

County Council

Tuesday 28 September 2021

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Peter Gilbert (Chair), Councillor Jo Barker, Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne, Councillor Brett Beetham, Councillor Margaret Bell, Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi, Councillor Barbara Brown, Councillor Peter Butlin, Councillor Jeff Clarke, Councillor John Cooke, Councillor Andy Crump, Councillor Yousef Dahmash, Councillor Piers Daniell, Councillor Jackie D'Arcy, Councillor Judy Falp, Councillor Jenny Fradgley, Councillor Sarah Feeney, Councillor Clare Golby, Councillor Brian Hammersley, Councillor John Holland, Councillor Dave Humphreys, Councillor Marian Humphreys, Councillor Kam Kaur, Councillor Jack Kennaugh, Councillor Justin Kerridge, Councillor Christopher Kettle, Councillor Sue Markham, Councillor Sarah Millar, Councillor Chris Mills, Councillor Jeff Morgan, Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell, Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher, Councillor Will Roberts, Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE, Councillor Tim Sinclair, Councillor Mejar Singh, Councillor Richard Spencer, Councillor Heather Timms, Councillor Mandy Tromans, Councillor Robert Tromans, Councillor Martin Watson and Councillor Andrew Wright

1. General

(1) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Sarah Boad, Tracey Drew, Jonathan Chilvers, Bill Gifford, John Horner, Andy Jenns, Jan Matecki, Daren Pemberton, Caroline Phillips, Wallace Redford, Howard Roberts, Kate Rolfe, Jill Simpson-Vince and Adrian Warwick

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

Referencing item 3 on the agenda, Police and Crime Commissioner Representation, Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Leader of the Council) declared a personal interest stating that she would leave the room whilst the matter was being addressed.

(3) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 1 July 2021 were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair.

(4) Chair's announcements

Councillor Pete Gilbert (Chair of Council) made the following announcements.

a) Young Authority of the Year

Over recent years we have worked hard to attract and encourage young colleagues into a career in local government. We have recently become involved in the LGA's National Graduate Development Programme. Through the scheme we have been able to recruit three graduates who are currently working their way through a two-year programme of placements.

Two of our graduates represented Warwickshire County Council at the Young Local Authority of the Year competition. This is a national competition which aims to further the professional development of people in the early stages of their careers.

Laura Pain and George McVerry battled against 16 other teams from across the country and I'm delighted to say that they have brought the trophy back to Warwickshire and we now officially hold the title of Young Local Authority of the Year.

Huge congratulations to Laura and George.

Members joined to congratulate Laura Pain and George McVerry.

b) Warwickshire County Cricket Club

Last Friday marked a very memorable moment in the sporting calendar. It saw the culmination of the County Cricket Championship and it gives me great delight and pride to say that the overall winners were Warwickshire County Cricket Club.

The County Council has excellent links with the cricket club and many of our residents are fans of the club. Indeed, a former pupil of Warwick School scored a century in that final match, helping to seal a memorable victory for the Bears.

The county has a very significant cricketing heritage, and we share the great pride of all involved in the cricket club's tremendous achievement. I'm sure you will all join me in passing on the congratulations of the council to all involved.

Members joined to congratulate Warwickshire County Cricket Club on its achievement.

c) Statement of Accounts

I have been asked to read out this notice from the Strategic Director for Resources in his capacity as the Council's Section 151 officer. This is to inform all councillors that it has not been possible to present accounts for approval at this meeting to meet the end of September deadline for reasons entirely outside the Council's control.

The County Council finance team produced the accounts, both for the Council and the Warwickshire Pension Fund, to the agreed timetable. However, the external auditor informed us in late July that due to resourcing problems and delays on other client audits, our external audit work will not be completed until mid-October. This means we will now present the audited accounts to Audit & Standards Committee on the 4 November and Full Council on the

14 December. The delay is solely due to Grant Thornton's inability to resource the external audit work to the originally agreed timetable.

I have written formally to the auditor to express my strong disappointment that the Council is in this situation for these reasons and have published a formal notice of the delay.

It is worth pointing out that this situation is common across the county and an article in the Municipal Journal on 16 September suggested, based on a survey by Public Sector Audit Appointments, that as many as half of councils may miss the end of September audit deadline.

d) Death of Former County Councillor John Appleton

Again, it is my sad duty to report the death of a former County Councillor. John Appleton passed away on Monday 13 September at the age of 84. He represented the division of Southam from 2005 until 2017.

During his time with Warwickshire County Council John, a Conservative member, served on a range of committees including the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Pension Fund Investment Sub Committee and Staff and Pensions Committee.

He was also involved in outside bodies including Age Concern and the Severn Trent Regional Flood Defence Committee.

John also served on Stratford on Avon District Council. He was widely respected for his commitment to his constituents and for his insightfulness.

