

County Council

Tuesday 19 July 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Dave Humphreys (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 Jackie D'Arcy, Councillor Yousef Dahmash, Councillor Piers Daniell, Councillor Tracey Drew, Councillor Judy Falp, Councillor Sarah Feeney, Councillor Bill Gifford, Councillor Peter Gilbert, Councillor Clare Golby, Councillor Brian Hammersley, Councillor John Holland, Councillor Marian Humphreys, Councillor Kam Kaur, Councillor Jack Kennaugh, Councillor Justin Kerridge, Councillor Christopher Kettle, Councillor Sue Markham, Councillor Jan Matecki, Councillor Chris Mills, Councillor Jeff Morgan, Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher, Councillor Daren Pemberton, Councillor Caroline Phillips, Councillor Wallace Redford, Councillor Will Roberts, Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE, Councillor Ian Shenton, Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince, Councillor Tim Sinclair, Councillor Richard Spencer, Councillor Heather Timms, Councillor Mandy Tromans, Councillor Robert Tromans, Councillor Adrian Warwick and Councillor Martin Watson

1. General

The Chair welcomed Councillor Ian Shenton to his first meeting of the County Council following his election to Arden Division on 14 July 2022.

(1) Apologies for Absence

Councillors Jenny Fradgley, Andy Jenns, Sarah Millar, Penny-Anne O'Donnell, Howard Roberts, Kate Rolfe, Mejar Singh, and Andy Wright.

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

Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne notified an interest in item 5 on the agenda, Adoption of the Warwickshire Minerals Local Plan 2018-2032, and indicated that he would leave the room during the debate on this item and not participate in the vote.

Councillor Clare Golby notified that she had changed her job but had not yet had an opportunity to update her register of interests.

(3) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 17 May 2022 were agreed as a true record.

(4) Chair's announcements

The Chair, Councillor Dave Humphreys, made the following announcements

1) Local Government Apprentice of the Year

“Andre Russell, one of our many fantastic apprentices, was part of a winning team at the Local Government Apprentice of the Year which took place virtually on 25 May 2022.

The national event, now in its second year, was designed and delivered by South West Councils and the East of England Local Government Association with support from the LGA.

More than 100 Level 2 and 3 local government apprentices from across the country took part in the one-day event, with workshops which encouraged them to learn, network and showcase their skills, expertise, and initiative.

Andre and his team members won the Team Award for their innovative idea for councils to save money by going paperless.

Andre joined WCC in June 2021 as an Apprentice Community Development Worker which involves attending different community groups, youth groups and community events. He is just one example of our many fantastic apprentices working at the Council.

Many congratulations Andre!”

Andre Russell was asked to stand for a round applause.

2) Lawyers in Local Government Awards 2022

“Huge congratulations are also due to the Council’s Legal Services team who have been recognised on multiple fronts for outstanding achievements that contribute to local communities at this year’s national Lawyers in Local Government Awards.

The Lawyers in Local Government Awards celebrate the most dedicated and engaged professionals across local government legal practice and highlight the crucial work that local government lawyers do for their local communities.

Warwickshire Legal Service’s Children and Families legal team were awarded ‘Legal Team of the Year’, in recognition of the work they do to safeguard the children of Warwickshire and the many other local authority areas that they support every day.

Jack Cantwell, a Senior Solicitor and team lead for the Corporate and Commercial legal team, was awarded ‘Legal Project Team/Individual of the Year’ in recognition of his work on a number of major initiatives, including the County Council’s Warwickshire Property and Development Group.

Our Assistant Director for Governance & Policy, Sarah Duxbury, was Highly Commended for

her 'Significant Contribution to Local Government Law and Practice'.

Stephanie Hartopp, who joined the Council as a trainee solicitor in September 2019 and is now a Solicitor for the Warwickshire Legal Services' Courts team, was a finalist for 'Junior Lawyer of the Year'.

Many congratulations to you all."

Representatives of the Legal Team in attendance at the meeting were asked to stand for a round of applause.

3) Municipal Journal Achievement Awards

"At the MJ Achievement awards ceremony held on 24 June, Monica Fogarty, our Chief Executive, won the award for Chief Executive of the Year and Nigel Minns, People Directorate's Strategic Director, was given the award for Corporate Director of the Year.

