

County Council

Tuesday 19 December 2023

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Christopher Kettle (Chair), Councillor Jeff Morgan (Vice-Chair), Councillor Jo Barker, Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne, Councillor Margaret Bell, Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi, Councillor Sarah Boad, Councillor Peter Butlin, Councillor Jonathan Chilvers, Councillor Jeff Clarke, Councillor John Cooke, Councillor Andy Crump, Councillor Yousef Dahmash, Councillor Piers Daniell, Councillor Jackie D'Arcy, Councillor Tracey Drew, Councillor Judy Falp, Councillor Jenny Fradgley, Councillor Sarah Feeney, Councillor Bill Gifford, Councillor Peter Gilbert, Councillor Clare Golby, Councillor Brian Hammersley, Councillor John Holland, Councillor Dave Humphreys, Councillor Marian Humphreys, Councillor Andy Jenns, Councillor Kam Kaur, Councillor Dale Keeling, Councillor Jack Kennaugh, Councillor Justin Kerridge, Councillor Sue Markham, Councillor Jan Matecki, Councillor Sarah Millar, Councillor Chris Mills, Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell, Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher, Councillor Daren Pemberton, Councillor Caroline Phillips, Councillor Wallace Redford, Councillor Kate Rolfe, Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE, Councillor Ian Shenton, Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince, Councillor Tim Sinclair, Councillor Mejar Singh, Councillor Richard Spencer, Councillor Heather Timms, Councillor Mandy Tromans, Councillor Robert Tromans, Councillor Adrian Warwick, Councillor Martin Watson and Councillor Andrew Wright

1. General

(1) Apologies for Absence

Councillors Brett Beetham, Barbara Brown and Caroline Phillips.

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

Councillors Sarah Boad, Andy Crump, Judy Falp, John Holland, Heather Timms, and Adrian Warwick declared a pecuniary interest in item 4 on the agenda - Warwickshire Pension Fund Accounts 2022/23 - indicating that they were members of the Warwickshire Council Pension Fund.

Councillors Sarah Feeney and Sarah Millar also declared a pecuniary interest in item 4 on the agenda - Warwickshire Pension Fund Accounts 2022/23 - indicating that they were members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

(3) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 26 September 2023 were agreed as a true

record.

(4) Chair's announcements

(a) Death of Former Councillor Jenny St John

The Chair stated that it was his sad duty to inform Council of the recent passing of former County Councillor Jenny St John. Jenny, from the Labour group, served as a Warwickshire County Councillor for Warwick North between 2013 and 2017. The Chair extended condolences to her family and friends.

Councillor John Holland spoke in memory of former Councillor Jenny St John reflecting on her achievements during her four years in office.

Councillors Isobel Seccombe and Sarah Boad also expressed their condolences to former Councillor St John's family before Council stood for a minute's silence in remembrance.

(b) Welcome to New Councillor Dale Keeling

The Chair noted that Councillor Keeling was elected to represent the Dunsmore and Leam Valley Division in Rugby at a by-election on 14 December 2023 held following the resignation of Councillor Howard Roberts.

(c) Engagements

The Chair reflected on his year in office to date, noting that some of the occasions he had attended so far were celebrated as part of the collage of engagements which featured on his official Christmas card. He had attended some interesting events over the last quarter, including Remembrance Day services, charity events and the Annual Service for Charity Workers which had offered a unique opportunity to see the diverse groups volunteering to support the community.

(5) Public Speaking

None.

2. External Auditors' Annual Audit Report 2022/23

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader of the Council) moved the motion and introduced this report, noting the improvement since the previous year's report. Councillor Adrian Warwick seconded the motion.

Mr Avtar Sohal was in attendance as a representative of Grant Thornton to present the report. Mr Sohal drew attention to the executive summary in the report, and noted that overall it was a good report with no significant weaknesses to be highlighted.

Councillor Holland stated his understanding that the purpose of the external auditor's report was to reassure the public and asked for comment on recent media reports describing the Audit & Standards Committee Chair experiencing 'discomfort' at the way an historic issue had been

handled by the auditors. Mr Sohal explained that this related to an objection to a previous set of accounts which was being dealt with and would be completed shortly.

