

# County Council

Tuesday 17 May 2022

## 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 Sarah Boad, Councillor Barbara Brown, Councillor Peter Butlin, Councillor Jonathan Chilvers, Councillor Jeff Clarke, Councillor John Cooke, Councillor Andy Crump, Councillor Yousef Dahmash, Councillor Piers Daniell, Councillor Tracey Drew, Councillor Judy Falp, Councillor Jenny Fradgley, Councillor Sarah Feeney, Councillor Bill Gifford, Councillor Clare Golby, Councillor John Holland, Councillor Dave Humphreys, Councillor Marian Humphreys, Councillor Kam Kaur, Councillor Justin Kerridge, Councillor Christopher Kettle, Councillor Jan Matecki, Councillor Sarah Millar, Councillor Chris Mills, Councillor Jeff Morgan, Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell, Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher, Councillor Daren Pemberton, Councillor Wallace Redford, Councillor Will Roberts, Councillor Kate Rolfe, Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE, Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince, Councillor Tim Sinclair, Councillor Mejar Singh, Councillor Richard Spencer, Councillor Heather Timms, Councillor Mandy Tromans, Councillor Robert Tromans, Councillor Martin Watson, Councillor Adrian Warwick and Councillor Andrew Wright

### 1. Election of Chair of Council

Note – During the meeting item 3(4) Chair's Announcements was considered as the first item of business, however, these minutes adhere to the order of business as set out on the published agenda.

Councillor Margaret Bell, seconded by Councillor Mejar Singh proposed that Councillor Dave Humphreys be elected as Chair of Council for the ensuing year.

There were no other nominations.

#### Resolved:

That Councillor Dave Humphreys be elected as Chair of Warwickshire County Council for the municipal year 2022/2023.

In accepting the position as Chair, Councillor Dave Humphreys expressed his sadness at the circumstances of his election and undertook to represent the whole of Warwickshire to the best of his ability.

### Vote of thanks to the retiring Chair

Councillor Humphreys led a vote of thanks for the outgoing Chair, Councillor Pete Gilbert, and noting Councillor Gilbert's style of facilitating open debate, Councillor Humphreys expressed his intention to follow the example that had been set.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe extended congratulations to Councillor Humphreys on his election to the Chair and thanked Councillor Gilbert for steering the Council throughout his year in office. It had not been an easy year due to the pandemic and the physical return to the Chamber and thanks were due to Councillor Gilbert for his smooth running of the Council's business and for ably representing the Council at events.

Councillor John Holland echoed previous comments and commended Councillor Gilbert for his efforts to consider all opinions across the Chamber.

Councillor Robert Tromans expressed his thanks to Councillor Gilbert for his support and for his work in Nuneaton and Bedworth where he had been a "tower of strength" and a credit to the county.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse congratulated Councillor Humphreys on his ascendance to the Chair and thanked Councillor Gilbert for his skill as a Chairman.

In response, Councillor Gilbert expressed his gratitude to the late Councillor John Horner who had supported him to a very high standard during the year and had been a credit to the Council, taking the Chair on two occasions. Councillor Gilbert paid tribute to his fellow councillors for the quality of the debates he had had the pleasure to Chair and thanked the County Council officers who had supported him, in particular, Dawn Mardle for her fastidious organisation skills, and also to Monica Fogarty, Sarah Duxbury, Paul Williams and Deborah Moseley.

#### **Resolved:**

That the Council records its appreciation for Councillor Pete Gilbert's service as Chair of the Council for 2021/22.

## **2. Election of Vice Chair of Council**

Councillor Isobel Seccombe proposed that Councillor Christopher Kettle be elected Vice-Chair of Council for the ensuing year and was seconded by Councillor Jo Barker.

There were no other nominations.

#### **Resolved:**

That Councillor Christopher Kettle be elected Vice-Chair of Council for the 2022/23 municipal year.

### **3. General**

#### **(1) Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Jackie D'Arcy, Brian Hammersley, Andy Jenns, Sue Markham, Jack Kennaugh, and Caroline Phillips.

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

None.

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

##### **Resolved:**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 15 March 2022 were agreed as a true record.

#### **(4) Chair's announcements**

The Chair, Councillor Pete Gilbert, made the following announcements:

##### **(1) Death of Councillor John Horner**

"The burden has fallen to me too often over the last twelve months to inform members of the passing of former and sometimes serving colleagues. Today, that burden falls even heavier.

