

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18 April 2018, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Boad (Chairman); Councillors Ashford, Mrs Bunker, Butler, Cain, Coker, Cooke, Cross, Davison, Doody, Edgington, Mrs Evetts, Gallagher, Gifford, Gill, Grainger, Heath, Hill, Illingworth, Mrs Knight, Mobbs, Murphy, Naimo, Parkins, Phillips, Quinney, Mrs Redford, Rhead, Shilton, Mrs Stevens, Thompson and Weed.

81. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Cain, D'Arcy, Davies, Day, Mrs Falp, H Grainger, Howe, Noone and Whiting.

82. **Declarations of Interest**

Minute 89 – Report of the Executive

Councillor Naimo declared an interest in the report of the Executive because it referenced matters relating to Leamington BID and she worked for Leamington BID.

83. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21 February 2018 were taken as read and duly signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

84. **Communications & Announcements**

The Chairman informed Council that there was no business to be conducted under Item 5 Petitions and Item 7 Public Submissions.

85. **Eco Family Fun day 29 April 2018**

The Council received a presentation reviewing the Eco Family Fun day from 2017 and detailing the planned fun day for 2018.

86. **Notice of Motion**

It was proposed by Councillor Gifford, and duly seconded that:

"This Council recognises that the Covent Garden Car Park needs to be demolished due to the degradation of its structure. This Council believes that the substantial loss of car parking spaces, for a year to 18 months in the town centre, has the potential to be very damaging to local businesses. The Council asks the Executive to engage parking or other consultants to work with stakeholders, including BID Leamington and the County Council, with the objective of producing a workable town centre wide solution whilst the multi storey car park is replaced. This should not preclude the new car park being built on a site other than Covent Garden or vigorous, innovative promotion of other modes of transport."

Councillors Grainger proposed an amendment to remove the words “new car park being built on a site other than Covent Garden or”. This was duly seconded by Councillor Mobbs.

Councillors Grainger, Naimo, Gifford, Barrott, Butler, Mrs Knight, Coker and Quinney spoke on the amendment and on being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

Councillor Gifford spoke on the amended motion, as it was now the substantive motion. On being put to the vote it was:

Resolved that Council recognises that the Covent Garden Car Park needs to be demolished due to the degradation of its structure. This Council believes that the substantial loss of car parking spaces, for a year to 18 months in the town centre, has the potential to be very damaging to local businesses. The Council asks the Executive to engage parking or other consultants to work with stakeholders, including BID Leamington and the County Council, with the objective of producing a workable town centre wide solution whilst the multi storey car park is replaced. This should not preclude the vigorous, innovative promotion of other modes of transport.

87. **Leader’s and Portfolio Holders’ Statements**

The Leader, Councillor Mobbs informed the Council that:

1. 36 Councillors had attended the General Data Protection regulation training on 16 April and expressed his disappointment that only 16 Councillors had attended one of the two courses provided on Major Emergency Planning;
2. Warwick District was the top performing District in the Sub-Region with regard to increased productivity, the lowest rate of unemployment and the highest population percentage with a skill level of at least NVQ level 4;
3. he had addressed the Leamington Business Festival, where he had informed it of the solid financial foundations of the Council and provided facts with regard to the new HQ and Car Park project. At the forum many businesses expressed their thanks for explaining the facts on the HQ/Car Park project which had enabled them to understand what the Council was seeking to achieve;
4. he had now received seven emails from within the business community in Leamington with concerns regarding the new HQ and Car Park re development; and reminded Council that there were 2012 businesses in Leamington;
5. the Council must continue to work to encourage our existing businesses to flourish and the sub-regional manager of Lloyds Bank informed him that this Council was the best of all local authorities for supporting business;
6. that at the last CWLEP Board there was a call for funding bids, in advance of this the Leader had been promoting the plans for the creative quarter which was supported by the LEP and Universities; further update on this would be provided as the work continued on this; and
7. he had met with Channel 4, in confidence, shortly after it was told to move out of London, to discuss the potential for them to use the Creative Quarter as a Midlands hub. As a result, Leamington was now being considered as one of the options, with written submissions and shortlisting taking place in

May with potential formal presentations in June followed by a final decision shortly afterwards.

