
Annual Council meeting: Wednesday, 15 May 2024

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of Warwick District Council will be held at the Shire Hall, Market Place, Warwick, on Wednesday 15 May 2024 at **6.30pm**.

Agenda

- 1. Election of Chairman of the Council**
To elect the Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal year.
- 2. Appointment of Vice-Chair of the Council**
To elect the Vice-Chair of the Council for the ensuing Municipal year.
- 3. Vote of Thanks for the Retiring Chairman**
- 4. Apologies for Absence**
- 5. Minutes**
To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10 April 2024.
(Pages 1 to 8)
- 6. Membership of the Cabinet**
To be informed of the Members appointed to the Cabinet by the Leader.
(Pages 1 to 5)
- 7. Appointments**
 - (a) to consider the nominations for membership of the Committees including substitutes;
(Pages 1 to 4)
 - (b) to approve the memberships of Working Parties & Forums; and
(Pages 1 to 2)
 - (c) to consider the appointments to Champion Roles & Outside Bodies and confirm that the outside body appointments by Council are not to be politically proportionate
(Pages 1 to 3)
- 8. Appointment of Independent Person – Belinda Pyke**
To reappoint Belinda Pyke as an Independent Person for the Council for a term of office ending in June 2028.
- 9. Declarations of Interest**
Members to declare the existence and nature of interests in items on the agenda in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct. Declarations should be disclosed during this item. However, the existence and nature of any interest that subsequently becomes apparent during the course of the meeting must be disclosed immediately. If the interest is not registered, Members must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days.

Members are also reminded of the need to declare predetermination on any matter.

If Members are unsure about whether or not they have an interest, or about its nature, they are strongly advised to seek advice from officers prior to the meeting.

10. Annual Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

To consider the report from Overview & Scrutiny Committee. **(Pages 1 to 15)**

11. Cabinet Report

To consider the recommendations of the Cabinet meeting held on 15 May 2024.
(To Follow)

12. Public and Press

To consider resolving that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Item Numbers	Paragraph Numbers	Reason
13	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

13. Confidential Appendix B to Item 10 – Annual Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

To consider a confidential Appendix **(Page 1)**

14. Common Seal

To authorise the affixing of the Common Seal of the Council to such deeds and documents as may be required for implementing decisions of the Council arrived at this day.



Chief Executive
Published Tuesday 7 May 2024

For enquiries about this meeting please contact Warwick District Council, Town Hall,
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456114.



WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Warwick District Council held at Shire Hall, Warwick, on Wednesday 17 April 2024, at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Syson (Chairman); Councillors Aizlewood, Armstrong, Barton, Billiald, Boad, Browne, Chilvers, Collins, Cron, Davison, Day, K Dickson, R Dickson, Falp, B Gifford, Gorman, J Harrison, Kenndey, King, Kohler, Luckhurst, Matecki, Noonan, Payne, Phillips, Roberts, Rosu, Russell, Sinnott, Williams, C Wightman, and P Wightman.

98. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dray, C Gifford, Hales, D Harrison, Margrave, Milton, Redford, Tangri and Yellapragada.

99. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

100. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 March 2024 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

101. **Communications & Announcements**

The Chairman informed Council that a former Chairman and District Councillor, Joe Short had sadly passed away. He was a District Councillor for Whitnash from May 1991 – May 2007 and was Chairman of the Council from 2000-2001.

The Chairman thanked all Members who attended the Volunteer's Breakfast event that was held on Saturday 6 April 2024. There were over 80 attendees present and over 35 different organisations which operated across the District. The Chairman also thanked Committee Services Officers for the support received in organising the successful event.

The Chairman informed the Council that there would be no business to consider under Item 5 – Petitions and Item 6 - Notices of Motion.

102. **Director of Public Health for Warwickshire - Annual Report 2023**

The Council received a presentation from Dr Shade Agboola, the Director of Public Health Warwickshire, on her Annual Report for 2023.

103. **Leader and Portfolio Holders' Statements**

The Portfolio Holder for Arts and Economy, Councillor Billiald, informed Council that:

- (1) work was progressing at the former Stoneleigh Arms pub, Clemments Street which aimed to provide a new space for artists and makers as part of the support for the creative economy. The derelict building had been demolished and work would start soon on its replacement along with the

- restoration of the Old School House, Court Street Car Park. Officers were working to identify occupiers for the new buildings;
- (2) contractors were to be appointed for Phase 1 of the works on the Royal Leamington Spa Town Hall and were due to be on site for June 2024 with an aim to finish by the end of the year. The works would increase access to the building and update facilities, including an accessible lift and toilet. Officers were in regular contact with tenants and were keen to reduce any disruption to the Peregrine Falcons nesting site situated within the tower. As the works were due to start in June, the main breeding season for the Falcons would be avoided;
 - (3) Kenilworth Carnival was due to take place in June 2024, an alternative, more suitable site within Abbey Fields had been identified and Members agreed to support this at the Cabinet meeting held on 10 April 2024. As Abbey Fields was a historic monument, WDC needed to liaise with Historic England to enable them to determine the application. Councillor Billiald thanked the WDC Events Team, Green Spaces Team, and Councillor Kennedy, as Leader of the Town Council for all the work they had done to ensure the project was moved forward in a short space of time; and
 - (4) the heavy rainfall had an impact on the Royal Pump Rooms over the last six months, in order to protect the art works the flood barriers had to be installed and the Royal Pump Rooms closed on several occasions.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Councillor Kennedy, informed Council that:

- (1) as part of the low cost, low carbon energy strategic priority WDC aimed to reduce carbon emissions from public buildings by improving energy efficiency and introducing renewable energy generation capacity where possible. The Council's new Building Climate and Energy Manager had now started, within the Assets Team to lead on this objective. Proposals for extensive retrofitting for WDC buildings would be brought forward and this would help to achieve return on investment, both in terms of reducing costs to the Council and reducing carbon emissions. The first projects of this included Jubilee House in Kenilworth and The Temperate House in Jephson Gardens; and
- (2) he had decided to step down as Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and thanked officers for their support over the past year.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets, Councillor P Wightman, informed Council that:

- (1) the Members of the Asset Compliance Committee had briefing on 10 April on internal systems used by the Assets Team and progress on the action plan remained positive;
- (2) the current housing repairs contract with Axis is scheduled to end in March 2026 The team were in the process of hiring consultants to scope this project, for a new contract to start from April 2026. The work would be undertaken in conjunction with the resident's involvement group; and
- (3) Councillor Wightman congratulated the Housing Team following the recent internal audit regarding the handing of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's), there were no recommendations made and the internal team were able to offer reassurances regarding the systems in place.

The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood and Assets, Councillor Roberts, informed Council that WDC were taking part in No Mow May this year. A press release providing the details had been issued following the briefing paper that was

previously circulated to Members. To support this there was a webpage which gave detailed information regarding the plans. He also explained that due to the wet weather there had been a delay in the first grass cutting this year and crews were working hard to cut all areas by the end of April.