I, like all of you, was deeply saddened to hear of John Horner's death. He is a great loss to this Council, he was a fantastic Vice-Chairman, and he will be missed here at Shire Hall and across our county. He was independent minded, intelligent and in this for the right reasons. I know from my conversations with him that his sole focus here was ensuring that the Council represents the people it serves. You could uniquely like John, respect John, but not agree with everything he said. He was a man of principle, of quiet passion and someone I was proud to call a colleague and, later, a friend.

This Council will be far poorer without him. He would have made quite a brilliant Chairman - I'm sure far better than me – and arguably it still would have been a waste of his quite significant talents. He was so sharp, so bright also enigmatic to boot and I have wondered in recent days whether people like John will be encouraged to engage in politics in the future. We need more people like John here, not fewer.

John also had a wry wit. One of the comments I remember him making to me I'm going to share with you today. I said to John once that I would have liked to have ended one conversation feeling less stupid at the end than I did at the beginning. He smiled and quietly said, "Peter, impossible"!

A great man, and a great loss to us and to everybody in this county but an even greater loss to his wife, his children and to their wider family. So sudden and far, far too soon."

Councillor Gilbert invited Council to stand for a minute's silence in memory of Councillor

Horner before inviting Councillors to pay their own tributes.

The Leader, Councillor Isobel Seccombe, acknowledged that it had been a difficult week due to the shock of Councillor Horner's sudden death, which had come far too soon. She noted that she had known him since at least 2007 and reflected on his talents and qualities: very bright, capable, intellectual, possessing a dry wit, sardonic and amusing. He did not always toe the line but was a valued member, friend and colleague. The intellect he brought to the Group and the Chamber was valued. He had been a member of the cabinet with responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service and had also been a chair of overview and scrutiny. He had pursued the areas that concerned him, which were those of his community, and always stayed true to the issues his residents felt mattered. Councillor Horner was a country man, who took long walks with his dogs, and a family man with four children and grandchildren. The Council had much to thank him for and to miss him for.

Councillor John Holland reflected on the immeasurable loss to Councillor Horner's family and hoped the words of appreciation that were shared at the meeting would be of some comfort to them. He noted that Councillor Horner had been a quietly spoken but deep thinker, who drew on experience to come up with solutions. He understood that Councillor Horner had been very pleased to be elected Vice-Chair and was looking forward to taking on the role of Chairman and, to this end, Councillor Holland was grateful that Councillor Horner had had the opportunity to Chair some meetings. He concluded by extending sympathies to Councillor Horner's family.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers noted that he had never left a conversation with Councillor Horner without having something to think about. He noted he was a deep and intelligent man who saw the world in a different way and Councillor Chilvers considered that the world and this Council needed more people like that - people to challenge our preconceptions. He expressed the view that Councillor Horner would have been a wonderful chair and extended thoughts and prayers to his family.

Councillor Bill Gifford extended his thoughts and prayers to Councillor Horner's family. He expressed his shock at the news and expressed the view that this was a major loss for the Council. Councillor Gifford considered that Councillor Horner had been a brilliant Chair of the Pension Fund Investment Sub-Committee, who undertook a lot of work behind the scenes and displayed a sharp intelligence that Members had grown to respect and understand. It was an intelligence that was expressed in such a way that one never felt put down, never felt upset, but provoked thought. Councillor Horner was easy to get along with and one of the reasons it was a pleasant sub-committee to work on. Councillor Gifford expressed the view that Councillor Horner would have made a brilliant Chairman of the Council.

Councillor Judy Falp noted that she had first met Councillor Horner around 30 years ago when he had become a teacher at the school where she sat on the governing body and he had wanted the children to aspire to great things. She had also spoken to him a great deal during mental health first aid training, and had many good conversations with him. She noted how deeply he had cared for his division and that his passing was a great loss to the Council and to his family. She considered he was a great man to have known and was pleased he had been able to chair the last meeting of the Council.

Councillor Dahmash expressed his sadness and shock at the announcement and reflected on

his election in 2013 at the same time as Councillor Horner which had presented them with many opportunities to talk to each other. He noted that Councillor Horner was very knowledgeable and astute, an enigmatic maverick who was really kind, especially with his advice.

Councillor Andy Crump expressed how much he had valued Councillor Horner for his dry humour, wit and intelligence. He echoed sentiments that Councillor Horner was a deep thinker who looked at things from a different angle. Whilst he was softly spoken, when he spoke, people listened, as what he said was worth listening to. Councillor Crump expressed the view that Councillor Horner would have been a great chair as he was a great person. He would miss him, his wry and cheeky smile. Councillor Crump extended thoughts, prayers and condolences to Councillor Horner's family and friends.

Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell stated that she had been privileged to know Councillor Horner, someone who was very intellectual and wore his heart on his sleeve. He was always immaculately presented and possessed charm and wit, the underrated qualities of kindness and authenticity. She would miss his dry wit and comic timing and his family remained in her thoughts and prayers.

Councillor Christopher Kettle expressed the view that the Council would not easily forget Councillor Horner. His contributions in meetings were brief, preceded by a smile and he could nod and summarise a topic in one or two sentences that made it easy for all to understand. He thanked Councillor Horner for his contribution and for demonstrating how Charing should be done and undertook to try to follow his example.

Councillor Gilbert concluded by noting that a memorial service for John Horner would take place on 27 May 2022, and further details would be circulated.

## **(2) Church Service for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

Councillor Gilbert reminded Members to respond to their personal invitations to the Church Service to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on 5 June.

## **(5) Petitions**

None.

## **(6) Public Speaking**

None.

## **4. Appointments to Committees and Other Bodies**

Councillor Isobel Secombe, Leader of the Council, moved that Council agree proposals tabled at the meeting. Councillor John Holland, Leader of the Labour Group, seconded the proposals, which were put to the vote and agreed as set out below.

### **Resolved:**

1. That the Council confirms the Committee structure and delegations of non-executive functions to member bodies as set out in the Constitution
2. That the number of places on Council Committees be as follows

<b>Committees</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Lab</b>	<b>LD</b>	<b>GR</b>	<b>WRA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Audit & Standards Committee (6)	4	1	1			6
Regulatory Committee (12)	10	1			1	12
Staff & Pensions Committee (6)	4	1	1			6
Adult Social Care & Health (10)	7	1	1	1		10
Children and Young People (10)	8	1	1			10
Communities (10)	7	1	1	1		10
Resources and Fire & Rescue (10)	7	1	1	1		10
Political Balance Entitlement 2022	47	7	6	3	1	64

3. That the Council agrees the appointment of members to the Committees and other bodies as set below:

*Opposition Group Spokespersons are indicated for Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Sp)*

<b>Committees</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Lab</b>	<b>LD</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>WRA/Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
Audit & Standards Committee (6 +2 co-optees) J Bridgeman + R Edwards Zara	John Cooke Brian Hammersley Christopher Kettle Bhagwant Pandher	Sarah Feeney	Bill Gifford			6
Regulatory Committee	Jill Simpson-Vince (C) John Cooke (VC) Jeff Clarke Dave Humphreys Jack Kennaugh Christopher Kettle Justin Kerridge Jan Matecki Chris Mills Adrian Warwick	Sarah Feeney			Judy Falp	12
Staff and Pensions Committee	Andy Jenns (C) Brian Hammersley Christopher Kettle Mandy Tromans	Sarah Millar	Bill Gifford (VC)			6

<b>Committees</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Lab</b>	<b>LD</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>WRA/Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
Adult Social Care & Health OSC	Clare Golby (C) John Cooke Marian Humphreys Christopher Kettle Jan Matecki Chris Mills Penny-Anne O'Donnell Mandy Tromans	John Holland (VC)	Kate Rolfe (Sp)	Tracey Drew (Sp)		<b>10</b>
Children & Young People OSC	Yousef Dahmash (C) Jo Barker Brett Beetham Pete Gilbert Justin Kerridge Brian Hammersley Marian Humphreys Jill Simpson-Vince	Barbara Brown (Sp)	Jerry Roodhouse (VC)			<b>10</b>
Communities OSC	Jeff Clarke (C) Richard Baxter-Payne Dave Humphreys Bhagwant Pandher Tim Sinclair Mejar Singh Andrew Wright	Jackie D'Arcy (Sp)	Jenny Fradgley (Sp)	Jonathan Chilvers (VC)		<b>10</b>
Resources and Fire & Rescue OSC	Adrian Warwick (C) Parminder Singh Birdi (VC) Piers Daniell Pete Gilbert Sue Markham Rik Spencer Rob Tromans	Caroline Phillips (Sp)	Sarah Boad (Sp)	Will Roberts (Sp)		<b>10</b>
Joint Staff Negotiating Body (2) [*+ Leader Appointment x2]	+Izzi Seccombe +Andy Jenns	Barbara Brown	Bill Gifford			
Joint Teachers Negotiating Body (2) [*+ Leader Appointment x2]	+Kam Kaur +Andy Jenns	Barbara Brown	Bill Gifford			

