

Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 27 November 2019

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Alan Cockburn (Chair)
Councillor Jenny Fradgley
Councillor John Holland
Councillor Keith Kondakor
Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher

Portfolio Holders

Councillor Peter Butlin, Deputy Leader (Finance & Property)
Councillor Kam Kaur, Customer & Transformation
Councillor Heather Timms, Environment and Heritage & Culture

Other Members Present

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers

Officers

David Ayton-Hill, Assistant Director - Communities
Ian Marriot, Legal Service Manager
Scott Tompkins, Assistant Director for Environment Services
Victoria Mumford, Principal Transport Planner
Christopher McNally, Performance and Improvement Service Lead
Tom McColgan, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Margaret Smith, Team Leader Transport Planning

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillors Shilton, Wright, Gran, Jenns, Clarke and Crump sent their apologies for meeting.

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

There were none.

(3) Chair's Announcements

The Chair reminded members that there would be a special meeting of the Committee in January 2020 to consider a report on On Street Parking Pricing Review and Changes to Vehicle Permitting Scheme.

The Chair also welcomed Councillor John Holland who had joined the Committee replacing Councillor Richard Chattaway.

(4) Minutes of Previous Meeting - 18 September 2019

Councillor Kondakor noted that the removal of a disused railway bridge on Hinkley Road which was mentioned in the previous minutes under item 3 had not started in October 2019 and is now expected to begin in February 2020 at the earliest.

Resolved – That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record.

2. Public Speaking

There was none.

3. Questions to Portfolio Holders

In response to the Chair, Councillor Butlin stated that Cabinet had agreed funding from the Community Infrastructure Fund for two cycle routes; one in Nuneaton and one connecting Kenilworth to Leamington Spa. While the Kenilworth to Leamington Spa route was relatively short it required a lot of engineering work to implement. Councillor Butlin was hopeful that it would be completed in the next two years.

Councillor Kondakor stated that Bedworth Town Council was currently in the process of developing a town master plan and he felt installing a cycle path through the town centre was a priority as the current route was treacherous for cyclists. He stated that he wanted to see cycling infrastructure schemes integrated with town and local plans.

Councillor Butlin responded that the County Council would take a holistic view of cycle and footpaths to ensure they were integrated into existing infrastructure and represented good value for money.

4. Warwickshire Draft Rail Strategy Consultation Update

Margaret Smith introduced the report highlighting the good response rate and key issues. She also emphasised that financial implications of the programmes mentioned in the report were not yet known and funding had not been identified.

Councillor Holland welcomed the report particularly the news that lifts were to be installed at Warwick Station. The works needed at the station required some additional funding to join the County Council provided cycle route to the Network Rail provided scheme and he asked Cabinet to be mindful of this cost when considering the budget. He also stated that the level of demand for rail travel would be largely determined by the district and borough council's local plans which set out how many new houses

would be built and where. It was thus important for the County Council to gain a clear understanding of housing allocations in the local plans.

The Chair responded that officers had been asked to prepare a briefing note on development that had been identified through local plans after the last Chair and Spokesperson meeting.

Councillor Kondakor stated that he was disappointed by the lack of young people responding to the consultation and by the lack of a response from Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and the Nuneaton Rail Users Forum.

Margaret Smith responded that the report only listed organisations that had responded by writing and she confirmed that Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council had responded online.

Councillor Kondakor noted the Nuneaton Parkway Station on the A5 mentioned in the report. He stated that this station would not have any public transport links and he felt that there was not a lot of demand locally for the station.

Margaret Smith responded that the Council aimed to provide a mix of stations to balance existing travel demands with services to the centre of communities. She stated that transport planners took a wider corridor approach to travel and that a station on the A5 would help to intercept existing car journeys and encourage modal shift as Stratford Parkway had done in the south of the County.

Councillor Kondakor stated that he would welcome a review of the placement of the parkway station and that a station on Eastboro Way seemed to be a better option. He also stated that there was a risk of parkway stations reducing services to town centre stations.

In response to Councillor Chilvers, Margaret Smith stated that she wanted to manage expectations around a potential Warwick University Station. While the Council did have an aspiration to bring forward a new station early feasibility work had shown that significant investment in rail infrastructure would be required in order to provide a level of service that would attract rail users.

Councillor Pandher noted the low level of response from BAME communities and asked officers how the consultation had been advertised and if officers knew why it had not elicited more of a response.

Margaret Smith responded that the consultation had been mainly carried out online through the council's consultation portal and advertised through Council mailing lists that residents could sign up to. The consultation had also been sent to a standard list of stakeholders. Margaret Smith stated that she would relay Councillor Pandher's concerns to the council's consultation team.

Councillor Pandher stated that he would welcome a review of how the Council consulted residents to ensure that all residents were able to respond.

