motion) reminded Council of the extent of dissatisfaction felt by local communities.

Councillor Clarke (Proposer of the Conservative amendment) concluded by calling for overview and scrutiny to review the matter.

Vote

A vote was held on the Conservative amendment. This was carried with two abstentions and eighteen votes against.

Thus, the Conservative amendment became the substantive motion. A vote was held on the new substantive motion. This was carried with one abstention and eighteen votes against.

Resolved

“The Council supports the timetable in respect of the recent consultation on parking charges. The timetable allows the analysis of the consultation to be assessed and presented to Overview and Scrutiny to give Members time to consider and comment on. The report will then be presented to Cabinet with any recommendations that may be made by Scrutiny”.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12.50 and reconvened at 13.35.

2) Budgetary Underspends

Councillor Chattaway moved the motion stating,

“This Council would like to understand why The Administration has failed to ensure that all monies collected from the rate payers of Warwickshire have not been fully utilised and spent on much needed services in our towns and communities.

We therefore ask Cabinet to produce a detailed report for consideration by the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee identifying why the underspends and slippage in the capital programme and revenue have occurred and what actions will be taken to ensure that this is not repeated in the future. This report should include an assessment of capacity to deliver budgets”.

In tabling the motion Councillor Chattaway noted significant reported underspends in capital and revenue in the 18/19 financial year. Regarding capital underspends he suggested that this was because of a failure to progress projects at an adequate pace. In addition, he suggested, a focus on the Council’s transformation programme appears to have had an impact on the Council’s capacity to deliver in some areas. Councillor Chattaway requested that a report be produced to explain why the underspends are arising. Regarding members’ delegated budgets Councillor Chattaway considered that projects supported by these were moving too slowly.

Councillor Adkins seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak.

Debate

Councillor Kondakor expressed the view that the term “late spends” should be used as opposed to “under spends adding that costs increase with delays. He considered that members are not kept adequately informed of schemes and that there appeared to be little planning around when best to undertake work. Small projects, he concluded, should be kept in reserve to use resources that have been assigned to projects that are delayed.

Councillor Andy Crump (Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety) explained to Council that underspends are not unusual and can be attributed to a range of different factors including, late payment of government grants and unexpected additional income. The flexibility that underspends can present means that other council services can benefit. For example, additional resources have been provided for the Fire Protection Service from reserves.

Councillor Adrian Warwick suggested that the actions called for in the motion before Council are already being undertaken by the overview and scrutiny committees and Cabinet. The principal objection, he suggested, is to obtain best value for money.

Councillor Peter Butlin stated that of the £14m underspend reported in 2018/19, £9m was the result of increased income. He assured Council that services are being delivered and that customer satisfaction rates remain high. In the first quarter of this financial year an underspend has been reported for adult social care. However, this is attributable to the late payment of a government grants and not to a drop in demand for services.

Councillor Adkins (Secunder of the motion) stated that whilst she appreciated the need to retain reserves there are people in communities in need of services. She called for consideration to be given to the establishment of a cross party group to consider the factors leading to underspends.

Councillor Chattaway asked why it had been considered necessary to increase funding for the Fire Protection Service. He concluded that the motion had been presented to act as a means of ensuring that the Council has the capacity to deliver its services.

Vote

A vote was held on the motion. The vote was lost with one abstention.

3) GP Surgeries

In proposing the motion Councillor Richard Chattaway stated,

“Given the increasing demands on primary care provision in Bedworth and North Warwickshire we would ask that this Council invites the CCG and NHS England to attend the next appropriate Adult Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee to provide,

- 1) full details of the reasons for closures of 4 GP practices in Bedworth and North Warwickshire,
- 2) full details of what provision is being put in place to ensure that primary care services are both accessible and fully meet the needs of local residents in these areas, and

- 3) a list of all statutory consultees and details of all consultations held including disclosure of feedback received in relation to these closures”.

Councillor Chattaway added,

- 1) The George Eliot Hospital in Nuneaton is currently experiencing major pressures. One reason for this is a shortage of GP practices.
- 2) Warwickshire has experienced a shortage of GP practices for some time.
- 3) The closure of a surgery can affect around 2000 people. These have then to be served by remaining practices.
- 4) Nuneaton and Bedworth are set to grow. This growth will only apply greater pressure to surgeries.
- 5) The re-tendering of GP services may not provide the answer to the problem of this shortage.