The Portfolio Holder for Place, Councillor King, informed Council that:

- (1) the inspectors report following the public examination into the net zero carbon DPD had been published. The inspector stated that the plan was sound, subject to a number of modifications which he had previously made WDC aware of and had been consulted on. Significant weight could now be attached to the amended DPD when making decisions on planning applications;
- (2) work was continuing on the South Warwickshire Local Plan. Following the Member briefings which took place in February 2024, requests had been received from Parish Councils for similar work to be done at Parish level and this was being arranged;
- (3) following the approval of the University of Warwick draft campus framework master plan at Cabinet; WDC, Warwick University and Coventry City Council were working together to co-ordinate a consultation, which was due to start May 2024;
- (4) work towards updating the guidance for windows in listed buildings was ongoing. Officers were aware they should embed sustainability credentials as much as possible; and
- (5) as previously reported Building Control officers were undergoing a rigorous period of competency reaccreditation and assessment which was co-ordinated by the Building Safety Registration Unit. Almost all officers were registered, and most had taken examinations. It was expected most officers would be qualified by the accreditation date of July 2024 allowing the service to continue uninterrupted.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Chilvers, informed Council that:

- (1) work was ongoing under corporate strategy priority 1, delivering sustainable services and this included work towards the West Midlands Investment Zone business rate retention agreement;
- (2) the first Procurement Champions meeting had taken place; and
- (3) the in-depth fees and charges review, was due to start shortly as part of the Transformation Programme, the fees and charges timetable would be published so Members were aware when decisions would be made.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure, Councillor Sinnott, informed Council that:

- (1) the Safer Communities, Leisure and Environment Team had won Lawn Tennis Association Park venue of the year for the Midland's region, this would progress to the national award finals; and
 - (2) the issue with odour and flies within the Heathcote area had unfortunately got worse and the investigation was still ongoing. Councillor Sinnott urged residents to report all incidents to aid this investigation and added he was aware of a trade association meeting scheduled 29 May 2024 but advised WDC had not been invited.
- He concluded by thanking the Chairman for the volunteer's breakfast event.

Councillor P Wightman read out a statement on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Councillor J Harrison, and informed Council that:

- (1) the Change Programme Board had met today, and the next meeting would be held in June 2024. Councillor Harrison requested that Group Leaders emailed her to confirm the appointed representatives for this group;
- (2) Cabinet had approved the move of Waste Services calls from Stratford-on-Avon District Council to WDC. This was in line with Corporate Priority 1.3, which was to achieve and demonstrate high quality services;
- (3) the relocation project of Council Services from Riverside House had been completed and Councillor Harrison passed her thanks to the team for the hard work over the last few months. Riverside House was now closed, saving the Council £58,000 per month in running costs; and
- (4) the Royal Pump Rooms site opened 9 April 2024 and feedback regarding accessibility had been excellent. Artist's work was now on display again, but it was still a work in progress as WDC had hoped more artworks be displayed. The build had been completed within the anticipated six-month window and the delivery was achieved for £330,000 which was £80,000 less than originally anticipated.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, Councillor Davison, informed Council that:

- (1) an additional Cabinet meeting would be held on 15 May 2024 to consider a number of specific reports (including the Net Zero DPD, pausing proposals for a £G Pitch at Newbold Comyn, an opportunity to buy land for woodland use and potentially West Midlands Investment Zone.); and
- (2) Councillor Kennedy would be in post as Cabinet Member for Climate Change until after the aforementioned meetings had taken place, and after which Councillor Williams would be appointed.

104. **Questions to the Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holders**

Councillor Barton asked the Portfolio Holder for Arts and Economy if, like Kenilworth Carnival Committee, Whitnash Fun Day Committee would be entitled to a grant of £2,000 to help fund the volunteer led event which currently cost £4,000 to run.

In response, Councillor Billiald explained the support, which Cabinet recently agreed, to provide to assist the Kenilworth Carnival Committee was in response to a particular set of exceptional circumstances. These related to the well-publicised financial difficulties that the Kenilworth Carnival Committee had been facing in organising this year's event and the Council's desire to regularise the relationship between both the Council and Carnival Committee. In doing so, it was recognised that WDC imposed an additional and unbudgeted burden on the Kenilworth Carnival Committee which had not previously existed. The offer of support was in recognition of that fact. The community projects reserve supported a range of local initiatives, and the team would ask those who administer the scheme if the Whitnash Fun Day or other similar local events would qualify for additional support. Councillor Billiald added that the Council funded a service delivered by Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) who supported community groups to access funding amongst other things, so it might be worth contacting them to see if they could offer any further support or help to identify other funding sources. In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Baron Councillor Billiald agreed to send him the details of WCAVA.

Councillor Barton asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood and Assets why did Whitnash still suffer from the free and easy use of the use of pesticides and weed killers around street furniture items and in respect of No Mow May, Whitnash public

space grass had not yet been cut, could you confirm this would not be the case for Whitnash given the already tall growth of grass in the area.

In response, Councillor Roberts thanked Councillor Barton for the photographic evidence of pesticide use in Whitnash which had been taken in March 2024. Councillor Roberts confirmed that contractors had not yet started to spray pesticides and were not due to start this work until 22 April 2024. He continued the spray had possibly been completed by a rouge resident and he would work with Councillor Barton to see what could be done to prevent this in future.

Some grass areas of Whitnash had started to be cut, however there had been delays due to adverse weather. The aim was to ensure all areas involved in No Mow May would be cut before May, and if not, they would be prioritised to be cut first at the end of May. The main issues faced from No Mow May last year were due to equipment failures, however these issues had already been addressed this year. The more WDC participated in No Mow May, the more WDC would learn and would be able to plan a more targeted approach. This year, WDC had decided to create several meadows which would only be cut annually and would help to increase biodiversity within the District.

Councillor Barton asked the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure if Warwick District Council had been invited or would be attending the open day held at Berry Pollimers in conjunction with the trade association. Various businesses had been invited to attend as well as various Councils.

In response, Councillor Sinnott stated to the best of his knowledge Warwick District Council had not been invited and would not be attending.

Councillor Barton then asked the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure why WDC refused to answer a Freedom of Information (FOI) request regarding specific complaints about Fortress and Berry Pollimers, when the same FOI had been given a comprehensive answer from the Environmental Agency.

In response, Graham Leach the Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer asked Councillor Barton to share the details of the request with him and he would consider this in line with information request handling procedures of the Council.

Councillor K Dickson asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets if as this Council's housing stock was under scrutiny, were the customers being heard and were these voices being used when the plans and strategies were being made regarding WDC's future housing.

In response, Councillor P Wightman stated that it was important to take account of the tenants and the people living in WDC properties. In September last year a residents engagement strategy was introduced which set out five priorities to deliver and improve residents' engagements and offered housing tenants a range of ways to have a say in what WDC delivered. Councillor Wightman stated it was difficult to measure, but WDC were committed to getting resident engagement and listening to it. The introduction of this strategy saw the creation of the Resident Influencing Group which had a direct influence on design and scrutiny of the service. This group had met three times since its conception, and it was supporting improvements in relation to tenant satisfaction measures. There was also a dedicated customer involvement team who sent surveys to new tenants and worked alongside other housing teams to deliver projects such as community events. Estate walkabouts in which housing staff survey a local area for visible repairs or fly tipping would be organised and residents would be invited to these.