Our condolences go to John's family.

Members made the following comments in memory of John Appleton.

Councillor Andy Crump stated that John Appleton had been his predecessor in Southam. He was a pleasant person to be with who sought particularly to help young people from pre-school age up to teenagers. Although softly spoken he could at times "turn into a tiger".

Councillor Izzi Seccombe stated that John Appleton had served with her on Stratford on Avon District Council as well as the County Council. He had a particular eye for detail especially regarding financial matters. In order to see the correct policies developed John Appleton was prepared to be very challenging. He was a positive contributor to Council and ensured that he held the administration to account.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) echoed the views that John Appleton could be very challenging. This was helped by a sharp mind and the efforts he made to remain on top of his brief. The loss of John's wife hit him very hard. He is to be thanked for all he did for Warwickshire.

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader, Finance and Property) told the meeting that when he had joined Warwickshire County Council John Appleton had been his mentor. The advice that John Appleton had given was to know your brief and numbers. He would be much missed.

Councillor John Holland (Leader of the Labour Group) noted that John Appleton had served on pensions committees with him. He was always found to be friendly and helpful.

e) Death of Former County Councillor Brian Hawkes

Lastly, it is my sad duty to inform you of the death in July of former County Councillor Brian Hawkes. Brian was a Labour Councillor who lived in Bedworth and represented the Bedworth West Division from December 2013 having been selected in a by-election. He served until the Council elections of 2017.

As well as being a member of the County Council, Brian was a long-standing member of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. In 2014/15 he was Mayor of the borough.

Our condolences go to Brian's family.

Members made the following comments in memory of Bryan Hawkes.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe stated that Bryan Hawkes was a very decent person. In his later years he had suffered ill health. Nevertheless, he was happy to welcome Councillor Seccombe to his house when she was canvassing for the May 2021 elections.

Councillor John Holland noted that Bryan Hawkes was a councillor who stood up for his residents. His employment had been in health and safety and he was a keen advocate of safe practices wherever he was.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse observed that Bryan Hawkes looked across political divides. He would always stand up for his community and was to be thanked for that.

Members stood in memory of John Appleton and Bryan Hawkes.

(5) Petitions

None.

(6) Public Speaking

None.

2. Dispensation for County Councillor

Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Economy and Place) moved the recommendation. Councillor Will Roberts seconded the recommendation.

There was no debate but Council joined to wish Councillors Tracey Drew and Kate Rolfe well.

Resolved:

That the Council approves the absence of Councillor Tracey Drew and Councillor Kate Rolfe from meetings of the authority on the grounds of ill health.

3. Police and Crime Commissioner Representation

Having previously declared an interest Councillor Izzi Seccombe left the room.

Councillor Andy Crump (Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety) introduced the published report. Members were informed of a correction. The period of office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to 2024 and not 2025 as stated in the report. Members were informed that the PCC has a legal right to sit on the County Council to speak on and consider matters regarding the Council's function as Fire and Rescue Authority. Collaboration between blue light services has increased significantly in recent years as evidenced through the creation of the Blue Light Collaboration Joint Advisory Board. In addition, recent months have seen examples of practical collaboration at a number of high profile incidents. It was made clear that the PCC will not be able to speak at the Council's budget setting meeting.

Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell seconded the recommendation and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor John Holland observed that the PCC is not elected as a County Councillor. He should not have a right to speak on any issue.

Vote

A vote was held. The recommendation was agreed.

Resolved:

That the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner be reappointed as a co-opted member of the full Council for the purposes of Section 7 Policing and Crime Act 2017

4. Education (Schools) Capital Programme 2021/22

Councillor Jeff Morgan (Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education) moved the recommendation. He explained that a considerable amount of development has taken place to the south of Leamington Spa. This has resulted in the requirement for a new school.

Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi seconded the recommendation and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor John Holland suggested that the location for the proposed school is inappropriate. He noted that the major development referred to by Councillor Morgan falls within Warwick and not Leamington Spa. When it was evolving the draft Local Plan for Warwick District was opposed by Warwick members. Nevertheless, the development is now underway. Observing that the privately run Kings High School for Girls has relocated to new site Councillor Holland expressed his doubts that the new school being proposed would be of a similar high standard. Councillor Holland stated that there were no references in the report to meeting special needs. In addition, the proposed location of the school on the edge of the development is inappropriate. It should, he suggested, be in the middle of the development as this would make it more readily accessible. The location will also mean a reduction in the amount of land available for the public park. It was also noted that the

proposal is that parents and carers taking their children to school will be able to park on the school site. This will not serve to reduce car journeys.

Councillor Barbara Brown expressed her concern that the need for new schools is not being met outside of Warwick. For example, there is a shortage of school places in Rugby.