Councillor Bill Olnor seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Margaret Bell moved a friendly amendment. This was to the first bullet point of the motion, changing it to say,

“Full details of the re-contracting of the four Alternative Provider of Medical Services (APMS) primary care services in Nuneaton, Bedworth and North Warwickshire”.

The reason behind the friendly amendment was to avoid creating undue anxiety amongst local residents who might fear for the future of their services. Councillor Bell explained the background to the Alternative Provision of Medical Services (APMS). This arrangement involves the re-contracting of GP services every five years. At present 3 practices are up for contract. Councillor Bell was keen to emphasise that the Clinical Commissioning Groups have worked hard to ensure that stakeholders and communities are kept informed on progress. There is a possibility that the Leicester Road surgery will close but Councillor Bell stated that the CCG would have an opportunity to explain this at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Les Caborn seconded the proposed friendly amendment. In doing so he agreed with Councillor Chattaway adding that “winter pressures” are now experienced throughout the whole year. He agreed to circulate to the Council a briefing note and letter that he had received on it.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse noted that it had previously been agreed with the health providers that whenever changes to services were proposed these would be discussed with the Council. In this case such discussions had not been held. Councillor Roodhouse suggested that the concordat required refreshing and that the Council should do more to hold the health providers and commissioners to account.

Councillor Keith Kondakor agreed that getting GP practices to set up in Nuneaton is a challenge. The shortage of GPs means that people sometimes struggle to get appointments and present late.

Councillor Clive Rickhards observed that there is an increasing tendency towards closure. The GP practice in Studley had closed some while ago and there is no indication that it may re-open.

Councillor Wallace Redford stated that the issue of GP practices had been raised at a recent meeting of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. At a meeting to be held on 15 November the issue will be discussed again. The CCGs are expected at that meeting.

Councillors Shilton and Phillips echoed other members' concerns with Councillor Phillips adding that pressure on hospitals has an impact on elective surgery.

Councillor Bill Oler echoed welcomed Councillor Bell's amendment. He considered that the way in which the CCGs work continues to be a mystery. Additionally the relationship between GPs and CCGs is unclear.

Vote

A vote was held. The motion as amended was agreed unanimously.

Resolved

That given the increasing demands on primary care provision in Bedworth and North Warwickshire the Council agrees to invite the CCG and NHS England to attend the next appropriate Adult Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee to provide,

- 1) Full details of the re-contracting of the four Alternative Provider of Medical Services (APMS) primary care services in Nuneaton, Bedworth and North Warwickshire,
- 2) Full details of what provision is being put in place to ensure that primary care services are both accessible and fully meet the needs of local residents in these areas, and
- 3) A list of all statutory consultees and details of all consultations held including disclosure of feedback received in relation to these closures

6. Member Question Time (Standing Order 7)

1) Introduction of New Parking Permit Arrangements

Councillor Roodhouse to Councillor Clarke

"The consultation on resident parking states, "Our existing paper-based permit management system is becoming obsolete with technical support from its suppliers being reduced from October onwards. We must now move to a digital, online system." Could the Portfolio Holder say when he knew it was going to be obsolete and how much is this change costing"?

In response to this question Councillor Clarke stated that the current system will continue until the new one comes on line. Councillor Jeff Clarke agreed to send a full response out to members.

2) Environmental Impact Statements on Reports

Councillor Chilvers to Councillor Timms.

“Council reports have recently had an ‘environmental impact’ section added. What framework have officers been given to enable them to assess the impact of a policy?”

In response, Councillor Timms observed that the approach to the statements on reports would vary depending on the nature of the report.

3) Waiting Time for OT Assessment

Councillor Chilvers to Councillor Les Caborn (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health).

“How long is the current wait for an OT assessment for adaptations for older people for each level of priority?”

In response Councillor Caborn, not having the information to hand, agreed to send it to all of Council in the next few days.

4) De-merge of Police Coalition (i)

Councillor Fradgley to Councillor Dave Reilly (Chair of the Police and Crime Panel).