<b>Committees</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Lab</b>	<b>LD</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>WRA/Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
Pension Fund Sub-Committee *appointments are made by Staff and Pensions Committee	Brian Hammersley Christopher Kettle Mandy Tromans	Sarah Millar	Bill Gifford			
Pool of Members to sit on the Appointments Sub-Committees and Appeals Sub-Committees.	Margaret Bell Parminder Singh Birdi Peter Butlin Jeff Clarke John Cooke Andy Crump Yousef Dahmash Piers Daniell Brian Hammersley Dave Humphreys Andy Jenns Kam Kaur Justin Kerridge Jan Matecki Jeff Morgan P O'Donnell Wallace Redford Izzi Seccombe Jill Simpson-Vince Mejar Singh Heather Timms Mandy Tromans Adrian Warwick Martin Watson	Barbara Brown Jackie D'Arcy Sarah Feeney John Holland Sarah Millar Caroline Phillips	Sarah Boad Jerry Roodhouse Bill Gifford	Tracey Drew		

4. That John Bridgeman be confirmed as the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee.

5. That the Council confirms/amends membership to the following bodies:

	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
Health and Wellbeing Board (4)	Margaret Bell Izzi Seccombe Jeff Morgan		Jerry Roodhouse
Joint Coventry & Warwickshire Health OSC (5)	Clare Golby John Cooke Chris Mills Penny-Anne O'Donnell	John Holland	
Corporate Parenting Panel (6)	Jeff Morgan Penny-Anne O'Donnell Pete Gilbert	Caroline Phillips	Jerry Roodhouse

	Marian Humphreys		
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) (5)	Parminder Singh Birdi John Cooke Justin Kerridge	Barbara Brown	Sarah Boad
Warwickshire Waste Partnership (5)	Heather Timms Andrew Wright Tim Sinclair Bhagwant Pandher	Sarah Millar	
Horton Joint OSC	Christopher Kettle		

6. That the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health is appointed as the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board
7. That the Council agrees an amendment to the Constitution as it applies to the Health and Wellbeing Board consequent upon the establishment of the Integrated Care System and endorses the appointment of the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board as the Council's nominee on the Integrated Care Partnership and the Strategic Director for People as the Council's nominee on the Integrated Care Board
8. That the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for children's services is appointed as the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
9. That the Council approves the appointment of the Service Manager (Universal Services) as the Proper Officer for Registration Services and authorises the post holder to carry out the duties and powers of the Proper Officer
10. That the Council authorises the Chief Executive to agree the final appointments to the Police and Crime Panel in consultation with Group Leaders as she considers to be necessary to meet the requirements of geographical and political proportionality required and to work with District and Borough representatives to achieve that end.
11. That the Council confirms/appoints to the following external bodies

	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
LEP (1)	Martin Watson		
LGA (4)	Izzi Seccombe Peter Butlin	John Holland	Jerry Roodhouse
CCN (4)	Izzi Seccombe Peter Butlin	John Holland	Jerry Roodhouse
LGA Fire Commission	Andy Crump		

12. That the Council endorses the transfer of the Education Service to the People Directorate and approves the consequential budget transfer, and authorises the Chief Executive to take such steps as she considers necessary to implement the change
13. That Council confirms the delegations of non-executive functions to officers as set out in the Constitution subject to changes to those delegations or to such other delegations previously made as are required to implement any changes agreed by Council (including the transfer of the Education Service to the People Directorate) and authorises the Strategic Director for

Resources to make such amendments to the Council's Constitution as may be required as a consequence of this and any other changes agreed at this meeting

## **5. Overview and Scrutiny - Annual Report**

Councillor Yousef Dahmash, Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, proposed that the annual report be received by Council and was seconded by Councillor Jeff Clarke, Chair of the Communities Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairs of the Committees each highlighted the work of their Committee and paid tribute to the invaluable support provided by Officers and more particularly the Democratic Services Team.

The following points were raised during the debate:

- The onus on Members to further drive the scrutiny agenda and direction of travel.
- The challenge for new Members taking up scrutiny roles after the 2021 election
- The importance of parity of esteem for the scrutiny function, particularly in a council with a large majority and the potential to adopt a Chair of Chairs to provide co-ordination as suggested by the Review of Scrutiny
- That all sides of the chamber had contributed constructively to overview and scrutiny meetings
- The focus on providing the best outcomes for residents and how even small changes could have a big impact
- Reflection on the Review of Scrutiny and subsequent action plan. Improvements had been achieved through the committees' flexible, proactive, and responsive approach to corporate priorities and the use of technology
- The exemplary role of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, particularly for its work on women's health and the ambulance service
- The possibility of receiving more evidentiary contributions from frontline workers, particularly from the NHS and care organisations.