The Portfolio Holder for Development, Councillor Rhead, informed the Council that:

1. as one of the District's Procurement Champions he had asked the Procurement Team to investigate how future tender enquiries could include conditions as to how the use of plastics would be phased out over a period of any intended contract. The Procurement Team had provided some thoughts in terms of introducing a non-compulsory question, but this could only be introduced by Council updating its Policy. In terms of measuring performance, any question needed a corresponding KPI. KPI's had recently been introduced for new contracts but would need to be effectively monitored by Service Managers. There was more that could be done on wider Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and contracts. Pursuing CSR credentials needed to be a corporate decision, because CSR was becoming very high profile for companies; and
2. our District's landscape was changing as the associated infrastructure started to be implemented in support of the new homes. In tandem with our Development Officers, the Council had lobbied WCC to seek its cooperation so that these upgrades could be designed in a more unified way to create safe, attractive, and prestigious routes, which not only accommodated traffic but also pedestrians and cyclists especially at the northern stretch of Europa Way, closer to the built up areas. This had been undertaken because:
 - (i) tens of thousands of motorists (including commuters, tourists and shoppers) travelled along this stretch of Europa Way and Gallows Hill every day and the quality of the routes affected visitor perceptions of Warwick and Leamington, (Warwick Castle alone received around 750,000 visitors a year);
 - (ii) the appearance of Europa Way / Gallows Hill, and the attractiveness of these routes, as well as their functionality, affected the quality of life of existing residents, and those moving into the new garden suburbs;
 - (iii) the wider setting of the Grade I registered Castle Park needed to be protected;
 - (iv) the developers promoting and delivering the new garden suburbs south of Leamington and Warwick, (approximately 5000 new homes), adhered to the principles in the adopted guidance commissioned by WDC from WYG, produced in partnership with WCC: *'Design Guidance for the Strategic Urban Extension South of Royal Leamington Spa and Warwick, January 2016'*; and
 - (v) there needed to be an attractive approach and setting for the proposed new Park and Ride facility off Europa Way, in effect the park and ride would become a new gateway to Leamington and Warwick.

Consequently there were two recommended approaches:

1. an overarching design vision and design principles were needed to pull all of the highway schemes together, to ensure traffic and people were accommodated safely and that opportunities for landscape design reflecting garden suburb principles and 'place-shaping' were maximised. The design approach needed to reflect different character areas from Junction 14 off the M40 to the Shire Retail Park close to Leamington town centre; and
2. that a landscape architect be appointed to work alongside highway engineers on the vision and the detailed design.

The Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection, Councillor Thompson, informed Council that the fears of Jewish people across the country were articulated powerfully last night in Parliament and closer to home there were reports of LGBT phobic behaviours when Warwickshire Pride had a stall in Stratford.

Therefore he stated that Warwick District Council was proud of its diversity and its communities, and it did not accept or tolerate hate crimes or incidents of hate in any form.

Throughout and following these incidents, further actions had been taken to continue to make sure that Warwick District was a welcoming place for all.

The Council had worked alongside other members of the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board in condemning hate incidents, and helping to share information. The members of the Board had supported the police in their actions to reassure the impacted communities and prevent hate in Warwick District. It was understood that there were no incidents in the District that took place as a result of the Punish a Muslim Day.

The Council was continuing to raise awareness of the options available to people should they be a victim of hate crime and within the District working with partners to make reporting Hate Crime easier. The Council served on the Hate Crime Incident Panel reviewing how Hate Crime incidents were investigated. Councillors were encouraged to look at the Warwickshire Hate Crime Partnership website at reporthatenow.com.

All Councillors should have been sent an invite to the "Love Instead of Hate" Warwickshire Anti-Hate Conference taking place on 16 June, and the Council was promoting this within its communities. The Council was also continuing to support the Cake not Hate events in community venues.

The Council would continue to work with all communities to make sure that Warwick District remained tolerant and welcoming, and that it was a happy place for people from diverse communities to live in. He concluded by stating his pride in that this Council and District celebrated difference, promoted cohesion, and challenged and called out prejudice and abuse.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Phillips informed Council that the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 had come into effect. This established a minimum level of energy efficiency for privately rented property in England and Wales.

From this month landlords of privately rented domestic and non-domestic property in England and Wales must ensure that their properties reached at least an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E before granting a new tenancy to a new or an existing tenant. From April 2020 all existing tenancies for domestic properties would need to meet a rating of E or better and by April 2023 for non-domestic properties.