Vote:

A vote was held. The recommendation was agreed by a majority.

Resolved:

That Council:

1. Notes the Annual Audit Report of the External Auditors, attached to the report at Appendix A; and
2. Requests that Audit and Standards Committee review the delivery of the management action in response to the recommendations in the Annual Audit Report.

3. Warwickshire County Council Statement of Accounts 2022/23

Councillor Peter Butlin (Deputy Leader of the Council) moved the recommendation and was seconded by Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi. Councillor Butlin observed that the report clearly demonstrated the Council's financial position and how it was intended to meet the Council's financial commitments.

Councillor Bill Gifford commented on the difficult financial landscape and expressed concern regarding the Council's responsibilities to provide funding for SEND with little control over the expenditure in this area. Councillor Butlin acknowledged these concerns and noted that the situation was reflected in authorities across the country.

Vote:

A vote was held. The recommendation was agreed unanimously.

Resolved:

That Council approves the Warwickshire County Council Statement of Accounts for 2022/23.

4. Warwickshire Pension Fund Accounts 2022/23

Councillor Christopher Kettle moved the recommendation set out in the report and the additional recommendation that had been tabled at the meeting. Councillor Brian Hammersley seconded.

Councillor Bill Gifford commended the Pension Team and Fund Advisors for the good health of the Fund, which was well managed with the careful assessment of risks. He also noted that the Pension Fund Investment Sub-Committee had taken a keen interest in seeking improvements in the pension fund's responsibilities in terms of climate change and sustainability.

Councillor Ian Shenton welcomed the growth that had been seen in recent years and was reassured that the fund was stable for its members.

Councillor Hammersley assured Members that the fund was being properly managed and the Pension Fund Investment Sub-Committee was ably supported by a number of independent advisors.

Councillor Christopher Kettle noted that the Fund was in an excellent position and reflected on the Pension Fund Investment Sub-Committee's areas of focus in terms of climate change, cyber security and business continuity. He also expressed thanks to the officer support team, some of whom were leaving the authority (Andy Felton, Victoria Moffat and Vicky Jenks) and acknowledged the contribution that they had made to the Sub-Committee's meetings.

Vote:

A vote was held. The recommendation was agreed unanimously.

Resolved:

That Council:

1. Approves the Warwickshire Pension Fund Statement of Accounts for 2022/23; and
2. Authorises the Executive Director for Resources in consultation with the Chair of the Council to amend the accounts for any final adjustments requested by the external auditors prior to the accounts being formally published and requires a report to the next Audit and Standards Committee setting out the changes.

5. Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

Councillor Isobel Seccombe (Leader of the Council) moved the motion and introduced this report, which presented the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement for consideration by the Council. The motion was seconded by Councillor Yousef Dahmash. There were no questions or comments on the report.

Vote:

A vote was held. The recommendation was agreed unanimously.

Resolved:

That Council approves the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement.

6. Education Capital Programme 2023/24

Councillor Kam Kaur (Portfolio Holder for Education) introduced this comprehensive report relating to projects at Wharton Nethersole CofE Primary School and St John's Primary School in Kenilworth and moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Peter Butlin (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property) seconded the recommendation and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Tracey Drew welcomed the statement in the report that “all future school capital projects will be developed in accordance with statutory regulations which include the revised Building Regulations 2021” and sought more detail regarding the challenges set out in section 5 of the report.

Councillor Dave Humphreys welcomed the project in Wharton Nethersole, but noted that much of the housing development in the area was already complete and he asked if the possibility of receiving Section 106 monies at an earlier stage could be considered for future projects so that amenities were available at an early stage in the development not at the end.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers welcomed additional places in Kenilworth given the amount of growth, but expressed concern that St John’s was some distance from the new growth which led him to believe that this would raise questions regarding transport at the planning stage. Additionally, whilst these places were needed, he noted that there were two new junior schools to be built in the east of Kenilworth which seemed some time away from being in place.