### **Resolved:**

That Council notes the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22.

## **6. Annual Monitor of use of the Urgency and Call-in Procedures July 2021-April 2022**

Councillor Isobel Seccombe presented the annual report on the use of the Council's urgency and call-in procedures, and noted that several urgent decisions had been required during the course of the year and that there had been limited use of the call-in process over the last year. Councillor Kam Kaur seconded the proposal to note the report.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers considered that the Council struck a good balance between the needs for urgency and transparency in its decision making.

### **Resolved:**

That Council note the report.

## 7. Education Schools Capital Programme 2022-23

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader) moved the recommendation as set out in the report. Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi seconded the recommendation and reserved the right to speak. During the debate, the following points were made:

- Attention was drawn to the Local Plans of each of the five district and borough councils and that the county council was required to provide school places to support the house building set out therein. It was claimed that it had previously been estimated that the implications were a requirement for 63 new schools. Councillor John Holland asked if this was the correct figure and how many of the schools had been built
- It was asserted that it had been previously acknowledged that the Oakley Grove School was not built on the preferred site and the costs involved were questioned, considering any losses, and how this compared to the cost that would have been incurred if building had taken place in the centre of the Heathcote estate
- The sufficiency of school places was questioned, particularly in Warwick district, where huts were being provided. The opinion was expressed that it was important to ensure that there were adequate school buildings for children who progressed through the school system
- The view was expressed that schools must not be built to a lower quality due to inflation and a shortage of school spaces and should be fit for the future so that retrofitting of efficiency measures was not required and to maximise revenue savings for the council and the schools
- The provision at Myton School was welcomed
- Disappointment over the absence of provision for Rugby in the report was expressed and assurance was sought that the urgent need in the area was being recognised
- It was noted that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee were planning a task and finish group focussed on sufficiency.
- The delivery of the extension to the Queen Elizabeth Academy was welcomed as an exciting development for the school.

Councillor Singh Birdi noted that the debate had extended beyond the recommendations in the report and asserted that provision needed to be economically viable and compliant with building regulations and welcomed the proposals.

In response, Councillor Peter Butlin noted that the Council had delivered five new schools since 2016, with a further four being delivered in the following four years. He reflected on the reasons for the siting of the Oakley Grove school and stated that, after consideration, the current site was the preferred site. He advised that developments would be built to the new building regulations and whenever possible and financially viable, it was the Council's intention to exceed those standards, but the primary concern was to ensure there were sufficient school places in Warwickshire. He noted work had been commissioned to determine where and when school places were needed so that decisions about school building in Rugby and across the county were made on current data and projections.

### **Vote**

A vote was held. The recommendation was agreed unanimously.

### **Resolved:**

That Council agrees the addition of £8.630 million to the capital programme to deliver the schemes at The Queen Elizabeth Academy, Atherstone and Myton School, Warwick, to be funded from Department for Education grant and third party contributions.

## **8. Review of the Warwickshire County Council Members' Allowances Scheme - Report of the Independent Panel**

Councillor Isobel Seccombe, Leader of the Council, noted the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and the suggested increases to Members Allowances. However, it was her view that, due to the economic situation that had developed since the Panel completed its work, the increase was not accepted and, instead, she moved the Member Allowances Scheme as set out at Appendix 2 of the report. Councillor Peter Butlin seconded.

### **Amendment**

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers proposed an amendment seeking an additional paragraph to be inserted after paragraph number 12 of the Member Allowances Scheme as set out at Appendix 2 of the report:

“Details of all allowances paid in accordance with paragraphs 2 (Basic Allowance) and 10-14 (Special Responsibility, Co-Optee and Spokesperson Allowances) of the Members Allowances Scheme 2022-2026 and received by each Councillor in respect of each role they undertake will be published on the Council website.”

In moving the amendment, Councillor Chilvers stated that he was supportive of the link to the staff pay increase and did not think it was appropriate to increase pay beyond that. However, he did consider that the Executive were underpaid, particularly the Leader and Deputy Leader whose allowances compared unfavourably to those paid at neighbouring authorities and he would have been supportive of an increase for those roles. He also considered that the proposed change in arrangements for opposition groups was fairer. He added that he was proposing the amendment so that all information about Special Responsibility Allowances was published and to give greater transparency about the expenditure of the Leadership pots to support payments for Group Spokesperson and Cabinet Support, both of which he considered were valid roles, but he welcomed more transparency on the payments.