Monica received her award in recognition of her outstanding leadership of the Council, where she moves with pace, precision, determination and commitment and on account of her passion and compassion, which consistently inspire and motivate those around her.

Nigel received the award for Corporate Director of the Year. The award recognised Nigel's exceptional leadership covering public health, children, adults and commissioning services. These areas provide considerable challenges in a large county and this was recognised by the judges.

Congratulations to you both!"

Monica Fogarty and Nigel Minns were invited to stand for a round of applause.

Councillors Isobel Seccombe, John Holland, and Sarah Boad extended their congratulations and expressed their pride in the award winners.

(5) Petitions

None.

(6) Public Speaking

None.

2. Member Dispensation

Councillor Isobel Seccombe moved the recommendation that a dispensation be granted for Councillor Howard Roberts which was seconded by Councillor Chilvers. There was no debate but Council joined to wish Councillor Roberts well.

Resolved

That the Council approves the absence of Councillor Howard Roberts from meetings of the authority on the grounds of ill health.

3. Education Capital Programme 2022/23

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader) moved the recommendation as set out in the report. Councillor Kam Kaur seconded the recommendation and reserved the right to speak.

Debate

Councillor Tracey Drew noted media reports about potential school closures due to the heatwave taking place at the time of the meeting and expressed the opinion that schools should be built to the highest standards possible to ensure that they were future proofed against the need to close during thermal weather incidents which would be detrimental to pupils' education.

Councillor Bill Gifford expressed the view that it was important to support and work with schools, like Trinity Roman Catholic School, which were undersubscribed but improving after changes to management, to ensure that they remained viable, rather than resort to building new schools.

Councillor Judy Falp shared her disappointment at the delay to the opening of Oakley Grove School.

Councillor John Holland raised concerns regarding the siting of the Oakley Grove School and the poor accessibility of the site together with the additional costs that were being incurred during the building works. He sought a discussion on how an inquiry into the development could be instigated to establish lessons learnt and how the best education for students could be secured.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers raised concern regarding the additional funding requested, and the knock-on effect this would have for other projects. He welcomed the building of Oakley Grove and Shipston Schools to 2022 Regulations, viewing building to a higher standard as an investment that would result in lower fuel bills. However, he lamented the lack of a mechanism to share the proceeds of investment.

Councillor Sarah Boad praised the usefulness of the now obsolete Area Committees as useful forums to share information. She commented on the need to ensure school places were available to support new housing developments as they came to fruition, and she considered that this needed to be pre-empted and places available so that children could go to school close to home. She also supported previous comments that it was crucial for schools to be built fit for purpose so that children's education did not suffer because of thermal weather events.

Councillor Robert Tromans welcomed the report and expressed his hope that the report would be the first of a series that would bring forward projects in other areas of the county.

Councillor Jan Matecki similarly welcomed the report and commented on the setting of the Oakley Grove site in relation to improved walkways, cycleways and the location of the country park which reduced the need for motorised travel on school journeys.

Councillor Kam Kaur noted that existence of the capital programme to ensure that the Council could meet its statutory duty to provide school places and that work was underway to set up and

build a new sufficiency strategy for the period 2023 to 2035 onwards. This would also include new provisions and expansions discussed with the district and borough council through the local planning process. It was important to sustain and grow existing schools to make them more sustainable.

Councillor Peter Butlin noted the impact of inflation on budgets and the need for wise management of funds. The Council was building schools above minimum regulations – at Oakley Grove building to new regulatory standards was adding £2.5m to the overall cost. However, he considered that the right balance had been reached and in terms of building to a higher standard, there was no recourse to claw back any investments. He stated that he had not previously accepted that there should be an inquiry into the delivery of Oakley Grove School but had suggested that issues be raised with Warwick District Council which had allocated the site which he did not consider as being poor in terms of accessibility.

Vote

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was carried by a majority.

Resolved:

That Council agrees:

1. To increase the Capital Programme allocation for Oakley Grove Allthrough School by £6.000 million to £56.150 million to be funded from Department for Education Grant.
2. To increase the Capital Programme allocation from Stratford-upon-Avon High School by £2.2 million to £13.773 to be funded from the Department for Education grant
3. To add the scheme at Shipston High School set out at paragraph 3 of the report at a cost of £10.532 million funded by £10.023 million from the Department for Education grant and £0.509 million from developer contributions

4. Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report 2021/22

Councillor Christopher Kettle introduced the published report and moved the motion stating the Audit and Standards Committee had undertaken some very valuable work over the last 12 months. He thanked members of the committee and John Bridgeman, the Chair of their committee for their hard work and noted the contribution of the late John Horner.