Councillor Rob Tromans welcomed that the County Council is working to provide a new school. He noted that the report does make reference to special education needs. A similar report and scheme for Nuneaton would, he suggested, be welcome.

Councillor Peter Butlin informed Council that it was Warwick District Council that had identified the site for the school. Recognising that the County Council has a statutory responsibility to provide adequate school places Councillor Butlin expressed concern over the increased costs of the project caused by competing projects such as HS2 and the need to level the site. Sufficient money has been set aside but Councillor Butlin advised that costs may increase further.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse welcomed the funding that is being made available for new schools adding that the HS2 project is being blamed for many instances of additional costs. Concerning special education, as referenced on page 35, he looked forward to seeing the action plan around its delivery.

Councillor Judy Falp agreed with Councillor Holland's comments regarding the location of the school. Nevertheless, that a new school is to be built was welcomed.

Councillor Justin Kerridge reminded Council that it is the district and borough councils that are the local planning authorities. He suggested that the County Council and the district and borough councils do not always work as closely together as they might and whilst the County Council cannot dictate what it wants, it should add its weight to any arguments to help secure that which it is after.

Councillor Tim Sinclair expressed his concern over the length of time it takes to progress major projects. In addition, he suggested that active transport plans should be supported.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe stated that the County Council has worked hard with Warwick District Council concerning the development. The land had belonged to the County Council but had been sold off to allow housing to be constructed. The district council had determined the location of the school and it is acknowledged that a different site would have been cheaper to build on. Nevertheless, the school that is constructed will be done so to a high standard. That it is a through school will incur greater costs but its location close to the country park will be a benefit to teaching. Councillor Seccombe concluded that children with challenges benefit from being taught in mainstream schools whenever possible. They need to remain part of the community if they are to thrive.

Councillor Chris Kettle emphasised the importance of exercise for young people adding that proper cycle routes should be provided to the school. Any future school project should encourage green travel.

Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell noted that being an all-through school there should be greater opportunities to identify children with special needs earlier. In addition, there will be greater opportunities to up-skill staff across the school.

Councillor Dave Humphries asked for greater investment in new schools in North Warwickshire. Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi acknowledged that the location of the school is not ideal but recognised the need for it. That it will be close to the country park is seen as a bonus. The school's travel plan needs to ensure that children do not have to travel along main roads.

Councillor Jeff Morgan confirmed that it is expected that there will be 22 SEN places in the school. He emphasised the need to provide SEN places in mainstream schools. The site, he agreed, is not perfect but there is a need to press on with the project. Regarding pressure for school places across Warwickshire Council was informed that meetings are being held in all five district and borough areas to consider this.

Vote

A vote was held. The recommendation was agreed unanimously.

Resolved:

That Council agrees that £49.5 million be added to the capital programme to deliver the new all-through provision in South Leamington/ Warwick (Oakley Grove).

5. Independent Persons

Councillor Kam Kaur introduced the published report adding that the individuals listed are happy to continue in their role.

Councillor Chris Kettle seconded the recommendation.

Referencing paragraph 1.5 of the report Councillor Rob Tromans noted the degree of cooperation between local authorities.

Vote

A vote was held. The recommendation was agreed unanimously.

Resolved:

That Council appoint Howard Darling, Mumtaz Goolam, Garth Murphy, Maureen O'Sullivan, David Stone and Raymond Leslie Tomkinson to the position of Independent Person for a four-year period to 30 September 2025.

6. Review of Overview and Scrutiny

Councillor Kam Kaur introduced the report and moved the recommendation.

Councillor Yousef Dahmash seconded the recommendation. In doing so Councillor Dahmash emphasised the importance of parity of esteem across the scrutiny process. He also commended the Democratic Services team for its hard work.

Vote

A vote was held. The recommendation was agreed unanimously.

Resolved:

That Council approves the proposals for scrutiny reform as set out in Appendix 2 of the published report.

7. Youth Justice Plan 2021/22

Councillor Jeff Morgan introduced the report and moved the recommendation. In doing so he stated that he is very proud of the Youth Justice Service in Warwickshire. He had been impressed with the professionalism of the staff when he had met them. The Strategy, he stated, is written in a style and format that is prescribed by the Youth Justice Board. It is required as part of the funding process. Council was informed that performance is generally good although the rate of first time entrances to the system requires close monitoring. In addition, NEETS performance is not as good as it might be and there has been a noticeable increase in serious violent crime reflecting the national picture.

The recommendation was seconded by Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse commended the Youth Justice Service adding that it requires more investment. Referencing paragraph 6.8 of the strategy Councillor Roodhouse noted the challenge around "county-lines" and cross boundary information sharing. Whilst agreements are in place these, he suggested, should be more comprehensive. In addition, more investment is required around victims and victim support.

Councillor John Holland supported the strategy. He emphasised the importance of remembering that over time protection of the public has moved away from the Council to the Ministry of Justice.

