

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 October 2015, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.05pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Doody (Chairman); Councillors Ashford, Barrott, Boad, Bromley, Mrs Bunker, Butler, Coker, Cooke, Cross, D'Arcy, Davies, Davison, Day, Edgington, Mrs Evetts, Mrs Falp, Mrs Gallagher, Gifford, Gill, Miss Grainger, Grainger, Mrs Hill, Howe, Illingworth, Margrave, Mobbs, Morris, Naimo, Parkins, Phillips, Quinney, Mrs Redford, Shilton, Mrs Stevens, and Weed.

(The Chairman delayed the start of the meeting until 6.20pm to enable Councillors present to consider an addendum to the report on Devolution and Economic Growth – options for a combined authority, that had been circulated by the Chief Executive earlier that day.)

46. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cain, Mrs Cain, Harrington, Heath, Mrs Knight, Mann, Murphy, Rhead, Thompson and Whiting.

47. **Declarations of Interest**

Minute - Devolution and Economic Growth – options for a combined authority
Councillors Gifford and Shilton declared an interest because they were Warwickshire County Councillors.

48. **Devolution and Economic Growth – options for a combined authority**

The Council considered a report from the Chief Executive about the current position regarding proposals for devolution, growth and combined authorities and current proposals for Coventry and Warwickshire and the West Midlands in the context of rapidly changing national policy.

In June 2015, the Council agreed a report that proposed responding to this rapidly moving agenda by entering into discussions with other local authorities and the Government to establish how the Council's objectives could be achieved through membership of a West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). This required the Council Leader and Chief Executive to feedback on these discussions to Council. This report provided feedback on those discussions for the Council to make a decision on the way forward and in particular to make a decision to join or not join the proposed WMCA as it was now required.

In addition to the report the Chief Executive had circulated an addendum to the report, earlier that day, which set out the recommendations on this matter being presented to two other Councils in Warwickshire this week, the LEP, and to Coventry City Council next week, on the same matter; a letter received from Warwickshire County Council on a proposal for a Warwickshire Devolution Deal; a summary of recent discussions on a WMCA Business Rates pool; a copy of the Chancellor's announcement on Business Rates and funding for Councils; the announcement of a Devolution Deal for the Sheffield City Region; information on the legal steps to exiting a Combined Authority; and advice for Councillors,

from the Chief Executive on this matter in the light of the additional information and the risks that arose.

Councillor Mobbs proposed five alternative recommendations, to the report, as set out below, and this was duly seconded by Councillor Coker.

The proposed alternative recommendations were:

- 1) That this Council declines the invitation to become a Non Constituent Member of the proposed West Midlands Combined Authority **on the current terms.**
- 2) That this Council notes the current position in respect of its preferred option for a Coventry and Warwickshire Combined Authority and agrees to retain this option in case the proposed West Midlands Combined Authority does not develop as currently envisaged.
- 3) That this Council seeks a review of the current Joint Committee covering Coventry and Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth to enhance and maintain the strong local economic, housing and planning linkages and the local authority input into the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP).
- 4) That the Council agrees to participate in proposals for public sector reform in the sub region or Warwickshire should it receive an invitation to do so from the Warwickshire County Council **or should any improved proposals be offered by the WMCA.**
- 5) That the Council agrees that the governance arrangements for any new Business Rates Pool are agreed and signed off by the Chief Executive and Head of Finance in consultation with the relevant portfolio holders (Leader and Finance).

In light of this it was proposed by Councillor Boad and duly seconded that Council Procedure Rules should be suspended to enable members to speak more than once on this matter. On being put to the vote, the proposal to suspend Council Procedure Rules was defeated.

Councillors Barrott, Boad, Day, Naimo, Mrs Bunker, Miss Grainger, Quinney, Mrs Falp, Illingworth, Shilton, Phillips, Gifford, Parkin, Ashford, Gill, Coker and Mobbs addressed the meeting on this matter.

The proposed recommendations from Councillor Mobbs, that had been duly seconded, were put to the vote and

Resolved that

- (1) the invitation to become a Non Constituent Member of the proposed West Midlands Combined Authority, be declined, on the current terms;
- (2) the current position in respect of its preferred option for a Coventry and Warwickshire Combined Authority, be noted, and agrees to retain this option

in case the proposed West Midlands Combined Authority does not develop as currently envisaged;

- (3) this Council seeks a review of the current Joint Committee covering Coventry and Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth to enhance and maintain the strong local economic ,housing and planning linkages and the local authority input into the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP);
- (4) Council agrees to participate in proposals for public sector reform in the sub region or Warwickshire should it receive an invitation to do so from the Warwickshire County Council or should any improved proposals be offered by the WMCA; and
- (5) the governance arrangements for any new Business Rates Pool be agreed and signed off by the Chief Executive and Head of Finance in consultation with the relevant portfolio holders (Leader and Finance)

(Prior to the vote being taken it was proposed by Councillor Shilton, and duly seconded by two Councillors, that a recorded vote should be taken on this proposal. The votes were recorded as follows:

For: Councillors Ashford, Mrs Bunker, Butler, Coker, Cooke, Cross, Davies, Davison, Day, Doody, Edgington, Mrs Evetts, Mrs Falp, Gallagher, Miss Grainger, Grainger, Mrs Hill, Howe, Margrave, Mobbs, Morris, Phillips, Mrs Redford, Shilton and Mrs Stevens.

Against: Councillors Barrott, Bromley, D'Arcy, Gill, Naimo, Parkins, Quinney and Weed.

Abstentions: Councillors Boad and Gifford.

On this basis the proposal was carried by 26 votes to 8 with 2 abstentions.)

49. **Common Seal**

It was

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

(The meeting ended at 7.35 pm)

CHAIRMAN
18 November 2015