Councillor John Cooke seconded the motion.

Councillor Bill Gifford observed that Councillor John Horner had been a great loss to the Committee. He noted that there had been no standards issues for the Committee to consider for a number of years and he considered this to be a compliment to the Council and the amicable approach that was taken. He hoped that this would continue into the future.

Councillor Kettle welcomed these comments and commended the report to the meeting.

Vote

A vote was held. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolved:

That Council endorses the Annual Report of the Audit & Standards Committee.

5. Adoption of the Warwickshire Minerals Local Plan 2018-2032

In accordance with his prior declaration of interest, Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne left the meeting during the determination of this item.

Councillor Wallace Redford introduced the report and moved the recommendations. In doing so, he explained that as the Local Planning Authority for Minerals, the council was required to prepare a plan for the steady and adequate supply of minerals. The Minerals Plan had been through several consultation stages with residents and stakeholders since 2015 and, following an Examination in Public, which was overseen by a Government Planning Inspector, it was now in the final stage of the plan process: plan adoption. Councillor Redford also noted that Cabinet had received a letter from Barford Parish Council opposing the Plan, specifically in relation to the Wasperton site and, although the consultation had closed, a response was being prepared.

Councillor Jo Barker seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Debate

Councillor John Holland noted that concerns from residents of Barford and Wasperton were not new and had been brought up at the outset of the process. Local residents were now receiving help from their MP who was promoting a Bill to restrict quarrying close to homes, which this plan would allow, and Councillor Holland did not believe any residents of Warwickshire should be subjected to. He also had concerns about the environmental impact and sustainability.

Councillor Sarah Boad referred to the original consultation from 2018, noting that the plans had moved on since then as it had taken some time to move through the required process. Residents from her division and the Parish Council had been in contact with her and she was somewhat reassured by the comments of Councillor Redford but she considered that the suggestion that objections could be submitted during the planning permission process was missing the point somewhat. Councillor Boad considered that the Plan was unsatisfactory.

Councillor Jan Matecki noted that a lot of consultation had taken place but it had been based on the prevailing facts at the time, and the position at the time of the meeting was different and the Plan was now out of date. It had been asserted that objections to developments could be raised through the planning process but he considered it would be difficult to argue against the Plan. Reflecting on a recent report to Regulatory Committee, Councillor Matecki noted that the current production of sand and gravel at Dunton Quarry (200,000 – 250,000 tonnes per year) would outstrip that anticipated at Wasperton and he was questioned whether the Wasperton site was, therefore, required. Councillor Matecki went on to highlight the risks to health and the environment and suggested that a cautious approach should be adopted while further information was sought.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers noted the need to produce a significant amount of sand and gravel to produce cement for houses and infrastructure. However, he considered that a realistic approach

to how much needed to be extracted was required since most sand and gravel came from the sea. He noted that the target amount had been approved as sound by government but levels of extraction were projected to overshoot the target. He suggested that more consideration needed to be given to how to balance the costs of environmental degradation with the need to build infrastructure. To this end, it would be important to look at a reduction in the use of cement and more effective use of recycled aggregate so that as much cement would not be needed in future.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe noted the evolution of the Plan over time, including the reduction in the number of sites that were included since the initial draft. She noted that a seven year supply of sand and gravel was required. This supported development in the local plan. She considered that it was important to provide materials as close to any development taking place as possible and this meant that not all sites identified in the Plan might come forward, but instead would be utilised as required to reduce road mileage. Sand and gravel could only be quarried from certain sites and the sand and gravel quarried would be used across the West Midlands, where there was a requirement for sand and gravel. Councillor Seccombe went on to suggest that a sense of realism about the model of extraction was required and extraction was now much better managed than in times gone by and there were requirements for the environment and safety that would be met. She considered that it would be important, when sites came through the planning process, for there to be a clear policy in place for operators to work with local community groups to manage the impact on them. She concluded that it had been a long process to adoption and there had been extensive consultation providing opportunities for engagement with all parties. It was now at the point where a Plan needed to be delivered before one was imposed.