Councillor Wightman continued that the update to the WDC repairs contract would also ask for resident involvement and aim to develop contract specification which asked for service which benefits residents and tenants. Members should also be aware that the Asset Compliance Committee had tenant representation to ensure customer perspective on the work which the Committee oversaw.

Councillor R Dickson asked the Portfolio Holder for Place, following the hosting of the community engagement event alongside Atkins Global 15 months ago, where local residents in Kenilworth could find out more about the planned housing development on the Kenilworth Sixth Form site could you update Members when the scheduled development plans would be brought forward for consideration and when would the next round of public consultation take place.

In response, Councillor King stated that he would provide a full response in due course.

Councillor R Dickson asked the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership regarding the internal Audit report heard at Finance and Audit Committee in October 2021 which drew Members attention to the delays which had been identified in the Council responding to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. In January 2024, the Information Commissioner issued an audit report regarding Warwickshire Police which stated the completion rate of FOI requests within the statutory guidelines was below the required standard and the persistent backlog of requests needed to be addressed as a priority. Could you confirm that as of the 31 March 2024 WDC was up to date on all FOI, Subject Access Request (SAR) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests and that there had been no re-occurrence of the problems reported in October 2021.

In response, Councillor Davison confirmed there had been ongoing issues. As stated in Cabinet reports from April 2024, there had been issues with the shared post with Stratford-On-Avon District Council. Councillor Davison continued there had been a rapid turnover of staff which had also affected the efficiency. The Information Commissioner's office expected 90% of requests to be returned on time, this was currently not being met. Performance was currently at 84% for FOI requests and 78% for SAR's. This was something the team were hopeful that the changes implemented following the report to Cabinet would resolve. The first job adverts for the approved roles would be live from the end of this week.

Councillor Matecki asked the Portfolio Holder for Place if, following the introduction of the Net Zero Carbon SPD Policy, former Councillor, Alan Rheed who had stood down in May 2023, should be thanked for all the hard work he did towards getting this to the position it was in now and the lasting legacy he had made for this Council.

In response, Councillor King stated that he understood at the next Council meeting the formal adoption would be announced and an acknowledgement would certainly be made. Councillor King added that officers were working on an SPD to help both officers and Councillors understand the complexities and the implications of enabling the DPD.

Councillor Syson informed Council she would be inviting, former Councillor, Alan Rheed to the Annual Council meeting scheduled for 15 May 2024 in order to acknowledge his contribution.

105. Cabinet Reports

- a) The recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10 April 2024 in respect of Parks Exercise Permit Minute Number 115 were proposed by Councillor Sinnott and seconded by Councillor King.

Councillor Sinnott spoke on this item.

Resolved that recommendations contained in minute number 115 headed "Parks Exercise Permit" as set out in the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 April 2024, be approved.

- b) the recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10 April 2024 in respect of Revisions to Fees for Markets in 2024 Minute Number 116 were proposed by Councillor Billiald and seconded by Councillor Sinnott.

Councillors Billiald and Chilvers spoke on this item.

Resolved that recommendations contained in minute number 116 headed "Revisions to Fees for Markets in 2024" as set out in the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 April 2024, be approved.

106. Common Seal

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Davison and

Resolved that the Common Seal of Warwick District Council be affixed to such documents as it may be required for implementing decisions of the Council arrived at this day.

(The meeting ended at 7.20pm)

CHAIRMAN
15 May 2024



Membership and roles of the Cabinet 2024/2025

Portfolio Area Name	Portfolio Holder	Service Area(s)	Teams
Arts & Economy	Councillor Billiald	Place, Arts and Economy Phil Clarke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development & Regeneration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Including events, markets and tourism • Arts & Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Town Hall ○ Spa Centre ○ Pump Rooms ○ Art Gallery & Museum and ○ Arts development
Climate Change	Councillor Williams	Climate Change Dave Barber Housing, Health and Communities Lisa Barker Neighbourhood & Assets Steve Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy for new WDC buildings (including housing stock) being zero carbon in use • High-level framework for decarbonisation of existing Council homes and all Council buildings

Communities and Leisure	Councillor Sinnott	Safer Communities, Leisure & Environment Marianne Rolfe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Health & Licencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environmental protection ○ Food safety ○ Health & Safety ○ Licensing • Community Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CCTV ○ Emergency Planning ○ Community Safety ○ Safeguarding • Sports & Leisure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leisure contracts ○ Outdoor sport ○ Active communities
		Housing, Health and Communities Lisa Barker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities • Health & Wellbeing

Housing & Assets	Councillor Wightman	Housing, Health and Communities Lisa Barker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Needs • Landlord Services (less Community Health & Well-being) • Housing Strategy and Development • Business Development and Change, within Housing • Milverton Homes and Joint venture • Delivery of new homes • Delivery of retro fit of fire safety, decent homes and decarbonisation programmes of HRA stock.
		Neighbourhood & Assets Steve Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance, Repairs & Maintenance Facilities • Technical Surveying & management of contracts for Housing Investment Programme / Decent Homes works. • Building Surveying • Internal Health & Safety • Delivery of retro fit of fire safety, and decarbonisation programmes of Non HRA buildings
Neighbourhood	Councillor Roberts	Neighbourhood & Assets Steve Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement Services • Contract Services • Public Conveniences • Off street Car Parking & Rangers • Refuse & Recycling Collections • Street Cleansing, • Grounds Maintenance
		Safer Communities, Leisure & Environment Marianne Rolfe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Play Areas ○ Green space strategy ○ Wildlife strategy

Place	Councillor King	Place, Arts and Economy Phil Clarke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Control • Development Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development Control ○ Planning Enforcement ○ Land Charges ○ Planning Conservation • Planning Policy & Delivery, including Local Plan and all DPDs
Resources	Councillor Chilvers	Finance Andrew Rollins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountancy • Audit & Risk • Procurement, Purchasing & Payments • Exchequer (Council Tax & Business Rates) • Financial oversight of Milverton homes
Strategic Leadership	Councillor Davison	Chief Executive Chris Elliott & Deputy Chief Executive Darren Knight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Policy • Strategic Partnerships • Leisure Development Programme • Programme Team - Development & Delivery of Major public realm projects
		Governance Services Graham Leach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Governance • Civic & Committee • Performance Management • Corporate Support • Electoral Services
		Climate Change Dave Barber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Emergency Action Plan • Biodiversity Action Plan

Transformation	Councillor J Harrison	Customer & Digital Services David Elkington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpdesk & Technical Support • Infrastructure, • Geographical Information Systems (GIS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital Mapping Services ○ Local Land & Property Gazetteer (LLPG) ○ Street Naming & Numbering • Transformation & Applications Support • Benefits & Customer Services • Broadband delivery
		People & Communications Tracy Dolphin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HR ○ Employee relations ○ People Management ○ Corporate Payroll • Learning & Development • Marketing & Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Media ○ Design ○ Website ○ Print Room



Membership of the Committees 2024/2025

Audit & Standards Committee (13)