“The Chair will be aware that the Home Secretary has placed a six-months delay on the de-merger of the Warwickshire and West Mercia Police Forces. The September 2019 Peel Report on Warwickshire Police by HM Inspector of Constabulary notes serious concerns about the force’s efficiency. I am pleased that 7 out of 12 categories are rated “good”, however, four categories are rated “requires improvement” and one, “Planning for the Future” is rated “inadequate”. The cause of concern for this inadequate rating is the force has not yet defined how all its services to the public will operate in the future nor has it agreed a smooth transition for a future operating model, nor has it consulted with the public on these matters. Amongst other recommendations the report states “the force should improve its arrangements both to consult with the public about business planning and to make feedback as a result of such consultation”. In view of the importance of the police service to Warwickshire residents and a number of this council’s departments, will the Chair please discuss with the Police and Crime Commissioner what public consultation is planned in response to the inspector’s recommendations and whether there are any ways in which this council can assist in the consultation”

In response to this question Councillor Reilly assured Council that the Police and Crime Panel is working with the Police and Crime Commissioner to address issues around the ending of the alliance. Councillor Reilly repeated that performance had been found good in many areas adding that the County Council is working to fulfil its role in supporting the police.

5) De-merge of Police Coalition (ii)

Councillor Olnier to Councillor Crump.

“Many members will have viewed with concern the very public breakdown of the Strategic Alliance between the West Mercia and Warwickshire Police forces. We have seen an intervention by the Home Secretary with an inspector despatched to assess the situation resulting in a suspension of the divorce for a period of three months, and the recent announcement by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner offering to act as a mediator because of the serious concerns he has about the implications of the breakdown. There have also been less than positive comments with regard to Warwickshire Policing in the recently published Peel Report. Given the fact that our Police Commissioner sought and was granted the right to attend Full Council and, in some circumstances, to vote in this Council but is yet to appear in these meetings. Can the Portfolio Holder tell us when the Police Commissioner intends to come to this Council and to give a full account of the current state of policing in Warwickshire and provide members with answers to the considerable number of concerns which are being expressed by those whom they represent?”

In response Councillor Crump assured Council that the Police and Crime Panel works to hold the Police and Crime Commissioner to account.

In response to a suggestion by the Chair, Council agreed that an invite be extended to the Police and Crime Commissioner to attend a meeting of Council

6) Stratford upon Avon Fire Station

Councillor Kate Rolfe to Councillor Crump

Displaying her android device Councillor Rolfe shared with Council a press release concerning major improvements at Stratford Fire Station. Councillor Rolfe asserted that she had received no prior notification of this and asked why this was the case.

In response Councillor Crump stated that the improvements had been approved by Cabinet but confirmed that he had not emailed Councillor Rolfe directly to notify her of them.

7) Long Service by Kenilworth Firefighter

Councillor Dave Shilton to Councillor Crump

Councillor Shilton asked the Portfolio Holder to recognise the long service of Kenilworth firefighter, Malcolm Gunter who has completed 40 years' service.

Councillor Crump commended Mr Gunter noting that there are a number of retained firefighters who have served for many years.

8) Government Support for Bus Services

Councillor Kondakor to Councillor Clarke

Noting that government has recently announced a national cash injection for bus services Councillor Keith Kondakor asked whether the Council will be bidding for a share of this.

In response Council was informed that officers are working on this.

9) Flood Water Tanks

Councillor Kondakor to Councillor Clarke

Councillor Clarke was asked whether he was aware of an incident whereby soil placed on top of a plastic flood relief tank had caused it to collapse.

It was agreed that Councillor Kondakor would send details to Councillor Crump and *the matter would be investigated.*

10) Delays with Double Yellow Lines

Councillor Boad to Councillor Clarke

Councillor Boad cited an example where the painting of double yellow lines on a road in her division had been delayed owing to an administrative error. The delay will be over 12 months as parking variations are looked at once a year. Councillor Boad asked the Portfolio Holder to review the process of annual reviews to consider whether they can be undertaken more frequently.

Councillor Clarke agreed to look in to this.

7. **Any other items of urgent business**

None

8. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

Resolved:

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

9. **Consideration of the Exempt Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 25 July 2019**

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2019 were considered by Council.

Resolved

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2019 be approved as a correct record.

The meeting closed at 14.57.

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Chair