Councillor Will Roberts stated that the Council should not ignore the environmental impacts of siting a quarry so close to the two villages of Wasperton and Barford. He also emphasised that the debate had concentrated on the part of the document which focussed on the extraction of sand and gravel but had not considered the elements relating to the extraction of fossil fuels, which he was deeply concerned about and did not align with the declaration of a climate emergency.

Councillor Martin Watson considered that this was an emotive topic for those affected. He acknowledged that quarry sites were not welcomed by local communities but considered that the recommendations of the Inspector had been built into the plan which offered some reassurance.

Councillor Jo Barker explained that she had commenced her career in minerals and had spent a lot of time with sand and gravel quarries. She pointed out that, during the years that she was involved in quarrying, huge strides had been made in the mitigations that were made against the hazards to those living close by, and the process of reinstatement would minimise the amount of airborne particles that caused concern. Importantly, there had been considerable consultation and it would go through planning again, and whenever any sites were put forward, any new points or research could be considered and taken into account through the planning process. Councillor Barker was confident that the process the Plan had gone through would enable it to stand up to scrutiny. She acknowledged that there was a balance between having to build and the duty to have sand and gravel supplies, not just for Warwickshire, but for national infrastructure against carbon emissions. She considered that dredging for sand, as had been raised in the debate, was not just thought to be disastrous environmentally but also the sand produced required more work before it was usable due to the high salt content. In conclusion, Councillor Barker asserted that there was a statutory duty to provide sand and gravel not just for Warwickshire but for regional and national infrastructure. Referring back to section 4.1 of the report, Councillor Barker highlighted

that minerals were a finite resource that could only be worked where they were found and the closer to where they are used, the better it was for the environment.

In reply, Councillor Redford emphasised that the Council was required to produce the Plan and had gone through a long consultation process during which there had been opportunities for interested parties to put forward comments and objections. The Planning Inspector had asked for some modifications to the Plan which had all been investigated and completed, and the Planning Inspector had found the Plan to be sound. Councillor Redford noted that there were some small points on the Plans to be redrawn, which the Inspector was aware of, and those changes were in progress. Sand and gravel extraction could only happen where it was found and the Plan stated that endeavours would take place to ensure that the environmental impact was kept to a minimum. There was no further consultation on the Plan and the planning process would apply when sites came forward in the future.

Vote

A recorded vote was held. The results were:

Votes for

Councillors Jo Barker, Brett Beetham, Margaret Bell, Parminder Singh Birdi, Peter Butlin, Jeff Clarke, John Cooke, Andy Crump, Yousef Dahmash, Piers Daniell, Peter Gilbert, Clare Golby, Brian Hammersley, Dave Humphreys, Marian Humphreys, Kam Kaur, Jack Kennaugh, Justin Kerridge, Christopher Kettle, Sue Markham, Chris Mills, Jeff Morgan, Bhagwant Singh Pandher, Daren Pemberton, Wallace Redford, Isobel Seccombe OBE, Ian Shenton, Jill Simpson-Vince, Tim Sinclair, Richard Spencer, Heather Timms, Mandy Tromans, Robert Tromans, Adrian Warwick and Martin Watson (35)

Votes against

Councillors Sarah Boad, Barbara Brown, Jonathan Chilvers, Jackie D'Arcy, Tracey Drew, Bill Gifford, John Holland, Caroline Phillips, Will Roberts, and Jerry Roodhouse (10)

Abstentions

Councillors Judy Falp and Jan Matecki (2)

At the time of the vote, Councillors Richard Baxter-Payne and Sarah Feeney were not present in the Chamber.

Resolved

That Council:

1. Adopts the Mineral Local Plan 2018- 2032 and its Policies Map, with all the Main Modifications recommended by the Examination Inspector and the Minor Modifications proposed by the Strategic Director for Communities, as a development plan document in accordance with section 23(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; and
2. Authorises the Strategic Director for Communities to take the steps required by Regulations 26 and 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and any other steps consequential upon or necessary to give effect to the adoption including

making the formatting, cartographical and typographical corrections described in paragraph 5.4 of the report to the final Plan to be placed on deposit.

Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne returned to the Chamber.

6. In Year Council Appointments

Councillor Isobel Seccombe, Leader of the Council, moved that Council agree the proposals set out in the report. Councillor Tim Sinclair seconded the proposals, which were put to the vote and agreed as set out below.