Councillor K Aizelwood
Councillor D Browne
Councillor L Cron
Councillor K Dickson
Councillor R Dickson
Councillor J Falp
Councillor B Gifford
Councillor R Hales
Councillor P Phillips
Councillor G Rosu
Councillor Green Vacancy
Councillor H Yellapragada
Councillor K Dray

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (12)

Councillor H Adkins
Councillor D Armstrong
Councillor A Barton
Councillor M Collins
Councillor A Day
Councillor D Harrison
Councillor M Luckhurst
Councillor A Milton
Councillor J Payne
Councillor P Redford
Councillor D Russell
Councillor C Wightman

Employment Committee (13)

Councillor K Aizlewood
Councillor I Davison
Councillor K Dickson
Councillor K Gorman
Councillor C King
Councillor J Harrison
Councillor R Margrave
Councillor R Noonan
Councillor J Payne
Councillor P Phillips
Councillor J Sinnott
Councillor S Syson
Councillor H Yellapragada

Planning Committee (13)

Councillor A Boad
Councillor M Collins
Councillor L Cron
Councillor R Dickson
Councillor K Dray
Councillor J Falp
Councillor B Gifford
Councillor M Luckhurst
Councillor R Noonan
Councillor P Phillips
Councillor N Tangri
Councillor J Kennedy
Councillor C Wightman

Licensing & Regulatory Committee (15)

Councillor D Armstrong
Councillor D Browne
Councillor A Barton
Councillor K Dray
Councillor C Gifford
Councillor K Gorman
Councillor D Harrison
Councillor C King
Councillor P Kohler
Councillor M Luckhurst
Councillor J Matecki
Councillor P Redford
Councillor W Roberts
Councillor G Rosu
Councillor S Syson

Asset Compliance Committee (10)

Councillor H Adkins
Councillor A Barton
Councillor A Boad
Councillor K Dickson
Councillor K Dray
Councillor J Falp
Councillor K Gorman
Councillor R Hales
Councillor P Phillips
Councillor H Yellapragada

Substitute Members 2023/2024

Audit & Standards Scrutiny Committee

Conservatives

Councillor A Day
Councillor J Matecki
Councillor R Noonan
Councillor P Redford

Liberal Democrats

Councillor A Boad
Councillor B Gifford
Councillor C Gifford
Councillor P Kohler
Councillor A Milton
Councillor J Payne
Councillor D Russell

Green

Councillor D Armstrong
Councillor K Gorman
Councillor D Harrison
Councillor M Luckhurst

Labour

Councillor M Collins
Councillor C Wightman
Councillor H Adkins

Whitnash Residents Association

Councillor A Barton
Councillor J Falp

Independent

Councillor JP Sullivan

Employment Committee

Conservatives

Councillor A Day
Councillor R Hales
Councillor J Matecki
Councillor P Redford

Liberal Democrats

Councillor A Boad
Councillor R Dickson
Councillor C Gifford
Councillor P Kohler
Councillor A Milton
Councillor D Russell
Councillor S Syson

Green

Councillor J Kennedy
Councillor N Tangri

Labour

Councillor H Adkins
Councillor D Browne
Councillor M Collins
Councillor K Dray
Councillor G Rosu
Councillor C Wightman
Councillor P Wightman

Whitnash Residents Association

Councillor A Barton
Councillor J Falp

Licensing & Regulatory Committee

Conservatives

Councillor A Day
Councillor R Hales
Councillor P Phillips

Liberal Democrats

Councillor A Boad
Councillor K Dickson
Councillor R Dickson
Councillor B Gifford
Councillor A Milton
Councillor J Payne
Councillor D Russell

Green

Councillor H Yellapragada
Councillor E Billiald

Labour

Councillor H Adkins
Councillor M Collins
Councillor J Harrison*
Councillor J Sinnott*
Councillor P Wightman*
Councillor C Wightman

Whitnash Residents Association

Councillor J Falp
Councillor R Margrave

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Conservatives

Councillor R Hales
Councillor J Matecki
Councillor R Noonan
Councillor P Phillips

Liberal Democrats

Councillor A Boad
Councillor K Dickson
Councillor R Dickson
Councillor B Gifford
Councillor C Gifford
Councillor P Kohler

Green

Councillor K Aizlewood
Councillor L Cron
Councillor K Gorman
Councillor N Tangri
Councillor H Yellapragada

Labour

Councillor D Browne
Councillor G Rosu
Councillor C Wightman

Whitnash Residents Association

Councillor J Falp
Councillor R Margrave

Planning Committee

Conservatives

Councillor A Day
Councillor R Hales
Councillor J Matecki
Councillor P Redford

Green

Councillor I Davison*
Councillor W Roberts*
Councillor D Harrison
Councillor H Yellapragada
Councillor L Williams*

Whitnash Residents Association

Councillor A Barton
Councillor R Margrave

Liberal Democrats

Councillor K Dickson
Councillor C Gifford
Councillor P Kohler
Councillor A Milton
Councillor J Payne
Councillor D Russell
Councillor S Syson

Labour

Councillor H Adkins
Councillor D Browne
Councillor J Harrison*
Councillor C King*
Councillor G Rosu
Councillor J Sinnott*
Councillor P Wightman*

*Not for WDC applications

Working Parties & Forums 2024/2025

Working Party / Forum	Lead Officer	Number of places	Councillors 2024/25
Abbey Fields Expenditure Working Party 1 from each Group		6 (one from each Group plus PH)	D Armstrong A Barton R Dickson C King (Chair) P Phillips C Wightman
Budget Review Group		10 (5 members from O&S and A&S each with Chairs of both automatically appointed. Appointments made by both Committees)	A Barton M Collins A Day R Dickson J Falp R Hales M Luckhurst A Milton G Rosu N Tangri
Members – Trades Union Joint Consultation & Safety Panel 1 from each Group	Tracy Dolphin	5	B Gifford J Kennedy Labour Vacancy J Falp P Phillips
St Mary's Lands Working Party 1 each Group plus PH	Chris Elliott	6 (one from each Group plus PH)	PH Neighbourhood & Leisure – W Roberts D Harrison D Browne R Hales WRA Vacancy Lib Dem Vacancy

South Warwickshire Local Plan Advisory Group	Phil Clarke	6 (one form each Group plus PH)	A Boad L Williams K Aizlewood M Collins R Margrave A Day
Warwick District Conservation Advisory Forum Two elected Members of Warwick District Council who have an interest in the historic environment and planning matters.	Robert Dawson	2	Councillor C Gifford Councillor J Falp

Working Parties appointed by the Cabinet

Working Party / Forum	Lead Officer	Number of places	Councillors 2024/25
Leamington Transformation Board Leader, PH, and all Group Leaders . (External appointments are 2 x WCC cllrs + 1 x LTC cllr)	Mark Brightburn	Leader plus PH plus all Group Leaders	Leader of the Council - Councillor I Davison PH Cllr Billiald & King. Councillors Boad, Day, Falp.