Councillor Justin Kerridge commended the Youth Justice Service. The strategy, he observed, is difficult to understand. Plans are unclear and the words and aspirations in the document are not backed up by any measures.

Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell stated that that there is a need to focus on the victim. Demand for the service is unprecedented. She welcomed input to the plan from the Police and Crime Commissioner and that it had been shared with the Chief Officer Board. She observed that young people benefit from speech and language support.

Councillor Jeff Morgan welcomed the support expressed in the chamber. He agreed with comments concerning "county-lines" and with those regarding the style and format of the strategy. There is, he suggested, a need to abolish the passive voice. Performance data is presented to the Chief Officer Board. Consideration will be given to whether it can be incorporated in the annual report.

Vote

A vote was held. The recommendation was agreed unanimously.

Resolved:

That Council approves the Warwickshire Youth Justice Plan 2021/22

8. Notices of Motion

Motion 1 – Climate Change and Climate Emergency

Members recognised that the agenda indicated two motions concerning climate change.

That motion proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group stated,

“This Council supports the UN sustainability goals as part of its corporate plan and notes the good work that has been taking place regarding Climate Change so far and welcomes the Green Shoots initiative along with other actions that have been taken.

This Council also recognises the increased scientific evidence that we need to act more quickly, as confirmed by the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report (sixth assessment). The UK is hosting the UN Climate Change Conference COP26 and holding the Presidency for this critical conference, and there is an ever-increasing focus on net zero carbon.

In light of these facts, Council requests that it establishes a framework by which all full Council and Cabinet decisions made by Warwickshire County Council are checked against a climate change assessment.

Warwickshire County Council should also use its unique position to bring forward strategic proposals on further developing the direction of Warwickshire’s economy. For example, this could include greater investment towards green skills as indicated in the latest growth hub report. With the increase in electric vehicles and the greater reliance and use of batteries, we as a county should also seek to work with innovators and lead in developing the recycling actions that will be needed to make Warwickshire a circular economy.

That motion proposed by the Green Group stated,

“The latest IPCC report (August 21) was loud & clear. The Climate Emergency is not something we will face in the future but is happening right now. Warwickshire County Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, but with any emergency we must adapt and change our plans as needed.

Therefore, this Council recognises the August 2021 IPCC report and the report's conclusion that we must reduce carbon output with greater urgency.

Therefore, this Council will take the following steps to strengthen its own climate action plan:

1) Develop for consideration a fully costed plan which is based on:

- Bringing forward our commitment to become a climate neutral Council from 2030 to 2025 and our aim for the whole of Warwickshire from 2050 to 2033 and setting an indicative carbon budget for Warwickshire through to 2100.
 - Creating a dedicated 'Carbon Management Team' to implement and manage the Council's climate goals from April 2022.
 - Building all new WCC buildings, schools and any buildings built with aid of Warwickshire County Council funding to carbon neutral and fabric-first standards, including the creation of a dedicated team to manage the Council's retrofit schemes across the County.
- 2) Ensure all new procurement and grants require a plan to be incorporated into the award documentation with the expectation that all partner organisations will be carbon net zero by 2030.
- 3) By 2025 over two thirds of the Council's new transport capital investment is in walking, cycling routes, rail schemes, electric buses and charging rather than building new roads for vehicles causing more dangerous air pollution.
- 4) Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Chair of the Warwickshire Pension Fund Investment Sub Committee requesting it to divest from all companies involved in the extraction of fossil fuels.

Revised Motion

A revised motion agreed to by Councillor Jerry Roodhouse and Councillor Will Roberts was tabled to replace the two originally proposed. This stated,

“The latest IPCC report (August 21) was loud & clear. The Climate Emergency is not something we will face in the future but is happening right now. Warwickshire County Council supports the UN sustainability goals as part of its corporate priorities and the County Council also declared a climate emergency in 2019 and we note the good work that has been taking place regarding Climate Change so far. As with any emergency we must now accelerate adapt and change our plans as needed to reduce our carbon footprint.

Therefore, this Council will take the following steps to strengthen its own climate action plan:

- 1) Develop for consideration a fully costed plan which is based on:
- Bringing forward our commitment to become a climate neutral Council from 2030 to 2025 and our aim for the whole of Warwickshire from 2050 to 2033 and setting an indicative carbon budget for Warwickshire through to 2100.
 - Creating a dedicated 'Carbon Management Team' to implement and manage the Council's climate goals from April 2022.
 - Building all new WCC buildings, schools and any buildings built with aid of Warwickshire County Council funding to carbon neutral and fabric-first standards, including the creation of a specialist team to manage the Council's retrofit schemes across the County.
- 2) Ensure all new procurement and grants require a plan to be incorporated into the award documentation with the expectation that all partner organisations will be carbon net zero by 2030.