Resolved

That Council approves

1. The appointment of Councillor Brian Hammersley to the Fire and Rescue Local Pension Board of the Firefighter's Pension Scheme for a term of three years from the date of this decision.
2. The appointment of the Strategic Director for People and the Director of Public Health to the Integrated Care Partnership
3. The appointment of Councillor Kate Rolfe to the pool of members from which the membership of Appointments, Disciplinary And Disciplinary Appeals Subcommittees can be drawn when required

7. Notices of Motion

(1) Educational Attainment

The following motion as set out on the agenda was proposed by Councillor Brett Beetham:

In line with Government's White Paper on Levelling Up, this Council is committed to levelling-up and ensuring that everyone in Warwickshire gets the best start in life, no matter what their background or where they live. The Council's approach to Levelling Up approved by Cabinet this month includes a priority around educational attainment reflecting the recent State of Warwickshire report, approved by this Council in February of this year, which highlighted the inequality within attainment in education in the county.

In order to further explore the reasons for this, and to establish how we as a Council can help effect positive change and reduce the present inequalities in relation to educational attainment, this Council will establish a time limited cross party Member Group. The Group should comprise members from all five areas of the county and should report back to Cabinet on its progress by end February 2023.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Beetham illustrated the notion that children and young people in Nuneaton and Bedworth, and in North Warwickshire, were academically disadvantaged with statistics that established that over 40% of children in these areas were not meeting the required basic standards for reading, writing and maths and that these were the only areas in Warwickshire which were consistently below the national average for English. He noted that whilst not everyone was academically minded, and whilst there were high levels of trade apprenticeships in Nuneaton

and Bedworth, there were also high levels of people without qualifications despite vocational qualifications being increasingly important within trades. He pointed to the differences in disposable income between people living in Nuneaton and Bedworth and those living in Warwick to demonstrate the result of educational inequality. He noted that residents were not lacking in drive or ambition and urged Council to support the motion and agree to set up a working group to investigate the reasons for the disparity and what could be done to level up education in the county.

Councillor Yousef Dahmash seconded the motion expressing the view that education was a driver of opportunity and as the Council held influence over the bodies involved in education, it had a responsibility to set the right tone. Whilst the Council was working to improve educational opportunities, the proposed Member Group could explore what more could be done. As Chair of the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, he considered that challenging school performance had been problematic as only limited success had been achieved in bringing together key stakeholders for discussions. He considered that there was more that could be done to address longstanding disparities and welcomed the proposals to involve all areas of the County in this work.

Debate

Councillor Isobel Seccombe expressed her support for the motion, which was timely as it dovetailed with the levelling up paper which had recently been considered by Cabinet. Education was a key aspect of the levelling up approach and it was an important service to get right due to the lifetime impact it would have. Councillor Seccombe lamented that the Council was not a Local Education Authority and was not able to hold more educationists to account but it was right for the Council do what it could to maintain pressure on those who had the power to influence educational attainment.

Councillor Tracey Drew also welcomed the motion. She noted that society had made some strides in reducing inequality but sought reassurance that the proposed member group would be productive in its investigations and ensure that even larger strides could be taken locally in a meaningful and tangible way.

Councillor Rob Tromans also commented on the timeliness of the motion and welcomed the focus on giving people at least a basic standard of literacy which would increase employability and provide greater opportunities. He stated that it was important to hold those with a responsibility for education to account.

Councillor Barbara Brown was supportive of the motion. She noted the importance of recognising the complexity of issues that contributed to the way children achieved or did not achieve and that there was not a simple solution. She considered that the Member Group's work should provide some focus on readiness for learning, concentrating on the first 1000 days, and not just on reaching the basic standards around literacy and numeracy. She echoed the comments of Councillor Seccombe but considered that there was more the Council could do to influence the quality of education in schools and, more widely, to influence the other factors that impinged on a child's ability to learn. She considered that there was a difference between attainment and achievement and achieving to one's optimum needed to be equally valued.

Councillor Pete Gilbert also welcomed the motion. He noted the importance of education as being the key to an individual's future. He supported the comments of Councillor Dahmash that Overview and Scrutiny had received little response on the topic and the level of debate now needed to be raised and difficult questions asked. He wanted to see the level of education improved to make the lives of children better in the future.