Champions 2024/2025

Champions	Lead Officer	Number of places	Councillors
<p>Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Champions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assure themselves that the Council has sound arrangements to protect children and promote their welfare are in place within the District Council and that the Council is promoting and engaging in effective interagency cooperation and collaboration in these fields; • Undertake reasonable investigations so as to be able to form a view of the quality of the Council's child safeguarding activities and work with the officer Children's Champion to assist the Council and improve the quality and/or effectiveness of those activities whenever appropriate; • Act as a "critical friend" to constructively challenge officers and elected members on child safeguarding and welfare issues as appropriate; • Promote awareness of child safeguarding and welfare issues and the activities and processes undertaken by this Council amongst elected members 	Marianne Rolfe	2	<p>Portfolio Holder, Safer Communities, Leisure & Environment – Councillor J Sinnott</p> <p>Councillor to be appointed by O&S Committee</p>
<p>Heritage Champion As explained in the CAF Constitution, the Chair of the Forum shall also act as the Council's Heritage Champion in promoting the historic environment both within the Council and the wider community.</p>	Robert Dawson	1	Chairman of CAF
<p>HS2 Champion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (To monitor the impact of HS2 on Warwick District and work on mitigation for this; • To liaise with appropriate officers and organisations on HS2 matters and support the Portfolio Holder in this detailed area of work) 	Erin Weatherstone	1	(23/24 - Councillor L Cron)
<p>Armed Forces Covenant Champion To champion all aspects of the Armed Forces Covenant in WDC.</p>	Bernie Allen	1	(23/24 - Councillor Redford)
<p>Parish/Town Champion – Role Profile</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise awareness and have regard of issues affecting Local Councils within the District Council; • To respond to invitations from Local Councils to attend meetings of mutual interest; • To be the first point of contact for Local Councils in the event of concerns relating to dealings with the District Council; • To ensure that Local Councils view are taken into account when the District Council undertakes consultation; • To facilitate discussions in relation to the possibility of devolving services to Local Councils; • To encourage joint training events including Councillors from the District Council and Local Councils • To respond to invitations to attend Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC) Area Committees; • To attend other Local Council liaison meetings as appropriate 	Bernie Allen	1	(23/24 - Councillor Redford)

Cabinet appointments 2024-25

(Appointments made by the Cabinet and therefore not a decision for the Council and not subject to political proportionality rules)

Cabinet Appointments	Number of places	Councillor
Warwickshire Police & Crime Panel	1	PH Safer Communities, Leisure & Environment Councillor Sinnott
District Councils' Network (Leader of the Council)	1	Leader of the Council Councillor Davison
West Midlands Combined Authority (Leader of the Council)	1	Leader of the Council Councillor Davison
Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board	1	PH Safer Communities, Leisure & Environment Councillor Sinnott
South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership	1	PH Safer Communities, Leisure & Environment Councillor Sinnott
Warwickshire County Council Health & Wellbeing Board	1	PH Safer Communities, Leisure & Environment Councillor Sinnott
Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH)	1	PH Housing Councillor Wightman
Warwickshire Waste Management Forum	1	PH Neighbourhood Councillor Roberts
Shakespeare's England	1	PH Arts & Economy Councillor Billiald
Total	9	

Warwick District Council appointments 2024-25

Appointment	Number of places	Councillor 2024/2025 (2023/2024)	*Evaluation Criteria
Coventry Airport Consultative Committee	1	(Payne)	2
Kenilworth Abbey Barn Advisory Committee	1	(Hales)	4
South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust	1	(Sinnott)	5
Warwickshire County Council – Adult Social Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1	(Redford)	5
Birmingham Airport Consultative Committee	1	(Aizlewood)	2
Bid Leamington Board	1	(Billiald)	2
National Parking Adjudication Service (PATROL)	1	(Dray)	1 & 3

South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (Non Executive rep)	1	(Falp)	1
Chase Meadow Community Centre	1	(Rosu)	4
Warwickshire Local Councils' Climate Emergency Partnership* *Asked that one of the two seats is the PH for Climate Change	2	Williams (Kennedy) (Kohler)	3
Total	11		

*Evaluation Criteria Key:

Council agreed criteria:

1. A body or partnership to which the Council provides significant financial contribution;
2. An established Council partnership with agreements in place;
3. A body or partnership to which the Council is obliged to appoint a Member;
4. A body or partnership which relates to the management of an asset of the Council; or
5. Appointments made at the discretion of the Council.

Additional Criteria used by the Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer:

6. Does the body play a significant role in local service delivery; or
7. Does the body have significant influence on local or national policy.

Title: End of Term Report

Lead Officer: Lesley Dury, Principal Committee Services Officer

Portfolio Holder: Not applicable

Wards of the District directly affected: Not applicable

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder		Not applicable
Finance		Not applicable
Legal Services		Not applicable
Chief Executive	25/03/2024	Darren Knight
Director of Climate Change		Not applicable
Head of Service(s)	22/03/2024	Graham Leach
Section 151 Officer		Not applicable
Monitoring Officer	22/03/2024	Graham Leach
Leadership Co-ordination Group		Not applicable
Final decision by Council?	Yes	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	Appendix B – Paragraph 3	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

Summary

This report is the annual end of term report to the Council on the work the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has undertaken during the municipal year 2023/24. Article 6 in the Council's Constitution mandates that the Committee must report annually to the Council on the work it has covered. Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviewed this report at its meeting 9 April 2024.

The Committee met 14 times during the municipal year. Some members from this Committee also formed part of the membership of the Budget Review Group which met twice to discuss certain financial reports.

Recommendation

- (1)** That Council notes the list of matters considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee during the municipal year 2023/24, as detailed in Appendices A and B to the report, be noted.
-

1 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 Under Article 6 of the Council's Constitution, Overview & Scrutiny Committees and Policy Committees are required to provide an end of term report to the Council on the work they have undertaken during the year.
- 1.2 The matters considered during the year are attached at Appendices A and B to the report. This will be updated to include matters considered at this meeting before it is submitted to Council.
- 1.3 A full account of the work undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/24 will be submitted to Council.

2 Alternative Options

- 2.1 There are no alternative options because this report complies with the requirements of Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

4 Financial Services

- 4.1 There are no financial or budgetary considerations in this report.

5 Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 Warwick District Council has adopted a Corporate Strategy which sets three strategic aims for the organisation:
 - delivering valued, sustainable services;
 - low cost, low carbon energy across the district; and
 - creating vibrant, safe and healthy communities of the future.
- 5.2 Overview & Scrutiny Committee is the Cabinet's "critical friend". Councillors choose the reports on the Cabinet agenda to be called-in for scrutiny at Overview & Scrutiny Committee in on the Cabinet agenda. These must meet certain pre-set parameters detailed in Part 4, Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules, paragraph 19 in the Constitution. These reports are then "tested" at the Committee meeting to ensure that they are in line with the

Corporate Strategy's aims and objectives and the Committee will make comments and recommendations to Cabinet where it feels improvements can be made.

6 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no environmental/climate change implications in this report.

7 Analysis of the effects on Equality

7.1 There are no effects on Equality in this report.

8 Data Protection

8.1 There are no Data Protection implications in this report.

9 Health and Wellbeing

9.1 There are no Health & Wellbeing considerations in this report.

10 Risk Assessment

10.1 There are no risks associated with this report which is purely provided as a matter of good practice and Council policy concerning Scrutiny Committees.