Councillor Marian Humphreys welcomed the project in Wharton Nethersole.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Butlin commented on the three developments taking place in Wharton, including one where the Council was the developer, and how much the area needed this project. He also considered that the project at Kenilworth demonstrated how much growth was taking place in Warwickshire, a reflection that it was a good place to both develop and live.

In response to the debate, Councillor Kaur stated that if sufficient funds and time were available, then the Council would seek to complete projects with full green sources but, in this case, providing the places was of paramount importance. The Council would endeavour to use fossil fuel-free and zero carbon wherever possible but older buildings presented challenges in this regard. In terms of development funding and section 106 monies, she was only aware of one area where the developer had provided school amenities prior to building homes (Houlton). She explained that the sufficiency team was a small unit consisting of just four individuals who undertook forecasting of demand for the whole of Warwickshire. In-year changes, as a result of development, was causing some pressure but prioritisation would be given to those areas where demand was generating a need for school places.

Vote:

A vote on the motion took place which was carried unanimously.

Resolved:

That Council:

1. Approves the addition of £2.868m to the capital programme to deliver the scheme at Warton Nethersole CofE Primary School, to be funded by developer contributions and the Department for Education (DfE) Basic Need Grant.

2. Approves the addition of £6.335m to the capital programme to deliver the scheme at St John's Primary School subject to Cabinet's approval to increase the capacity of the school and establish specialist resourced provision.

7. Petitions Scheme

Councillor Yousef Dahmash (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) introduced this comprehensive report which followed a Motion to Council in March 2023. Councillor Pete Gilbert seconded the recommendation and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Sarah Feeney stated that the proposed revisions to the scheme did not meet the ethos of the motion that had been put forward in March 2023, which was to ensure that residents received a meaningful response. Whilst she acknowledged that the revisions provided more clarity around member engagement, she did not think it offered a better service. Whilst she understood the time sensitivities involved in preparing reports for debate, she considered this could have been built into the process. She noted that under the provisions of the scheme, only the person who submitted the petition received a response, not those who signed it. She was also of the view that the scheme did not provide an opportunity for petitions to hear an acknowledgement from the Council, however, she did welcome the provision to inform the Local Member who may wish to submit a motion in support.

Councillor Pete Gilbert considered that the revised scheme provided for more flexibility and continued the Council's tradition of listening to residents.

Councillor Dahmash reflected on the comments made during the debate and considered that it would be possible to learn from the changes after they had been introduced and there would be opportunities to make further changes in future as a result. However, he noted that the scheme made provision for the Local Member to speak on petitions presented at Council and expressed the view that there were logistical challenges which prevented a response to all signatories to a petition.

Vote:

A vote on the motion took place which was carried by a majority.

Resolved:

That Council approves the proposed changes to the Council's Petitions Scheme as set out at Appendices 1 and 2 to the report and delegates the consequent amendment of the Constitution to the Monitoring Officer

8. Appointment to Local Pension Board

Councillor Yousef Dahmash (Portfolio Holder for Customer and Transformation) introduced this report and moved the recommendation. In doing so, he explained the structure of the Local Pension Board and the robust process followed to make this appointment.

Councillor Brian Hammersley seconded the recommendation and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Sarah Millar supported the appointment and welcomed the gender diversity being introduced into the Board as a result.

Councillor Andy Crump also expressed support for the appointment and congratulated Councillor Dahmash for improvement in the recruitment process which had resulted in the appointment.

Councillor Dahmash noted that the best candidate had been selected for appointment.

Vote:

A vote on the motion took place which was carried unanimously.

Resolved:

That Council approves the appointment of Mrs Beverley Farmery as a Scheme Member representative on the Local Pension Board.

9. Notices of Motion

(a) Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Kate Rolfe:

“This Council recognises that the Equality Act 2010 currently protects people against discrimination for protected characteristics including age, race, gender and sexuality, but not care-experience.

The council notes that there is research suggesting that those who are care-experienced are more likely than the general population to face significant challenges in their life, such as mental health issues, barriers to further education, prison sentences and early mortality.