Councillor Sarah Boad commented on the fragmentation of the education system and the lack of funding that she considered was a key part of the issue. She noted that there were deprived areas throughout the County and a lack of aspiration could be an issue in all those areas.

Councillor Margaret Bell welcomed the motion and thanked Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the work it had done to date on this issue. She considered that the motion was a logical next step to progress that work and bring focus to the area and what could be done to reduce the gap. She noted within her own division, primary school attainment was good, but children did not then reach their potential at secondary school and she trusted the proposed Member Group could consider the transition from primary to secondary school in their scope.

Councillor Kam Kaur also noted that this motion progressed work commenced in Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and acknowledged the connection to the recent paper on levelling up. She welcomed the proposals and looked forward to the outcomes which would support her work with the Education portfolio and strengthen her engagement with schools and headteachers to hold them to account for how they would fulfil the conclusions of the group.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse noted that the motion posed a very wide ranging question and the key to the success of the member group would be its scope. To this end, he suggested that consideration be given to leadership in schools and how the relationships between academies and the wider education sector could be developed. The member group would also need to consider what inequalities were to be investigated.

Councillor Jeff Morgan highlighted achievements that had taken place to date and noted that in order to make further progress, the Member Group would need to focus on outcomes including aspiration and resources.

Councillor Jeff Clarke noted that there were some good schools in Nuneaton and Bedworth but there were also areas that needed further attention. He considered that the work of the Member Group would provide an understanding of what needed to be done in Nuneaton and Bedworth to bring attainment in the area up to level of the rest of the county. He emphasised the need for students to have opportunity and aspiration and considered that the work of the Member Group should be expedited.

Councillor Clare Golby noted that the poor performance of the Multi Academy Trust in Nuneaton and Bedworth had led to educational failures for 11 years with the associated knock on effects. She considered that the first question the member group should seek to answer was what was meant by levelling up in terms of education and she also emphasised the need for any recommendations made by the Member Group to be followed through.

Councillor Andy Crump also supported the motion, emphasising the need for an equitable educational opportunity across the county. He sought to establish milestones and benchmarks to

achieve this and considered that there was good leadership at the Council to achieve the outcomes for the children of the county.

Councillor Caroline Phillips explained that as a governor of Stockingford Maintained Nursery School she had noted the impact to budgets when the maximum early years child care allowance was claimed (15 hours plus 15 hours for eligible children of working parents) and suggested that the Member Group consider this as part of its scope. She also reflected on the loss of children's centres, which had been set up to address inequalities and the cycle of deprivation.

Councillor Tim Sinclair emphasised the need for the proposed Member Group to have a clear terms of reference and scope and encouraged all those taking part to ensure they had a clear understanding of how they could make a difference. Councillor Sinclair suggested a focus on best practice and learning from the most highly regarded teachers and also supported engagement with parents and young people.

Councillor Adrian Warwick reflected on his experience working in a school with pupils with SEND, some of whom were there from a lack of opportunity and suggested that the member group should consider how best to offer that opportunity. He suggested that it would be important to focus on the opportunities that could be provided to children and young people in Warwickshire that were not currently on offer.

Councillor Jackie D'Arcy reflected on her experience teaching in tertiary education and suggested that the Member Group could consider how to attract new teachers to the profession whilst also retaining aspirational teachers.

In response, Councillor Beetham requested that any suggestions for the scope of the Member Group should be shared with the Group who would agree its scope and definition of levelling up at the initial meeting. He hoped that the whole Council would support the motion to ensure that it had a mandate to undertake the work which essential sought to improve lives in the County.

Vote

A vote was held. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolved

In line with Government's White Paper on Levelling Up, this Council is committed to levelling-up and ensuring that everyone in Warwickshire gets the best start in life, no matter what their background or where they live. The Council's approach to Levelling Up approved by Cabinet this month includes a priority around educational attainment reflecting the recent State of Warwickshire report, approved by this Council in February of this year, which highlighted the inequality within attainment in education in the county.

In order to further explore the reasons for this, and to establish how we as a Council can help effect positive change and reduce the present inequalities in relation to educational attainment, this Council will establish a time limited cross party Member Group. The Group should comprise members from all five areas of the county and should report back to Cabinet on its progress by end February 2023.