Councillor Will Robert seconded the amendment, considering that the publication of information set out in the amendment would ensure that the expenditure within the scheme was transparent to the public.

### **Debate**

Councillor Sarah Feeney noted that staff on NJC terms had lost money in real terms over the past 12 years and this similarly limited increase would help to focus attention on staff pay.

Councillor Sarah Boad highlighted and applauded the availability of reimbursement for carer expenses, which was echoed by Councillor Judy Falp. Councillor Boad suggested that political groups should ensure potential candidates were aware of the ability to claim these expenses as one way to support a cross section of representatives.

Councillor Peter Butlin expressed the view that if the Panel's recommendations had been received in the previous year, he would have accepted them to bring allowances in line with other authorities. However, in the current climate, with a rising cost of living he did not believe it was the right time to increase councillor allowances. Whilst he did not consider it was appropriate to top the comparison table on allowances, Councillor Butlin supported the view that it was important to try to attract a broad spectrum of people to represent Warwickshire and he recognised that allowances played a part in that. He, therefore, reluctantly supported the recommendations.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers expressed his hope that Councillors would recognise his efforts to increase transparency and support the amendment.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe echoed the comments of Councillor Butlin, noting that the cost of living and the difficulties being faced by staff and the public made it inappropriate to accept the increases proposed by the Panel at this time. She did not accept the amendment and expressed the view that annual allowances were already published and, as the Chamber worked well cross-party, there was an ability to hold each other to account without changing the existing arrangements.

### **Vote**

A vote was held on the Green group amendment which was lost. A vote was held on the original motion which was carried by a majority.

### **Resolved**

That the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel be noted and that the Member Allowances Scheme at Appendix 2 to the report be approved for the period May 2022 to May 2026.

## **9. Notices of Motion**

The following motion as set out on the agenda was proposed by Councillor Sarah Boad:

### Bus Services in Warwickshire

Following a motion agreed by Council in July 2021, a cross party Member Group was set up to work with officers to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

It is noted that the Warwickshire Bus Service Improvement Plan was unsuccessful in getting any government funding.

Services are still suffering from a reduced frequency of service and low passenger numbers, and now Stagecoach have raised the cost of many journeys.

This Council agrees to ask the BSIP Group to look at the Plan with officers, and to report back to Cabinet with a costed list of those actions that the Group considers could be taken through the appropriate Council governance processes for alternative funding consideration.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Boad reflected on the allocation of funding and stated that it would be tragedy if the work done by officers and the exciting plans for bus services in Warwickshire came to nothing. She was keen to see the work continue and residents be encouraged to use bus services. She lamented changes to bus services in Leamington, noting lengthy journeys and increasing costs, and expressed the view that a modal shift was needed, not just to walking or cycling, but to also include public transport. This required a well-used, efficient service with reasonable journey times and routes, particularly for bus-pass users.

Councillor Bill Gifford seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

## **Debate**

During the course of the debate, the following points were made:

- The work of the BSIP was applauded and disappointment was expressed that funding had not been secured
- The need to encourage and support bus travel across the county in urban and rural areas was acknowledged
- An inventive and creative approach would be needed as it was difficult to nudge people away from car use as their default vehicle
- The benefit of bus use for alleviating loneliness was highlighted, together with the benefits for those who had limited other travel options
- The council needed to be conscious of the commercial viability of bus companies, particularly those replacing their fleet with hydro or electric vehicles, with the example of the sale of Johnsons bus operations in Stratford being cited
- It was suggested that the group needed to consider not just funding, but the root cause of bus services not making money and why people did not use the services
- The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on bus provision was notable with bus routes being redrawn and lengthened, and some areas being excluded from the new routes. Despite the lifting of Covid-19 regulations, services had not been reinstated and remained less frequent
- Fare increases by Stagecoach were noted, particularly that in Leamington it was cheaper for a family to go by taxi than bus.
- A view was expressed that the implementation of the Local Transport Plan should address the issues being raised by the motion
- The importance of having a costed list of measures for consideration was emphasised with clear and robust business cases being put forward for consideration against a backdrop of limited funding and competing priorities.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Gifford considered that the member group needed to understand why buses were not being used. He cited cost, frequency and knowledge of routes and timetables as barriers and related this to the bus journeys in Leamington. He suggested that the Member Group could look at areas where there was a culture of bus use (eg London) and consider what elements of success could be implemented locally. He considered that the Member Group had presented an excellent report and was disappointed that funding had not been secured. He noted that there were limited funds available but considered that with the right approach, improvements could be made and bus usage would increase.