This council will therefore write to the Government asking them to amend the Equality Act 2010 to include care-experience as a protected characteristic and commits that Warwickshire County Council will ensure that in designing its policies and undertaking any form of Equality Impact Assessment care experience is considered as a protected characteristic pending any change to legislation.”

Debate:

Councillor Sue Markham explained the work that the Council already undertook with care leavers, including a wide range of financial support, guaranteed interview schemes and support for young parents. She noted that this provision provided care leavers with a level of protection and the opportunity to build a prosperous, healthy, and happy future. She asserted that widening the number of protected characteristics gave them less meaning and children did not need further labelling.

Councillor John Holland considered that the Council would not be making the provision described by Councillor Markham if it was not needed. In terms of widening the number of protected characteristics, he asserted that the introduction of the Equality Act in 2010 listed the lowest number of protected characteristics in order to smooth its path through to assent but there was evidence to show that wider definitions needed to be added.

Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell drew on her experience sitting on the Corporate Parenting Panel to highlight that the robust support available demonstrated that the voices of care experienced individuals and care leavers were already central to any policy considerations.

Councillor Isobel Seccombe welcomed the support that the Council was delivering for young people in Warwickshire and noted that the Council's practice was to speak to, listen to, and react to the needs of children. She did not consider that the Council needed to adopt care leaver as a protected characteristic simply because other councils had done so and, in so doing, create a label for young people who had not been asked if they wanted it. She considered the best course of action was to continue to deliver in the right place, at the right time.

Councillor Marian Humphreys recollected her visit to the House project and meeting members of the Youth Council and how proud she was of their achievements and enthusiasm. She did not consider that they needed to be labelled.

Councillor Kam Kaur noted that the Chamber had previously spoken about issues of equality and diversity but she agreed with the list of protected characteristics as it stood at the time of this meeting. She considered it was more important to take time and focus resources on engaging with young people to find out what their needs were.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers sought an understanding of what the motion would mean in practice and how an equality impact assessment would influence the Council's work.

Councillor Sarah Feeney expressed her support for the motion and did not consider that it would 'label' care leavers, but rather influence the treatment that they received. She considered the motion sought to influence systemic responses, making sure that they were fit for purpose and the affected individuals were protected in such a way that their care experience did not cause discrimination.

Councillor Peter Butlin thanked Councillor Markham for sharing details of the Council's work as a corporate parent and expressed his dislike for labels, preferring to view each child as an individual. He did not consider that adding care leaver to the list of protected characteristics would achieve any more than had already been achieved by the Council as corporate parent.

Councillor Pete Gilbert recognised both sides of the debate but sought to understand what the motion would positively achieve. He considered that the Corporate Parenting Panel listened to care leavers and applauded their efforts to move on with their lives. He did not think that labelling these individuals would resolve anything. Instead, he considered it was important to celebrate the achievements of care leavers and help them to move on in their lives without label or stigma.

Councillor Brian Hammersley reflected on his experience as a businessman employing individuals and how the relationship between employer-employee did not need to focus on characteristics, but more about mutual support to achieve business and individual goals.

Councillor Kate Rolfe stated that she had anticipated some of the comments made in the debate and the motion was not tabled as a criticism. She expressed her pride in the work the Council conducted for children and young people. She considered that the Council's best practice should be shared with the government.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse responded that the motion did not intend to label individuals, but to provide them with a level of protection. He stated that the young people he had spoken to were supportive and viewed the outcome as a way for them to have more consideration in reports and policies. He reiterated Councillor Rolfe's assurance that the motion was not intended as a criticism, but rather to underscore the good practice that was taking place and provide an extra layer of support.

Vote:

A vote was held and the motion was defeated.

(b) Average Speed Cameras

Councillor Sarah Feeney moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Sarah Millar:

"There are areas of the County where residents have raised significant concerns about excessive speeding by drivers.