(2) Place Based Partnership Priorities and Progress on Reducing Inequalities

Councillor John Holland moved the following motion:

Council notes that Joint Strategic Needs Area Assessments were carried out in 2019. The information within those assessments was provided to the Place Based Partnerships, which provide activity updates to the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board, including on prioritised activities to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities.

The Council requests an update from the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board on Place Based Partnership priorities and progress on reducing inequalities.

In moving the motion, Councillor Holland considered that the subject fitted well with the levelling up agenda. He noted that work on health inequalities had taken place but not all councillors had been briefed.

Councillor Sarah Feeney seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Margaret Bell welcomed the timeliness of the motion and advised that Levelling Up and inequalities was at the top of the agenda for the ICS.

Councillor Feeney noted the importance of the motion in the context of the JSNAs identifying key issues and it would be helpful to understand the work that was taking place to address inequalities, for instance what was being done to address childhood obesity.

Councillor Holland acknowledged that the staff who would have been the driving force behind this work had been involved in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and he paid tribute to that important work but recognised that it was now time to drive forward and take action on the issues identified in the JSNA.

Vote

A vote was held. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolved

Council notes that Joint Strategic Needs Area Assessments were carried out in 2019. The information within those assessments was provided to the Place Based Partnerships, which provide activity updates to the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board, including on prioritised activities to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities.

The Council requests an update from the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board on Place Based Partnership priorities and progress on reducing inequalities.

8. Member Question Time (Standing Order 7)

(1) Question to Councillor Margaret Bell from Councillor John Holland

“In December 2021 Council agreed a Motion about the West Midlands Ambulance Service. Can we have a progress report?”

Councillor Bell recognised that there was a national issue with the Ambulance Service which was also felt in Warwickshire and whilst the county was not the worst affected area, it was still feeling the impact. At the last meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Nigel Minns had been asked to set up a meeting with key players to see whether there was anything that could be done in Warwickshire to mitigate ambulance delays outside hospitals and general ambulance delays getting to calls. There had been a number of operational meetings to look at specific issues and the new Integrated Care Board had agreed to put together a strategic meeting of the key players to see how the organisations could work together. This was a system issue; it was not just about ambulances and there were lots of pieces in the puzzle to fit together to make it work and this required the strategic overview meeting to be arranged. A report would be made to the next meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Councillor Bell indicated that a briefing note could be circulated to members at that stage.

(2) Question to Councillor Kan Kaur from Councillor Jerry Roodhouse

“In light of the recent media coverage and the increased cost of living pressures could the Portfolio Holder state what actions WCC are taking to support school meals in Warwickshire and give assurances that the nutritional value of these meals is not being reduced.”

Councillor Kaur advised that this was a difficult question to answer as the Local Authority did not provide meals to schools. Schools chose their own suppliers. However, Educators was one of the largest suppliers of school meals in Warwickshire and had sent a letter to schools on 5 July 2022 which stated

“Dear Client. In the last couple of days there has been a lot of coverage in the press following a report published by LACA the School Food People stating that due to rising food prices some school caterers have or will switch to cheaper imported meat and change other menu items to reduce costs. I am writing to reassure you that Educators will not be going down this route. We are as committed as ever to supporting British farmers by serving British meat and do not plan to make any changes to our menus, ingredient quality, recipes or portion sizes. Things will remain as they always have: delicious, nutritious food for all. We have had to make a small number of short term changes due to supply chain issues but in most cases, these are on a like for like basis. For example a switch from British Red Tractor chicken fillets to British Red Tractor turkey fillets not due to prices increases but a lack of British chicken due to avian flu. I’m pleased to report our young diners tucked into the delicious turkey just the same with no complaints.”

Councillor Kaur indicated that she was happy to share the letter with Members.

(3) Question to Councillor Wallace Redford from Councillor Jerry Roodhouse

“Will the portfolio holder state what road safety campaigns are being run especially at drivers who are amber gambling at traffic lights.”