3) By 2025 over two thirds of the Council's new transport capital investment is in walking, cycling routes, rail schemes, electric buses and charging rather than building new roads for vehicles causing more dangerous air pollution.

4) Warwickshire County Council should use its unique position to bring forward strategic proposals on further developing the direction of Warwickshire's economy. For example, this could include greater investment towards green skills as indicated in the latest growth hub report. With the increase in electric vehicles and the greater reliance and use of batteries, we as a county should also seek to work with innovators and lead in developing the recycling actions that will be needed to make Warwickshire a circular economy.

This revised motion was moved by Councillor Will Roberts.

In support of the motion Councillor Will Roberts stated that its single purpose is to strengthen the Council's commitment to the climate emergency. Council was informed of concerns over climate change and increases in the global temperature. Extreme weather is being experienced more frequently. In Warwickshire the number of summer grass fires has increased markedly. That the cost of addressing environmental issues will be of concern to members was acknowledged. However, there is a need to reduce greenhouse gases now. The meeting was informed that the West Midlands Combined Authority is working to address climate change issues and the Prime Minister has stressed the need to pay heed to scientific evidence.

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

Debate

Councillor Sarah Millar welcomed the work being undertaken by the Council on climate change. She added that she is preparing for the COP 26 climate change conference. There is a need to bring target dates forward, but it needs to be recognised that these are targets and there is also a need to consider accountability. For example, in Denmark the Climate Change Minister is required to attend Parliament and explain what actions they have been taking. In Warwickshire an annual "State of Warwickshire's Climate" report should be introduced. Councillor Millar thanked members engaged with the pension scheme for raising the profile of investments in companies that can harm the environment eg Companies extracting fossil fuels. The meeting was also informed of the "Great British Green Week" that involves many local organisations.

Councillor Jenny Fradgley emphasised the urgency in addressing climate change. Warwickshire, she said, is doing well but it is only at the start of the journey. Markets that invest in green energy should be supported and green manufacturers such as those making batteries and future fuel should be supported. Parity is required between walking, cycling and driving cars and in addition more public transport is required. All parties should have environment and climate change policies and all Council properties should be well insulated.

Councillor Jack Kennaugh stated that he struggled to identify the point of the motion adding that Warwickshire is clean and green compared to Asia and America.

Councillor Tim Sinclair acknowledged that much is being done to address climate change. The motion before Council is un-costed and its potential impact unclear. The Council is already

supporting green jobs and active transport and the pensions committees are investing in energy companies to encourage them to act appropriately regarding the green agenda.

Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture) thanked members for recognising the work on climate change already being performed by the Council. This includes the Green Shoots initiative, rail station development, cycleways, waterways, support for the circular economy and work with partners. She considered that the motion was premature.

Councillor John Holland agreed with the observation made regarding Asia. However, he suggested that it is only possible to lead from the front. Everybody has a role to play and although the motion may not be perfect climate change is happening now. If the incidence of flooding increases the cost of addressing this will need to be met by the County Council.

Councillor Clare Golby observed that the motion lacked any statement clarifying the effect of not acting. She stated that she is supportive of active travel, but her division and town need more roads if air pollution caused by standing traffic is to be resolved. The north of Warwickshire has problems with health, wellbeing and education. These are the issues of concern to people.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe reminded Council of the climate emergency debate of July 2019. With a range of views being expressed it is difficult to say who is right and who is wrong. It will be necessary to consider the cost of meeting the challenge and to weigh actions against other competing priorities. Councillor Izzi Seccombe added that the Council has done much already to reduce its carbon footprint. It has a bio-diversity off-set programme and has established 80ha of wildflower grassland and tree planting. However, more can be done. It is expected that more innovative solutions will come from Warwick University. The key, she concluded, is to take people with you in a measured and managed way.

Councillor Justin Kerridge agreed that it is important to listen to what people want. He suggested that the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee should monitor progress and that this should be undertaken using clear measures. Citing the school to be built south of Warwick Councillor Justin Kerridge suggested that costs will probably limit its green credentials. However, these should be pressed for and one means of doing this is via the overview and scrutiny function. Finally, those engaged in procurement should ensure that those the Council does business with are aware of its green targets.

Councillor Peter Butlin considered the motion unaffordable. He questioned the basis of assertions around climate change and stressed the need to avoid placing residents under pressure from the Council's own initiatives. If the motion were to be agreed to and followed there would not be sufficient funds for services to adults and children. Councillor Butlin stated that China remains a major polluter with many hundreds of coal-fired power stations.

Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi reminded Council that there are two climate change working groups in operation. He noted the good work of the Portfolio Holder and observed that many community groups are working on climate and environmental issues too.