There has also been a report published by the RAC Foundation on the effectiveness of average speed cameras. On average, the permanent average speed camera sites analysed saw a reduction in injury collisions, particularly those of a higher severity:

- Fatal and serious injury collisions fell by 25-46%
- Personal injury collisions fell by 9-22%

The report also suggested that average speed cameras are becoming more cost effective.

The Council's pilot of average speed cameras was approved in November 2022.

This Council resolves that:

1. A report is brought to Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Summer 2024 to update on findings of the pilot and explain the policy for installation and operation of average speed cameras, and
2. Consideration is given to increasing average speed camera use across the county as part of the MTFS budget proposals"

In moving the motion, Councillor Feeney noted that all Members of the Labour Group had recently received complaints about speeding. She noted the increasing number of accidents and

casualties on roads in Warwickshire and considered that average speed cameras would have a positive impact. The motion sought to shorten the existing timescales for a proposed speed trial and consider how funding for a scheme to introduce average speed cameras could be introduced into the MTFs. The motion was seconded by Councillor Sarah Millar.

Debate:

Councillor Sarah Boad noted that she received more complaints about speeding than any other issue. She noted that it was possible to hold a speed survey on a road for a small sum which was good value for money and provided high quality data. She noted that average speed cameras were located at each end of many villages in Cornwall and when she had made enquiries with Council officers about their installation, the key differences in geography had been explained to her. She considered that further investigation was required and if average speed cameras could be implemented at reasonable cost, it would be a very positive outcome.

Councillor Jan Matecki highlighted the good work the Council had done undertaken to reduce accidents on Warwickshire roads, the scheme in place with Warwickshire Police, and the funding levels that would be required to implement average speed cameras on all routes. He noted that a report to Overview and Scrutiny was already scheduled for 2024 and considered that the motion reiterated the work that the Council was already committed to undertake.

Councillor Adrian Warwick agreed that all councillors would like to reduce speeding but did not consider that this was the right methodology. He considered that the data in the RAC report referred to was aged and car safety technology had since improved, so he would have liked to see more recent evidence to support the motion. Whilst he agreed with the sentiments of the motion, he noted the costs of introducing Average Speed Cameras including maintenance and running costs and expressed a preference for the use of intelligent speed assistance technology, compulsory for all new cars since July 2022, which monitored position and limited speed. This helped to ensure safety on all roads, not just those which met the criteria to fund an average speed camera.

Councillor Jeff Clarke noted that the work sought by the motion was already underway and it had been on the Scrutiny Work Programme for some time. He considered the trials should take place as planned so that the data was available to inform policy moving forward.

Councillor Judy Falp shared her experiences of volunteering with Speed Watch, considered it was important to reduce speeding in the county and welcomed the debate to raise awareness.

Councillor Andy Crump, the portfolio holder with responsibility for community safety, noted that road traffic injuries were now almost at the levels seen pre-Covid-19 pandemic. However, he explained that speeding was not the only reason for road deaths and cited driving under the influence, undue care and attention, poorly maintained cars, and poor parking as other possible causes. He agreed with the need to raise awareness but did not think this was the right time to consider this motion, and preferred to wait for the evidence base from the trial to be considered by Scrutiny as planned.

Councillor Daren Pemberton shared his personal experience of the impact of speeding and expressed the opinion that it was important to gather evidence and data as planned. He noted that average speed cameras were only one of the tool available to address speeding and

considered that three elements were needed for success: enforcement, engineering and education. He considered that the motion therefore missed the point as cameras were not the whole solution with speeding also needing to be considered socially unacceptable. He called on all councillors to call out residents in their division on poor driving behaviour.

Councillor Tim Sinclair reiterated the view that the motion was redundant as the work was already taking place and funding streams would be considered at the budget meeting in February 2024.

Councillor Peter Butlin considered that both Labour motions were seeking funding in a way that should be debated as part of the MTFs and suggested that the group consider this as part of their budget in February 2024. He echoed comments from other councillors about the improvements in car safety being a major driver for the reduction in road deaths over the years, and around the poor timing of the motion.