Background papers:

Minutes of both Overview & Scrutiny Committee and of Cabinet have been referred to in the preparation of this report. These are published on the Council's website.

Supporting documents:

Not applicable.

Chair's Introduction

I'd like to start by thanking members of the committee for their work this year. It has been in many ways a year of transition for the committee as a new administration, new members and new officers brought their different perspectives to bear. It has been good to see how quickly new members have been able to make an effective contribution to the whole scrutiny process. I am also particularly pleased to hear feedback from new and long serving members of the committee about the value they place on our non-partisan approach. As Chair I firmly believe that every member of the committee has something to contribute and that by working together, we have the best chance of achieving the right outcome for our residents.

Key concerns for the committee over the last two years have been our workload and our ability to effectively scrutinise the finance agenda.

With the support and guidance of officers we have been able to adopt some different ways of working which have helped us to keep the agendas tight and the meetings focussed. We have also taken a more proactive approach to setting our agenda by starting to focus on key areas like significant contracts and key council projects. This will help us to get ahead of the curve and add more value to cabinet and officers in future policy making. We also hope that it will bring a greater focus on our residents' voices.

In terms of finance, we have begun to receive some of the training that we have been asking for. In particular, the recent training on Treasury Management was well received (if poorly attended) and being conducted shortly prior to the report being reviewed ensured that the level of debate and scrutiny was enhanced. This has also meant delaying certain items, like the HRA report, until I am satisfied that we have the tools to scrutinise it effectively.

Of ongoing concern is absenteeism from some members of the committee. We have an important job to do, and it is therefore disappointing that there have been many occasions when we haven't had a full complement of members. It is worth reminding all councillors that their duties go beyond simply attending council meetings and that there is an important role to be played in committees and the preparation involved in them.

Finally, I would think like to thank officers for their support throughout the year. Without their hard work, occasional prompting and guidance the committee wouldn't be able to run as effectively as it does. In particular, I'd like to thank Lesley Dury who will be retiring from Warwick District Council this year. She has been an ever present over my time as chair of the committee and her support has been invaluable in keeping us organised and on-track. We wish her all the best for her retirement.

Councillor Andrew Milton
Chair, Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Items considered by Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2023/24

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Items

2023:

- Appointment of Chair
- Future High Streets Fund Update
- Appointments to the Budget Review Group
- Appointment of the Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Champion#
- Learning and Action Plan – Procurement
- Climate Change Action Programme Update
- Scrutiny Arrangements
- Planning Enforcement Update
- Carbon Emissions Data and Climate Change Measures
- Corporate Strategy
- Waste Contract Review
- "No Mow May" Review
- Appointment of Vice Chair
- HEART

2024:

- Waste Enforcement Update
- Waste Contract Update
- Setting out what the Committee wishes to see in future reports to it on:
 - Homelessness
 - Leisure Services Contract
 - General housing repairs & voids
- Development of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Work Programme
- End of Term Report
- Reports scheduled to be sent to all District Councillors for comment during April:
 - Children's and Adults Safeguarding Champions: End of Term Briefing Note
 - Annual Outside Bodies and Champions' Statements and Review
 - Review on the Identification and Remediation of Damp and Mould in Council Homes
 - Noise Nuisance Investigations

Routine Items:

Review of the Work Programme, Forward Plan and Comments from Cabinet

Cabinet / Joint Cabinet reports scrutinised by the Committee and the Budget Review Group:

(Where Overview & Scrutiny Committee (O&S) has made a recommendation(s) to Cabinet on reports being considered at Cabinet, Cabinet's decision to approve or refuse that recommendation is detailed below.)

O&S meeting 4 July 2023:

Use of Delegated Powers for Urgent Decisions

This report was not called-in for scrutiny because the report referred to decisions that had already been made. However, it was felt that the process and timing in the use of these powers should be examined; it was noted that these decisions referred to in the report had been made during the pre-election period and some had involved sizeable sums of money.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

As part of the review of scrutiny arrangements that had already been agreed, a review should be carried out on the use of delegated powers and whether there is a way to provide more scrutiny of these decisions.

Cabinet response:

The recommendation from Overview & Scrutiny Committee was approved.

Milverton Homes Limited Governance Audit:

The Committee noted the comments from the Portfolio Holder for Housing which clarified that Recommendation 3 in the report was a recommendation to Council, and the following amendment to recommendation 4:

"Approves the Terms of Reference for the Shareholder Representative Board at the Appendix 1 **and asks Council to annex it to the Constitution**".

The Committee also noted comments that the Terms of Reference should be less specific and refer instead to any relevant risks or issues linked with any Joint Venture project referred to the Board by the Cabinet.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

Officers should review the effectiveness on governance arrangements with the Monitoring Officer chairing Board meetings and also being the Shareholder Representative. It asked for the review to examine whether alternative options should be pursued.

Cabinet response:

The recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as revised by the addendum were approved.

Milverton Homes Business Plan Revision: (Confidential Report)

See Appendix B

Customer Service Relocation Options

The Committee expressed concerns about the increase in costs from those that were initially stated. The Committee requested that costs were kept closely under control for the duration of the project and reduced if possible and provided value for money. The Committee requested that further effort should be made in respect of the plans for the Pump Rooms Shop to ensure that the service provided to residents continued.

O&S meeting 20 July 2023:

Call-in of Cabinet Decision 5 July 2023 – Customer Services Relocation Options

Resolved that:

- (1) the item be referred to Council for further debate so that all Members can be given the opportunity to ask questions and fully understand the implications, and to provide the Council with assurance that it is providing a viable option.

The Committee asks for pertinent information, such as a breakdown of customer attendance at Riverside House reception, plans for rooms at the Town Hall, an update on shop location (confidentially if needed), timescales for the overall project to be circulated ahead of Council by way of an addendum.

The Committee notes that the move of the Customers Services team is not done in isolation, but it is part of a wider picture, with the plan to move the Council offices out of Riverside House and the developments planned for the Town Hall. As such, the Committee asks that the relevant information from these different projects is brought forward ahead of the Council meeting.

The Committee also requested further details on what other options were considered as potential for relocating the Customer Services and reasons why these were discounted.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee asks that the issue of relocating the Pump Rooms shop should be considered by Council, asking that any confidential information be sent in advance to all Members, to inform the debate at Council, which should be carried in public session as much as possible, for the purpose of transparency and accountability; and

- (2) a briefing be arranged for Members advising what Council services are moving where and when.

Council response:

That in respect of the resolutions made by Cabinet on the Customer Services Relocations Options, the Council resolved to take no action. (This meant that the decision could be implemented the next working day.)

O&S meeting 8 August 2023:

Q1 Budget Update 2023/24

The Committee thanked officers for their work on the report.

It requested that in future budget setting, more visibility about the range of inflation rates used on the assumptions made was provided. Movement in the Council's

Reserve funds should also be highlighted and an historical context to this should be provided to show the trend in movement.

The Committee was keen to see the use of more visual or graphical presentation in the report which would make the report aid easier understanding of the figures.