Councillor Boad welcomed the debate and the unanimous view that bus services needed to be improved and commended the way the bus service operated in London. She agreed that it was important to have a costed list of measures and applauded the staff who had worked on the BSIP.

### **Vote**

A vote was held which was agreed unanimously.

### **Resolved:**

Following a motion agreed by Council in July 2021, a cross party Member Group was set up to work with officers to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

It is noted that the Warwickshire Bus Service Improvement Plan was unsuccessful in getting any government funding.

Services are still suffering from a reduced frequency of service and low passenger numbers, and now Stagecoach have raised the cost of many journeys.

This Council agrees to ask the BSIP Group to look at the Plan with officers, and to report back to Cabinet with a costed list of those actions that the Group considers could be taken through the appropriate Council governance processes for alternative funding consideration.

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

1) Councillor Sarah Millar to Councillor Heather Timms

“When will the Portfolio holder confirm with the commercial partner “Solar Together” the launch of the new round of registrations for Warwickshire residents to express their interest in the potential cost savings of group buying solar panels and battery storage?”

Councillor Timms advised that supporting residents in their journey to reduce carbon emissions had been the goal of the Solar Together scheme since its creation in 2021. Phase 2 of the scheme was expected to be launched before the end of this calendar year. However, there was awareness that there were national and local supply chain challenges and increasing costs so there was an element of availability for the scheme. There was also a desire to review Phase 1 of the scheme which had not yet completed with the council’s partner before the next round was launched.

2) Councillor Jan Matecki to Councillor Isobel Seccombe

“It has now been nearly three months since Russia invaded Ukraine. Ukrainians continue to put up an amazing brave resistance against the brutality of the Russian army. Many women, children and the elderly continue to flee their homes in search of safety. Warwickshire residents are amongst the most welcoming in this country with many of them generously offering up their homes to give sanctuary to displaced Ukrainians. I would like to ask the Leader what is this council doing during this crisis to help and support Ukrainian families that come to this county?”

Councillor Isobel Seccombe thanked all the residents of Warwickshire for their commendable generosity to Ukrainian people who had been displaced and the Council's team who were also working hard to provide help.

She stated that the Council was doing a lot of work, some of which Members would already be aware of and, in her response, Councillor Seccombe provided the headlines of this work. A Warwickshire Welcome pack had been devised and translated and made available to sponsors and guests to provide signposting to health and wellbeing, education and child care services. A set of safeguarding and welfare visits were taking place to understand the nature of buildings being offered and also to listen to the needs of the families, ensure that people were not being put into more danger and vice versa and ensure that appropriate signposting to support was provided.

The scope of the accommodation that should be appropriate had been agreed and there was a great working relationship with the districts and boroughs taking place who were stepping up to help and support in this particular area. The Fire and Rescue Service was also linked into the process.

Dedicated email addresses had been set up to ensure prompt responses for general enquiries, payments, DBS checks together with a dedicated freephone telephone number. A webpage had also been created which could be translated instantly. Councillor Seccombe would circulate the email addresses and freephone numbers to councillors.

In terms of payments, sponsors had access to £350 per month and a one-off payment of £200 on the arrival of the Ukrainian family and the county council was making those payments.

A number of webinars for sponsors and community groups had taken place which were providing useful two-way information channels.

Councillor Seccombe acknowledged there were glitches in the system, noting there were issues around visas, particularly for children without passports, but it was recognised that it was essential to ensure children were travelling with an appropriate adult. One of the immediate challenges being faced was that although MPs could access visa information for individuals through the Home Office, the Council could not, and this was something the Council was pushing for to enable people to be helped more quickly.

The Council was also working the CCGs to provide information on where sponsors and families were located so that they could plan service provision to try to ensure that there was access to health services.

A lot of advice through the Department for Education was being received around how children should be supported in schools and through mental health services.

This work was being undertaken on the back of Afghan and Syrian family resettlements and the teams were at full stretch.

Councillor Seccombe expressed her pride in the work the Council was doing to support and welcome the people of Ukraine who had been displaced. She concluded by thanking those families who had stepped up to offer a home and refuge.