Councillor Wallace Redford considered that most if not all members would have experienced drivers who had jumped red and amber traffic lights and caused extremely dangerous situations. In answer to the question, the County was a provider of the National Driver Offender Retraining

Scheme in partnership with Warwickshire Police. The scheme provided educational courses as an alternative to prosecution and points. The programme was recognised as being an effective driver of behavioural change. In addition, the What's Driving Us course was provided, which was designed to change drivers' behaviour using behavioural change techniques. Clients with such offences as driving without due care and attention, jumping traffic lights, tailgating, crossing solid white lines etc were referred on to this course. The course increases clients' awareness and understanding of the cause and consequences of risky, inconsiderate driving, the importance of concentration, observation and anticipation and reasons why their own driving maybe unsafe or inconsiderate. In addition to that, the Council was partners in the National Speed Awareness and National Motorway Awareness Schemes and safe considerate driving courses which showed a blended approach to the problems that such driving abuse caused. The courses were available online or in person and 1-1 and there were also several other courses available. In addition the Road Safety Team was monitored incidences of injuries and where they occurred and how road safety issues might improve the situation. The safe and active travel programme had developed and promoted the support and delivery of road safety education and active travel intervention through schools, work places, and the community across the county. 'Driving Ambitions', the secondary school road safety education programme, was delivered to pupils in Year 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12 by the Road Safety Team in partnership with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service. There was quite a broad approach to road safety and in particular the issue that Councillor Roodhouse raised.

(4) Question to Councillor Seccombe from Councillor Will Roberts

"Since records began in 1893, Warwick, where we sit today hasn't seen temperatures top 30°C very often and especially not in continuous consecutive years. A trend which we are now facing. Within the last decade, Warwick has topped 30°C in 2015/16/17/18/19/20/21 and 2022. In 2019 & 2020 the temperature topped 30°C on four days with Public Health England reporting the heatwave mortality in 2019 showed significant excess deaths in the West Midlands.

This year we have already topped 30°C on 4 days, breaking I believe a record yesterday, which is forecast to be broken again today. This pattern of warming weather and more intense heatwaves is something scientists have been telling us will happen for decades and will continue to worsen. Will you agree with me that the climate emergency is having a direct impact on the health & wellbeing of Warwickshire residents. And this council should be doing more to level up on its poor Climate Action Plan."

Councillor Seccombe noted that the question fell into the portfolio responsibilities of Councillor Heather Timms and invited Councillor Timms to provide a response. Councillor Timms stated that climate change was a main priority in the Council Plan and that a delivery plan had been agreed by Cabinet. A cross party climate change group meeting had taken place in the same week as the Full Council meeting and had discussed the sustainable future strategy, which would be presented to Cabinet in October. She also commented that the Green Shoots funding was being brought forward and Warwickshire was a national leader in biodiversity. Councillor Timms concluded that she did not agree with the statement that "the Council should be doing more to level up on its poor Climate Action Plan" and she was happy to give further information to prove how far ahead Warwickshire was on the agenda.

Councillor Roberts sought clarification from Councillor Timms whether, when she said she did not agree, she was referring to the climate emergency not having a direct impact on health and

wellbeing of residents and Councillor Timms said she had not responded to statements made in the preamble to the question, and had focussed her answer on the question regarding the quality of the action plan.

(5) Question to Councillor Wallace Redford from Councillor Jan Matecki

“I was contacted by a member of public about the Blue Badge Scheme around fast tracking for people who are terminally ill. The complaint was that the county does not have a fast tracking system. Councillor Redford explained to me that we do have a fast tracking scheme whereby applications are turned around in 24 hours, not just for the terminally ill, but also other residents with a range of other issues. My question is can we advertise this on our website to avoid unnecessary stress to residents who otherwise think they have to wait six weeks for their pass?”

Councillor Redford confirmed that the information had been put on the website.

(6) Question to Councillor Peter Butlin from Cllr Jonathan Chilvers

“This question follows on from the earlier debate. I was a little bemused Councillor Butlin said there was no way to get money from academies once we had handed over school buildings (we were talking about them benefiting from lower electricity costs) and I would have thought that a simple legal agreement whereby we say we’d built to a higher standard and we share the proceeds of that was a way to do that. Will Councillor Butlin investigate that mechanism? He then went on to say if there were any savings from improved standards, again I would ask whether he will ask for research to be undertaken to ascertain the level of additional lower energy bills by improved insulation and other measures in schools.”

Councillor Butlin advised that in terms of whether or not it was possible to ‘backtrack’ and bill schools for any savings going forward, he was mindful that it was arguable that would result in money being taken from childrens’ education. In terms of whether savings could be achieved, he awaited evidence to support the use of technologies such as air source heat pumps and he would act upon the information as and when it was received.

9. Any Other items of Urgent Business

None.

The meeting rose at 1.04pm

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Chair