The Committee was concerned about the adverse position in relation to the waste contract. It will be asking that the next report it receives on its Work Programme relating to the waste and recycling contract (in October) included a review of the finance considerations and would be asking that Finance provided support to the officer who would be writing the report. The level of reporting required should also be addressed in the report following on from conversations between the Chair and the Head of Finance.

Review of Significant Business Risk Register

The Committee thanked officers for their work on the report.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

With the evolution of the new Corporate Strategy the Committee recommended to Cabinet that it should take the opportunity to re-examine the whole framework for reviewing and managing risk and assurance. This should include the structure of the Risk Register with a view to ensure that it was focussed on informing actions that the Council could take and risk ratings which were meaningful. Assurance was required to show that the process of management of risk was effective, and this should be reflected in the reporting.

Cabinet response:

The recommendation from Overview & Scrutiny Committee was approved.

Resident Engagement Strategy

The Committee did not scrutinise this report at the meeting, but the Chair had liaised with the Head of Housing on the recommendation to Cabinet he would propose to the Committee.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

To strengthen the Resident Engagement Strategy The Committee recommended to Cabinet that:

- (1) Cabinet asked the Portfolio Holder to define key measures of success and metrics that could be used to determine the impact of the strategy and the effective use of Council resources; and
- (2) Cabinet asked the Head of Housing to agree appropriate measures of success with tenants to understand the level of impact on their needs.

These measures should be made available on the Council's Dashboard.

Cabinet response:

The recommendations in the report were approved, along with the following additional recommendation:

"that Cabinet asks the Portfolio Holder and Head of Housing to agree appropriate measures of success with tenants to understand the level of impact on their needs.

These measures should be reported by way of an annual report to tenants and on the Council's Dashboard".

Identification and Remediation of Damp and Mould in Council Homes

This report to Cabinet had not been called-in for scrutiny. The Chair had considered this report with others and the conclusion that had been reached was that there was nothing that the Committee could usefully add to the recommendations currently. It was agreed that a report would be added to the Committee's Work Programme six months' following implementation. The Committee would require a review on what was happening with the policy, was it being put into action and the impact it had made.

O&S meeting 19 September 2023:

Policy & Budgetary Framework Procedure Rules

The Committee held a good discussion on a draft Corporate Strategy for this Council.

The Committee considered that the Corporate Strategy report (in its draft stage) was difficult to scrutinise as a "Strategy" document because the document did not have either the structure or framework to understand the direction the Council wished to take, and whether the areas of focus listed in the report would help to achieve that. It made the following points that it wished Cabinet to bring more detail to in the Corporate Strategy:

1. The Committee encouraged Cabinet to "be brave" in setting out what it wished to achieve, particularly around climate ambitions.
2. There was a need for "smart objectives" showing what the Council intended to do, building on what it had already achieved in respect to its aims and there should be an indication of a timeframe.
3. The strategy should focus more on people and the different segments of people living or coming into the District such as new communities, visitors to the District, people who work in the District. It should seek to be "People first".
4. A more wholistic view on finances should be taken, not just the profit and loss but also the balance sheet.

The Committee suggested that how the Council intended to support new communities, local enterprise and town centre regeneration should be added to the Strategy.

Parish Councils should be added to the list of consultees.

Kenilworth Wardens

The Committee held a good discussion on the project reflecting on the fact that it had taken a considerable amount of time to reach this stage and noting the complexity of the project.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

The Committee recommended to Cabinet that as well as reviewing the financial case, that a best practice audit of governance of the club including confidence in the continuity of its management be carried out by officers. This should include how it

planned to engage new communities and new members into the club to ensure its continued running.

Cabinet response:

The recommendation from Overview & Scrutiny Committee was approved.

Earmarked Reserves

The Committee remarked on the late publication of the report which did not provide adequate time for proper scrutiny. The Committee would have preferred more time to undertake better scrutiny.

O&S meeting 31 October 2023:

Abbey Fields Swimming Pools Project

Recommendation to Cabinet:

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report with the following caveats and conditions which formed a recommendation to Cabinet:

1. the project undertook a review on the assurance of the environmental energy reduction measures;
2. an independent review of the costs was carried out; and
3. Cabinet should be provided with a full briefing on the previous site analysis that had been done so that they could be properly informed when making their decision.

Cabinet response:

The recommendation from Overview & Scrutiny Committee was approved.

Local Government Association Corporate Challenge Report and Action Plan

The Committee thanked Officers and the Peer Review Team for the work undertaken and welcomed their feedback and recommendations.

The Committee noted the importance of financial awareness for all Members and clarity on the Council's real financial position. It emphasised the importance of data in terms of managing and measuring performance of services to residents.

The Committee, as part of its remit, would be taking a role in shaping the performance data in a positive and constructive way (Appendix 2 to the report – Peer Review Action Plan, recommendation 6).

Corporate Strategy

The Committee had scrutinised the draft Corporate Strategy at length previously, so further scrutiny was not considered necessary. The Chair had liaised with the Leader of the Council and had informed him that he would be asking Members if they had any further comments to pass to Cabinet.

The Committee was pleased to note how performance would be measured was defined in the Strategy but looked forward to receiving the actual targets and key performance indicators (KPI's). The Committee requested more clarity on the review process because the "who, what, when and how" was unclear.

Budget Review Group meeting 1 November 2023

Fees and Charges

The Budget Review Group had concerns about the increase in fees at the crematorium but were satisfied by the rationale behind the decision provided by officers.

The Group wished to draw Cabinet's attention to the following points regarding car parking charges:

1. The connection between car parking fees and other priorities such as the town centre economy and the climate emergency should be recognised. The Council's ambition to encourage net zero carbon methods of transportation should be reflected in the parking charges strategy. To understand the impacts of these connections better and define a way forward in achieving the Council's goals, the Group encourages officers to test hypotheses and pursue different avenues to find potential solutions;
2. the importance of having an aligned strategy with Warwickshire County Council in relation to transportation and car parking charges should be highlighted;
3. in future, the consultation for car parking charges should be widened to include all Town and Parish Councils and interested organisations such as the Chambers of Trade and Commerce for Leamington, Kenilworth, and Warwick; and
4. a review into car parking charges of all car parks linked to leisure facilities would be welcomed to ensure that they are fair and equitable across the District.

The Group welcomed the increase in charges for filming on Council land.

The Group wished to draw Cabinet's attention to the circa £170,000 of opportunity that had not been taken which could have been available had the projections of the last Medium Term Financial Strategy been followed.

O&S meeting 14 November 2023:

Future High Streets Fund Update

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

It stressed the importance of pursuing a balanced eco system and offers that complimented each other through the Future High Streets Fund.

Asset Compliance Committee & Resources

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report and thanked Officers for their hard work.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

The Committee recommended to Cabinet that:

1. an appraisal report explaining how the situation the Council now found itself in and how this arose was prepared before the end of the year and should be presented to the Committee at the first opportunity; and
2. a more detailed Action Plan was progressed as soon as possible.

Members expressed some concern about deliverability of the work required and the potential impact on other services. The Committee had requested that a report was provided to it in the New Year to understand how the work would be effectively resourced and how the impact of this would be managed across the Council and its assets.