Councillor Brett Beetham questioned whether the residents of his division would benefit from the motion. He also reiterated that it would carry additional costs.

Councillor Chris Kettle suggested that rejecting the motion does not reject the principle of climate change. The Council Plan seeks to embed climate change considerations in everything the Council does. The new school discussed earlier on the agenda will be climate aware but what about older schools he asked.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (seconder of the motion) suggested that all agree that climate change is an issue that needs to be addressed. The motion seeks to foster debate. He congratulated the Portfolio Holder on all that has been achieved but considered that more could be done. There is a need to address the economy and focus on establishing a circular economy. Warwickshire is in a good position to take the lead on this. Green travel packs in new houses are of limited benefit. It is better to encourage people to cycle. To this end the highways department could be stronger in negotiating for more cycleways on new developments. Cabinet papers, he added, should reference climate change.

Councillor Will Roberts (mover of the motion) thanked members for their contributions. He counselled against thinking that climate change is the fault of others adding that air pollution exists in Warwickshire too. Regarding costs, members were referred to the line in the motion calling for the preparation of a costed plan. Councillor Will Roberts suggested that as well as reflecting on what is being done in Warwickshire to address climate change the actions of other local authorities should be studied too.

Vote

A vote was held. The motion was defeated.

Motion 2 – West Midlands Ambulance Service

The Labour Group proposed the following motion as set out on the agenda.

“This Council expresses concern about the proposals to review the provision of Community Ambulance Stations in the West Midlands with the potential closure of the local ambulance hub in Rugby.

This Council notes the concerns of Rugby residents of the perceived risks to health and wellbeing as a result and therefore asks that the Leader of the Council write to the Chair and the Chief Executive of the West Midlands Ambulance Service requesting that they engage with relevant local county councillors and the County Council's Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of their review to enable local views to be heard”.

Councillor Sarah Feeney moved the motion. In doing so she informed Council that the population of Rugby is growing but people feel that they are receiving less services. Concerns have been expressed over increased waiting times for ambulances and people are feeling forgotten. This is reinforced by the absence of an accident and emergency facility at St Cross Hospital in Rugby; something that the local MP has raised in Parliament.

Councillor Barbara Brown seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak.

Amendment

Councillor Margaret Bell proposed a friendly amendment. This was seconded by Councillor Clare Golby who reserved her right to speak. The amendment stated,

“This Council is concerned about the proposals to review the provision of Community Ambulance Stations in the West Midlands, for example, with the potential closure of the local ambulance hub in Rugby.

The Council notes that the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has extended an invitation to the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) to attend their meeting in November and the Committee has received information from WMAS about the proposed changes.

This Council notes the concerns of Rugby residents of the perceived risks to health and wellbeing as a result of the proposed changes to the location of the ambulance stations and therefore asks that the Leader of the Council write to the Chair and the Chief Executive of the West Midlands Ambulance Service thanking them for engaging with the County Council's Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of their review and encouraging them to accept the invitation to attend their meeting in November.”

The amendment was accepted by the Labour Group as a friendly amendment.

In moving the amended motion Councillor Margaret Bell stated that she understood people's concerns. Indeed, it was the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee that had invited the West Midlands Ambulance Service to one of its meetings. She suggested that there is no plan to reduce the number of ambulances in Rugby. There are plans, however, for a restructuring. With hospitals and ambulances facing unprecedented demand the proposals aim at optimising the use of ambulances. It reflects a shift to the use of hubs where staff ensure that returning ambulance are cleaned and restocked.

In seconding the motion Councillor Clare Golby observed that decisions regarding ambulance provision rest with the ambulance service. Tales of three-hour waits for ambulances are exceptional. Nuneaton and Bedworth has a large population but no ambulance station.

Debate

Councillor Andy Crump stated that concerns over increased waiting times were raised at a recent meeting of the Blue Light Collaboration Joint Advisory Board. The ambulance service is a member of that body and now regularly sends a representative to meetings.

Councillor Barbara Brown suggested that the proximity of ambulances to residents is very important. Councils have a role in helping people and it will be necessary to establish where reality and perception meet. Accurate data on waiting times and survival rates is required. It will also be important to know if ambulances are removed to operate in different areas.

Councillor Peter Butlin observed that on occasions ambulances are required to wait with patients outside hospitals as there is nowhere to off load them to. The proposed reorganisation will provide an opportunity for the Council to feed back its views.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse thanked Councillor Clare Golby for including the review on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He expressed concern over the process the ambulance

service has gone through. A study of the board's papers revealed no reference to consultation with local communities.

Councillor Marian Humphreys suggested that first responders should be included in the statistics.

Councillor Sarah Feeney welcomed the Council's commitment to the scrutiny of services and thanked Councillor Butlin for his observations regarding the wider health community.

Vote

A vote was held, and the amended motion was agreed unanimously.