5. Draft Report and Recommendations of the Climate Change Adaptation Task and Finish Group

Councillors Fradgley and Chilvers introduced the report. They thanked Councillor Timms for her involvement as the portfolio holder and thanked officers from across the council who had provided evidence to the group. The recommendations aimed to provide officers with a framework to help them address the challenges presented by a changing and less predictable climate.

Councillor Timms stated that she welcomed the report and felt that the recommendations aligned well with the work being undertaken by the Council as part of its Climate Emergency Work. She stated that consideration of climate change needed to be embedded across the council and that climate change mitigation and adaptation needed to be driven forward together.

In response to the Chair, Councillor Chilvers stated that the MET Office's climate projections were taken from the best available science and then broken down to a regional level.

Councillor Holland welcomed the report and reflected upon the difficulties caused by very high temperatures in the summer that had been reported by a local NHS hospital trust to the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He stated that the best science available was not as complete as it could be and that the Council had to be mindful that projections would change. Councillor Holland also praised the Council's Water Management and Flood Risk Team whose work had improved water management and flood risk alleviation works associated with both new developments and redevelopment of brown field sites.

Councillor Kondakor echoed the praise for the Water Management and Flood Risk Team but that work needed to be done to ensure that planning conditions were enforced. He emphasised the need to act to safeguard homes and business against flooding by designing in better ways to manage rainfall.

Councillor Butlin stated that while the report focused upon hotter weather it was important not to lose sight of the need to prepare for winter pressure in the social care and health system.

Councillor Kondakor noted that better insulated houses would both stay cooler in the summer and hotter in the winter.

The Committee unanimously agreed to forward the report to Cabinet.

Resolved:

That the Communities Overview and Scrutiny approves the following recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet for endorsement:

1. Adopts the Met Office's UK Climate Projections as the basis of Warwickshire County Council's expectation of the climate in 2050 and plans to this effect.

2. Provide clear direction through the Council Plan 2020-2025 detailing actions that will be taken to prepare Warwickshire for the change in climate to come.

3. Includes the impact of projected climate change in the assessment criteria for prioritising options and schemes that come forward for capital investment, which will prepare Warwickshire for the 2050 projected climate.

4. Produces an updated Climate Impact Assessment for Warwickshire assessing the economic and social impact of the expected changes in climate on key areas of the Council's responsibility and quantifying the costs of investment against the costs of inaction.

5. Establishes a standing group comprised of members from all political groups and officers, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Heritage & Culture to advance work on climate change adaptation.

i) That the standing group uses the themes identified in this report to develop an action plan within six months setting out the activity to be undertaken by the County Council in the short, medium and long term.

ii) That consideration be given to the establishment of a dedicated resource to coordinate climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.

6. One Organisational Plan - Quarter 2, 2019

David Ayton-Hill introduced the report. He stated that from quarter three onwards the performance figures would be presented in a different format and there would be some change in the measures that were being reported which reflected a change in the software being used to track performance.

The Chair noted the worrying rise in those Killed or Seriously Injured on Warwickshire's roads.

David Ayton-Hill responded that the Council was part of a reenergised Road Safety Partnership which brought together the Council, Fire & Rescue, Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner to take a whole system approach to road safety from engineering and education work through to the blue light response.

In response to Councillor Kondakor, David Ayton-Hill confirmed that accident cluster sights were continually monitored and that more information would be provided with the road safety report at the next meeting.

In response to Councillor Kondakor, Scott Tompkins confirmed that the Bermuda Bridge scheme was on track to start in February and was currently out to tender. He also confirmed that although the majority of work on Coton Arches had been completed in the last financial year there was still some scheme spend coming through in financial year 2019/20 and he could provide more detail in writing.

The Chair noted that the composting, reuse and recycling rate seemed had plateaued. David Ayton-Hill responded that a new County Council Waste Management Strategy would review the approach to encouraging recycling. Councillor Timms added that the County Council's approach would also depend upon the Government's own waste strategy the consultation on which included several options for increased plastic recycling and extended producer responsibility.

In response to Councillor Kondakor, Councillor Timms stated that the Council's existing contracts would not expire before the Council was able to produce a new Waste Management Strategy.

7. Communities OSC Work Programme

Members noted the reports scheduled to come to 12 February meeting; Road Safety, Major Road Network's integration into WCC's Transport Strategy, Waste Management Review and an update on Section 106 funding. Members also noted the briefing note on residential development outlined in local plans.

Councillor Kondakor suggested a report on air quality be added to the committee work programme. Councillors Kondakor, Holland and Fradgley all stated that they had been part of an air quality survey run by public health and that it would be good if the data collected by Public Health could be fed back to the committee.

8. Urgent Items

None.

The meeting rose at 15:00



Chair