Cabinet response:

The recommendations in the report were approved. The recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was amended slightly before approval:

- (1) an appraisal report explaining how the situation the Council now finds itself in arose is prepared *at the first reasonable opportunity* and should be presented to Overview & Scrutiny Committee at the *earliest* opportunity; and
- (2) a more detailed Action Plan is progressed as soon as possible.

Participation in the West Midlands Investment Zone

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report and thanked Officers for their work on the report and also for ensuring that what was a complex matter was explained in understandable terms.

The Committee recognised the potential benefits to the District as a whole and its residents. The necessity of a no detriment provision on an ongoing basis throughout the lifetime of this arrangement was clearly understood and supported.

O&S meeting scheduled for 20 November 2023, but then cancelled:

Revisions to the timetable for preparing the South Warwickshire Local Plan

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the recommendations in the report and thanked officers for their work.

The Committee requested that a briefing on the background for all councillors is provided early next year, explaining the stage the Plan has reached and what future steps were planned.

(The Chair used his discretion to cancel the additional meeting of the Committee 20 November because only one Councillor raised questions on the report and these did not meet the criteria for a call in because they did not relate to the substance of the paper.)

O&S meeting 5 December 2023:

Renewal of Microsoft Enterprise Agreement

The Committee raised concern about the lack of detail provided in the report, particularly around the areas of risk and alternative options, cyber security and protection of residents' personal data. The Committee asked Cabinet that a review should be done, to look at the breakdown in the process leading to the current situation, and lessons to be learnt from it.

Q2 Budget Update 2023/24

The Committee noted the report and thanked officers for their work on it, especially for including the summary of reserves. The Committee asked that in the future, more work should be done on how the Council monitored its budgets on an ongoing basis, so that there was a lesser discrepancy between projections and the actuals.

The Committee asked for an update from the Portfolio Holder in relation to the underspent capital budget for disabled playground facilities, and what the plan for spending this budget was. The Committee asked for future reports to bring forward comments in the situations of underspend.

Associated Costs for the Purchase of 24 Dwellings at the Europa Way, Warwick (Confidential Report)

The Committee noted the report and supported the recommendations within it.

Budget Review Group meeting 7 February 2024:

General Fund Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25

The Group thanked officers for their hard work in putting together the report.

The Group explored the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the impact on reserves. They were keen to see the upcoming change management strategy and the assumptions underpinning it.

Members requested that communications material be made available detailing all of the grants that the Council had access to, and information be provided so that residents could see what was being delivered with those grant funds.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2024/25 (including Housing Rent Setting)

The Group acknowledged the need for greater general awareness of the details of the Housing Revenue Account across the Council and requested that a briefing be organised to ensure Councillors' full understanding.

They noted the report and awaited answers to the questions asked about the Council's social rent rates in comparison to other Councils across Warwickshire.

O&S meeting 5 March 2024:

Treasury Management Strategy 2024/24

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee thanked officers for their hard work bringing the detailed and thorough report forward. The Committee was reassured by explanations around sensitivity analysis and the impact on Milverton Homes.

The Committee welcomed the initiative to bring forward more information on Treasury Management and affordability when decisions were being made on capital expenditure. It was pleased that the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Chilvers was keen to explore the initiative to set clear parameters to enable councillors to be confident in future borrowing decisions.

Change Programme – Case for Change

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee was keen to see that Customer Services were baselined and tracked to ensure that these reflected the commitment made in the Corporate Strategy to improve Council services.

The Committee requested a specific update on Change Programme progress following the Programme Board meeting scheduled in June.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

That all Members received regular communications from the Members Advisory Group detailing the outcomes, outputs and actions.

Cabinet response:

The recommendation from Overview & Scrutiny Committee was approved.

Q3 Budget Update 2023/24

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee thanked officers for the detailed and comprehensible report. The Committee supported the Finance Team's strategy to work with budget managers to improve budget management to smooth volatility and reduce peaks. This would result in a more measured view of what was going on.

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Review 2024

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee did not scrutinise this report at the meeting but made comments to Cabinet.

Members were keen to see maximum attendance at training sessions so asked that these, where possible, avoided holiday periods. However, to mitigate for this, the Committee requested that training sessions should be recorded (whilst also appreciating that external trainers might not be open to this request).

The Committee also requested that when HRA reports were to be considered in future, this should always be accompanied by a briefing to Members in advance.

The committee intends to add this report to the Overview & Scrutiny workplan in line with dates for further training.

Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee did not scrutinise this report at the meeting but made comments to Cabinet.

The Committee expressed concern about the lateness in signing off the AGS which the Head of Finance explained was linked to the delay in signing off the Council's Statement of Account and he explained how this would be overcome in the future with a backstop date being agreed.

The Committee requested that the AGS should be produced sooner in order to support a strong focus on governance.

O&S meeting 9 April 2024:

Park Exercise Permit

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee did not scrutinise this report at the meeting because a report on the subject shortly before the scheme was introduced had been considered by the Committee. Following consideration of that report, the Committee had requested a follow-on report after the scheme had been in operation for a while to check that the permits were operating in the way intended and then to discuss if the scheme should continue. The follow-on report was never forthcoming because various issues arose which stymied the operation of the scheme in the way intended to produce measurable results.

The recommendations in the report to Cabinet did not include an option on whether to proceed or not with the scheme but was purely to determine if the terms and conditions of the scheme should be changed.

The Committee requested that a report should be produced after the summer period on how the scheme was performing along with some data, including data on how much of officers' time was being spent with the implementation and governance of the scheme.

Revisions to fees for markets in 2024

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee did not scrutinise this report at the meeting but made comments to Cabinet.

The Committee requested that when in the future these same types of recommendations are made, more evidential data backing up the proposals being made should be provided; if fees are to be reduced then there should be options provided to mitigate or alternative plans that help to overcome some of the challenges being faced.

The Committee raised a concern that footfall numbers were reducing but there were no plans to reduce the fees. Markets were an important part of communities and the economy in towns.

Members of the Committee wish to remind Cabinet that these assumptions are built into our budget for the year and therefore making changes after the budget has been set could be problematic.

Joint Waste Contract – Customer Services

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee did not scrutinise this report at the meeting because it had very recently considered a report on the subject under its own Work Programme and it is one of the Council's contracts the Committee has chosen to scrutinise.

The Committee thanked officers for their work in bringing that report to it proactively. The Committee welcomed the recommendations in the report to Cabinet.

Milverton Homes Ltd Business Plan Revision

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee held good discussions supported by officers and would like to further explore Milverton Homes. The Committee is intending to set up a specific meeting to coincide with the time when Milverton Homes will hold its AGM (November). This will allow Members to better understand the assumptions going into the business plan and the mechanisms for running the business over the next 12 months.

The Committee asked that more attention should be placed on the way words and language could be interpreted in reports. The use of "no liability" stated in the report at paragraph 10.1 should more accurately have made plain that the Council was taking measures to mitigate the liability, so the statement "no liability" was technically incorrect. The word "constrained" at paragraph 1.1.4 was also problematic because it did not explain why this was and that the arrangements being used were perfectly valid and used in other Authorities.