Resolved:

This Council is concerned about the proposals to review the provision of Community Ambulance Stations in the West Midlands, for example, with the potential closure of the local ambulance hub in Rugby.

The Council notes that the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has extended an invitation to the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) to attend their meeting in November and the Committee has received information from WMAS about the proposed changes.

This Council notes the concerns of Rugby residents of the perceived risks to health and wellbeing as a result of the proposed changes to the location of the ambulance stations and therefore asks that the Leader of the Council write to the Chair and the Chief Executive of the West Midlands Ambulance Service thanking them for engaging with the County Council's Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of their review and encouraging them to accept the invitation to attend their meeting in November.

Motion 3 – Outdoor Education

Councillor Barbara Brown moved the following motion.

“This Council believes that everyone's education should include planned, high-quality outdoor learning which includes a residential. It's a very positive experience and part of the whole curriculum. It is our belief that this is an entitlement, not a luxury or an add-on.

This Council agrees that an amount of revenue funding, equivalent to the proceeds from the sale of Marle Hall, and funded from general reserves, be identified with a view, subject to viability, to setting up a charitable Trust Fund, administered through a Board of Trustees and operated independently from the Council, or to identifying some other appropriate funding mechanism, to enable schools to bid for groups of children and young people to participate in residential activities or apply for bursaries for individuals. The allocated funding would be expected to meet the establishment costs and the running costs of the arrangement.

The Council considers that this is an appropriate way to build on the work of Marle Hall, and to take its legacy forward and demonstrates that Warwickshire recognises the immense value of these activities and is willing to invest in the physical and emotional wellbeing of all our children and young people”.

Councillor Barbara Brown welcomed that the Leader of the Council had spoken passionately about the value of outdoor education. She was of the opinion that children require challenging outdoor experiences and exposure to the landscape. Outdoor education has a link to the green economy and enable skills to be developed that are not accessible in the classroom. It is particularly important to those children facing challenges in life building self-worth and a greater awareness of those around them. The motion asks the Council to consider the establishment of a trust fund to provide opportunities for all children.

Councillor Sarah Millar seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak.

Debate

Recognising the negative impacts of the Covid-19 lockdowns on young people Councillor Jackie D'Arcy stressed the importance of residential outdoor education.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe noted that the future of Marle Hall had been debated for a considerable time. When Marle Hall was opened there was no alternative provision in that area. Any child attending the facility had to be paid for. Now there are many facilities offering outdoor experiences close to Marle Hall. Council was informed that there is no receipt yet for Marle Hall. Also with a cross-party group reviewing future outdoor provision the motion may be considered premature.

Councillor Jeff Morgan was optimistic that the Council will end up with a strong outdoor education strategy. Regardless of the outcome schools will continue to enable children to enjoy outdoor education.

Councillor John Holland expressed some concern that decisions regarding Marle Hall were made in closed session. He considered that people do not like to see services being removed adding that the outdoor education strategy should have been completed prior to the decision regarding Marle Hall being made.

Councillor Andy Crump suggested that the reference in the motion to viability is unclear. He considered that all children should be able to access outdoor education opportunities. Council was informed that these opportunities may include water safety training working with the Fire and Rescue Service.

Councillor Tim Sinclair thanked the Labour Group for its motion. He stated that given the choice he would have liked to see Marle Hall remain open. Outdoor education is very important. Cabinet colleagues were asked to consider the spirit of the motion.

Councillor Clare Golby reminded Council that schools had not been sending children to Marle Hall. There is a need to make the best use of tax payers' money during times of austerity she added. In addition, schools should work to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to benefit from outdoor education.

Councillor John Cooke stated that for many years he has sat on the William Edwards Educational charity. Over the years this has funded children to attend Marle Hall. However, Manor Adventure in Shropshire is now more popular.

Councillor Jenny Fradgley regretted the loss of the Marle Hall facility.

Councillor Sarah Millar (seconder of the motion) spoke of the motion as being about the legacy of Marle Hall. There is a need to plan for future provision.

Councillor Barbara Brown thanked all members for their contributions to the debate. She stated that it is good to hear a recognition of the value of outdoor education and welcomed the production of the outdoor education strategy.

Vote

A vote was held. The motion was defeated.

9. Member Question Time (Standing Order 7)

(1) Question to Councillor Jeff Morgan from Councillor Jenny Fradgley

I understand that government legislation means that councils now have to restrict the number of home to school seats that can be sold on school buses. Whilst pupils living in a school's catchment area continue to be entitled to seats, I am told that only 20% of the remaining vacant seats can be sold to other pupils requiring transport.

Would the Portfolio Holder please confirm that this is the position and tell me whether this has led to some parents having to make alternative arrangements for home to school transport?