3) Councillor Sarah Millar to Councillor Peter Butlin

“In light of the Prime Minister’s comments about wanting people to be looked after by their councils in his interview with Susanna Reid on GMB (Good Morning Britain) on 3 May 2022, can the portfolio holder confirm how much support the Council has already received from central Government to support Warwickshire residents with energy and other cost of living increases and how much additional extra support it expects to receive in the future?”

Councillor Butlin advised that the government funded £4,093,080 in 2021/22 which was spent on the Household Support Fund. A further £3,474,259 had been allocated by government for the first six months of 2022/23 for spend against the Household Support Fund.

The Council also continued to run its own Local Welfare Scheme and since 2019, £644,657 of central government Covid 19 funding had been used to support this scheme.

The government would be lobbied for more funding to help people in Warwickshire reach full employment, which linked to the Warwickshire Recovery and Investment Fund that helped to keep people in employment.

The voluntary sector had also been brought together in terms of supporting people who were experiencing difficulties.

4) Councillor Jonathan Chilvers to Councillor Peter Butlin

Councillor Chilvers noted that his question had been answered as part of the debate on the Education Schools Capital Programme 2022-23 report and instead noted that all schools in that programme were going to be built to the new 2021 regulations, including the Queen Elizabeth Academy and Oakley Grove, but that the Myton School Sixth Form was currently only planned to be built to the 2013 regulations. He asked if Councillor Butlin shared his concerns in that regard and would commit to ensuring it was built to the higher 2021 regulations?

Councillor Butlin responded that bearing in mind the tight building schedule and funding schedule, and that it was imperative that the sixth form facility was available to accommodate children from Myton Grove, it would be disingenuous to make promises about raising standards and increasing costs on the build at this stage as that could jeopardise the delivery of the project and the future education standards for the children who would end up in Oakley Grove.

5) Councillor Jonathan Chilvers to Councillor Wallace Redford

"What is the average length of time that Warwickshire's pedestrian crossings are programmed to wait after the button is pressed before turning red if there is a steady stream of traffic?"

Councillor Redford advised that the average length of time that a pedestrian would need to wait for the green crossing signal to be lit in Warwickshire was 24 seconds after the button had been pressed. However, this period varied during the day dependent on how busy the road was with vehicular traffic. The maximum time a pedestrian would need to wait for the green crossing signal at a pedestrian crossing to be activated was 32 seconds once the button had been pressed. All crossings were intelligently monitored, and the light came on in three seconds if there was no traffic.

Councillor Chilvers asked whether Councillor Redford would investigate and consider whether the timings should be lowered to increase the speed of pedestrian journey times. Councillor Redford agreed to consider the request.

5) Councillor Rob Tromans to Councillor Isobel Seccombe

“As a Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Councillor, I am grateful that the Leader has reconfirmed the county's commitment to transforming Nuneaton and as Mayor of Nuneaton and Bedworth, I am also delighted that the Leader has confirmed the commitment for a Transforming Bedworth initiative as well. I have been struck by just how enthusiastic and interested residents are right across Nuneaton and Bedworth and the surrounding area about the transformation work due to go on there and which is picking up pace. The public are looking for more information so can we have some more regular and detailed communications to keep residents informed, particularly to elected members in surrounding areas who receive a lot of questions.”

Councillor Seccombe acknowledged the request and reflected that there had been concern about how to move forward and get all the pieces in place for the initiative but that it would now be helpful to provide feedback. She agreed to make sure that feedback was available but highlighted that it was a joint project and the information needed to feed through to all members on both councils.

5) Councillor Will Roberts to Councillor Peter Butlin

“Can you clarify your answer regarding Myton School? I know you cannot commit to building to 2021 regulations, but will you investigate building to 2021 regulations or not?”

Councillor Peter Butlin reminded members that funding into the capital programme had been approved earlier in this meeting for the school as per the building standards and regulations on the quotation. To go back, imposing further standards would be disingenuous and jeopardise the delivery of the school and the places needed for Oakley Grove and into the future for Myton School. Councillor Butlin considered that there would be opportunities in future when further technologies were available to retrofit and take savings because of that investment going forward. However, he could not at this stage jeopardise delivery of the school by imposing higher standards as those higher standards were already imposing higher costs on future projects. In effect, Members had voted the funding through on the earlier standards.

5) Councillor Jenny Fradgley to Councillor Clare Golby

“Can Councillor Golby provide councillors with an update on ambulances services in Warwickshire?”

Councillor Golby advised that she would respond in writing.

## **11. Any Other items of Urgent Business**

None.

The meeting rose at 12.57pm

.....  
Chair