Councillor John Holland expressed the view that car technology did not help pedestrians or cyclists and did not support the Highway Code's hierarchy of road users. He considered that the proposal supported the Police in their duty to enforce speed limits which would enable them to focus resources on other crimes.

Councillor Dave Humphreys commented on the availability of funding for average speed cameras and that this could not be covered by delegated budgets. He went on to note the improvements in road safety that had been achieved, particularly when compared to countries like the USA. He was of the view that the pilot schemes needed to take place as planned.

Councillor Tracey Drew shared her own personal experience of the impact of speeding and considered that relying on car design at the expense of increasing personal responsibility was a mistake. She supported the motion.

Councillor Ian Shenton also noted the need to have more evidence and research to make a decision and noted that the RAC report ended by saying there was a need to understand the cost benefit ratio. He noted that cameras were not always suitable and methods such as Speed Watch, which Councillor Falp had referred to, were also helpful.

Councillor Hammersley shared his personal experience of the impact of speeding and considered that drivers taking personal responsibility played a key part.

Councillor Sarah Millar thanked councillors who had brought their lived experiences to the debate. She considered that it was important to address rising road casualty figures and pointed out that improved car design protected those inside the vehicle, not outside it. She acknowledged that whilst education for drivers was needed, it was also important to make it difficult to speed and average speed cameras could play a part in that as the evidence suggested that they were more effective in influencing driver behaviour as well as offering the complimentary benefits of supporting better traffic flow, less congestion and less road rage.

Councillor Feeney also thanked those Members who had shared their personal experiences as part of the debate. She stated the view that the Council was behind the curve on this issue and the reality of the motion was about road safety and commencing the proposed trial at an earlier time so that the data would be available before 2025. She understood the cost considerations, but

was not proposing to cover every centimetre of road in the county, rather to identify problem roads and find the funding to pay for cameras.

Vote:

A vote was held and the motion was defeated.

(c) Electric Vehicle Charging

Councillor Sarah Millar moved the motion below, stating that areas with terraced housing in particular did not have access to EV charging. She noted that one in four registrations in 2023 were for hybrid/electric vehicles and the Council needed to respond to demand. The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sarah Feeney.

“Electric Vehicle numbers are on the increase in Warwickshire (and across the country there are more than 1 million plug in vehicles according to figures from the Society of Motoring Manufacturers and Traders).

There are concerns that the rate of uptake is not being matched by the availability of chargers. In some of Warwickshire’s towns there are specific off street vehicle charging challenges.

Whilst innovative technologies exist and others are emerging, like lamppost chargers and pavement cable bays, attempts at deployment have been challenging.

This Council resolves that:

1. Consideration is given to accelerating the implementation of EV charging facilities across the county as part of the MTFS budget proposals;
2. A report is brought to Cabinet before the end of March 2024 recommending an electric vehicle charging policy; and
3. A strategic approach to the procurement of charging technology is taken to support a flexible roll out that identifies community need and engages local members in identification of additional sites.”

Debate:

Councillor Tim Sinclair highlighted that this work had already been undertaken by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s Electric Vehicle Charging Points Task and Finish Group which had reported to Cabinet in December 2022 and he encouraged councillors to read the report.

Councillor Bill Gifford had read the report of the Task and Finish Group and, whilst officers were doing a good job, he believed there were constraints in terms of what could be done and the pace of work had slowed. He appreciated the spirit of the motion and was minded to vote in favour. Councillor Gifford noted that the government had previously suggested no petrol or diesel vehicles should be sold after 2030 and lamented the fact that this had been pushed back to 2035. As well as the costs involved, one of the reasons that put people off buying a hybrid or electric vehicle was the fear of not being able to charge.

Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne spoke on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, Councillor Jan Matecki, who had left the meeting due to an urgent engagement and had left his response with Councillor Baxter-Payne. He highlighted the work the Council was doing to encourage drivers to switch to electric vehicles, including ease of access to charging points at home and other locations, reviewing parking arrangements at charge point locations, securing £3.3m of levy funding to produce additional publicly available charge points for residents without access to off street home charging, a new EV webpage offering information and guidance and the opportunity to suggest sites for charge point installation, work with district and borough councils to understand beneficial locations and the equitable distribution of charging opportunities across the county, and work with partners to explore the deployment of new technology. Procurement rules did provide some constraints but officers were in the process of drafting a specification to go out to the market in the new year. He advised that local members would be kept apprised of any trials and deployments in their divisions.

Councillor John Holland considered that there was not a credible strategy to provide sufficient charging points and consultation with local councillors was required.

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers considered that the correct strategy, considering the Council's sphere of influence and budget envelope, was in place following the work of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points Task and Finish Group. He considered that large/long charges were best done from supermarket charging points, but street furniture could be utilised to support those residents who could not benefit from off street parking and it was important to implement this as fast as possible. He welcomed the motion.

Councillor Adrian Warwick noted that war in Ukraine had caused a shift in the electric vehicle market. He noted that over a quarter of properties could not easily charge and many people wanted to be able to charge at home. In terms of street furniture, in some areas lamp posts were owned by the parish councils but at circa 7kwh this would take some time to charge. The Council was working to find solutions, as had already been outlined by the Task and Finish Group, but it was important to be sensible in terms of the time frame.

Councillor Sarah Feeney considered that the motion recognised that efforts to introduce electric vehicle charging had stalled and residents were frustrated and not aware of schemes and trials available. She believed that residents wanted to charge from home but did not always have access to their own drive or off-street parking and, whilst the Portfolio Holder had recognised this, she had not heard a solution in the debate. She questioned Councillor Baxter-Payne's comments about the meaning of an equitable distribution of charging since the county was very diverse and some areas would not need it as much as others. It was important to support those residents who wanted to get a modal shift away from fossil fuels to do so without the current difficulties. A flexible policy was needed as well as power for officers to have a purchasing solution in place without the need for special permissions.

Councillor Sarah Millar responded that a plan wasn't implementation, which was what the motion was seeking. She considered that the price rise for fossil fuels because of war in Ukraine was a driver for seeking electric/hybrid alternatives. The motion also recognised that the Council had declared a climate emergency and the net zero targets that had been set, which she considered meant that a faster roll out and better implementation was required. Whilst the Council had previously been on the front foot, she considered that the pace had now stalled and the Council was not keeping pace with the uptake of electric vehicles and the associated need for services.

Vote:

A vote was held and the motion was defeated.

10. Member Question Time (Standing Order 7)

Councillor Sarah Millar posed the following question to Councillor Jan Matecki:

“Residents in Leamington Clarendon, for example on Wathen Road and Dale Street, have had to endure crater-like potholes and clanging man hole covers for weeks and months on end whilst the council argues with the utility companies as to who is responsible for their repair. What more can be done to more quickly identify the owner of such repair works so that residents don’t have to put up with these delays?”

As Councillor Matecki had left the meeting for personal reasons, Councillor Richard Baxter Payne responded on his behalf:

“The roles of the Highway Authority and the utility company in cases where utility apparatus is damaged is clearly defined in national legislation.

As the Highway Authority we are only able to make emergency repairs where there is a clear risk to road users. For example in cases where manholes are noisy, this does not constitute an emergency.

For non-emergency repairs, we inform the relevant utility of the issue, who are then responsible for remedial repairs. For these remedial repairs there is no set timescales for the repair to be undertaken by the utility. However, they do need to agree a reasonable timescale for repair.

In order to speed up these types of repair, the County will engage with utility companies in the new year to agree standard periods for these types of remedial repairs.”

Councillor Millar asserted that the issue was not the repair, but who was responsible. There was no guidance in this regard and she sought a process to easily identify who was the responsible authority at an early stage to ensure a better response on repairs.

Councillor Richard Baxter-Payne noted that non-emergency repairs were the responsibility of the utility company, and reiterated that in the new year officers would endeavour to secure a time frame for repairs to take place.

11. Any Other items of Urgent Business

None.

The meeting rose at 1.24pm

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Chair