Answer from Councillor Jeff Morgan

The new legislation requires that all vehicles carrying paying customers must comply with Public Service Vehicle Access Requirements. There were exemptions that could be applied for, but these have ceased. New exemptions have been introduced but these will run only to March 2022. After this date they will be reviewed further, and it may be that no exemptions are permitted in the future. Where it is considered that paying customers will make it viable some vehicles in Warwickshire have been converted. If the cost of any upgrade cannot be covered it has not been possible to offer transport to some paying customers. In Warwickshire around 30 students have been affected in this way.

Some services have been transferred to the private sector. This has helped to reduce the burden of upgrading on the County Council. The ultimate goal is to make all vehicles compliant.

Councillor Fradgley thanked the Portfolio Holder for his answer adding that it is important that parents should not have to see their cars given concerns over climate change.

(2) Question to Councillor Margaret Bell from Councillor Jenny Fradgley

The government has announced proposals to cap care costs. I understand that for nursing homes this cap applies to the care cost element of charges, but not to the accommodation part of the charge ie. cost of the room, meals, cleaning, entertainment etc.

Would the Portfolio Holder please give me an estimate for Warwickshire of the proportion of nursing home charges that cover care and the proportion that goes to cover other costs?

Answer from Councillor Margaret Bell

It is very difficult to provide a definitive answer as this will vary from home to home.

The Dilnot Report proposed a 'contribution' towards living costs of between £7k and £10k per year, or £135 to £192 per week (but that was in 2011). This would be the equivalent of up to £230 per week today (based only on general inflation).

An estimate of one third of the total cost being accommodation costs has been quite widely used (and is as good an estimate as any other at this stage - and ahead of any detailed guidance).

More details will be available when the white paper is published.

(3) Question to Councillor Heather Timms from Councillor Bill Gifford

In the absence of Councillor Bill Gifford Councillor Jerry Roodhouse read the following.

As Warwickshire County Council are affiliated with the Solar Together procurement scheme, I would be very grateful if you could let me know how the County Council can continue the excellent work of getting homes to use renewable energy, without a "High Risk" of supporting forced labour camps in China.

Answer from Councillor Heather Timms

Solar Together is a subsidiary of IChoosr which is, itself, an international company which, in the UK, has a specific focus on collective energy switching and group buying of solar panels. As a company they are affiliated to Solar Energy UK which represents over 230 companies in the UK energy sector. Solar Energy UK has issued the following statement with regards to the UK industry supply chain which has been endorsed by IChoosr. "We, members of the UK solar energy industry, condemn and oppose any abuse of human rights, including forced labour, anywhere in the global supply chain. We support applying the highest possible levels of transparency and sustainability throughout the value chain and commit to the development of an industry-led traceability protocol to help to ensure our supply chain is free of human rights abuses."

In addition, the Council has procedures in place to review all aspects of its supply chain and has asked IChoosr to provide us with assurances firstly that there is no forced labour in the manufacture of panels and secondly that they are actively working to identify and exclude suppliers who do not comply with the above statement. We will continue to exert as much influence as we can on IChoosr.

Not all solar panels are manufactured in China and not all Chinese manufactured panels will be linked to indicators of forced labour. However, we would expect, where relevant, IChoosr to exclude suppliers where there is evidence of forced labour and to identify alternative sources of solar panels. We are keeping a very close eye on this and if it becomes necessary would consider securing an alternative partner to continue the roll out of renewable energy in Warwickshire homes.

A supplementary question was read out.

Do you find it worrying that the contractors working on this project appear to not have screened out panel manufacturers that use polysilicon from Daqo (such as JA Solar and Jinkosolar) as highlighted in the report by Professor Laura Murphy of Sheffield Hallam University published in May this year shortly after it was raised with them?

Councillor Heather Timms agreed to supply an answer to this supplementary question after the meeting.

(4) Question to Councillor Wallace Redford from Council Jackie D’Arcy

A petition concerning part night street lighting was previously presented to Council. Has the Portfolio Holder responded to that petition and can this response be shared with members?

Answer from Councillor Izzi Seccombe in the absence of Councillor Wallace Redford.

A written reply has been provided to the petition organiser. Copies will be sent to all members.

In addition, it should be noted that the County Council will be re-assessing the impact of part night street lighting.

(5) Question to Councillor Andy Crump from Councillor Piers Daniell

Would the Portfolio Holder care to comment on the recent work of the Fire and Rescue Service?

Answer from Councillor Andy Crump

The Fire and Rescue Service has been called upon to undertake some excellent work especially in the last few weeks. Sadly, a life was lost at the fire in Leamington Spa and condolences go to the family of the man that died. The service worked well demonstrating close and effective working with partners.

The achievements of the service will be recognised at an awards evening on 14 October.

10. Any Other items of Urgent Business

None

The meeting rose at 2.25 pm

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Chair