These regulations did not apply to council housing, but as a responsible landlord this Council wanted to ensure that its properties at least met the same standards that it would be enforcing upon private landlords.

Key to this would be up-to-date EPCs for all properties. All Council void properties got an EPC. Valid EPC ratings were in place for approximately 30% (1,700) of Council properties and a further 400 a year were added from new voids. But the Council would accelerate this, so that all its properties had EPCs in the near future.

With this information, combined with the stock condition survey, a program would be developed so that wherever possible Council properties met an energy efficiency rating of D, through investment in the relevant energy efficiency works to Council properties. Officers would

- i) Look at how to gather this information
- ii) Draw up the program and
- iii) Ensuring that any property for which already had an EPC rated below E, was upgraded as a matter of urgency ahead of next winter.

The average cost of an EPC was around £68 so the maximum cost if surveys were required for all 3,900 properties would be in the region of £270,000. However it could be possible to obtain EPCs for some further properties from a national register held by MHCLG, and it was expected that the cost would drop below £250,000 through tendering and economies of scale.

A report would be brought forward to the Executive to consider the funding for this piece of work.

In response to a question from Councillor Barrott, Councillor Phillips explained they would be strongly encouraging other social landlords to follow the lead of the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Councillor Coker informed Council that:

- (1) St. Nicholas Leisure Centre would be opened by the Chairman on 21 April 2018 accompanied by Colin Jackson one of our most famous Olympians. The event started at 9.30am and included a Spin Class, Circuit Class with Colin Jackson, a Les Mills Body Pump Class and a Les Mills Body Combat Class.
- (2) In relation to the Leisure project as a whole, despite Newbold Comyn Centre was to be completed, the usage figures for the last quarter, over the five sites, were 236,392. This was a 44% increase on the previous quarter. The number of participants in swimming lessons was 2160 which was also a 44% increase on the figures prior to the start of the contract in June 2017.
- (3) The number of members at St Nicholas had increased from 600 to 1350 since completion of the Centre and children attending swimming lessons had increased from 245 to 530 since the end of Phase 1.

The completion of the gyms meant that the number of classes per week had increased from 11 to 28 and resulted in 1289 members and non-members booking since 21 March.

The number of people who had registered with Everyone Active was now 24,881.

- (4) On Thursday the 26 of April 2018 the Chairman would be opening the remodelled reception to the Pump Rooms. The new entrance would be more attractive and welcoming and would encourage more people to use the Art Gallery, Museum, Library Café Visitor Centre and the Spa Centre ticket

office. It was further helped by the reorganisation of the staff who had cooperated to bring all these features and services together.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Councillor Butler informed Council:

- (1) Leamington would be hosting the finish of a stage of the Ladies Cycling Tour on Friday 15th June. The route would be taking in both Kenilworth and Warwick. This was a big compliment to the District because it was the first time a town had been asked to host a stage finish twice. The Council would work with the BID to ensure maximum economic benefit to the Town and showcasing the District to a vast national and international TV audience;
- (2) the Council would be taking part in the Coventry & Warwickshire Business Festival. It would be between 19 and 30 November. Last year Warwick District was second only to Coventry in the number of events it hosted and it was intended to continue this level of participation in 2018 and improve the quality of the events.

To this end BAFTA (the British Academy of Film & Television Arts) had confirmed participation in the event. They would be in the District for two days to run a series of events including workshops for pupils and teachers, a public round table event and a BAFTA crew member meet-up. It was a clear indication of the regard in which the Council was held in the cultural sector;

- (3) the recent Jobs & Careers Fair was held at the Town Hall. This was led and funded by this Council and supported by Job Centre Plus and BID Leamington. The employer exhibitors included Warwick Castle, Café Nero, Everyone Active and this Council. The exhibitors felt that the event widened the population of potential candidates and were keen to be involved in a subsequent event. Positive feedback was also received from the 250+ job seekers who attended.

The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Grainger informed Council that:

- (1) the survey on Victoria Park was live and to-date over 900 responses had been received;
- (2) Tassimo sachet recycling was available within the District, as part of a six month trial; which residents could register for on the Council's website for six month trial;
- (3) on 23 April 2018, Clean Up Britain would launch their now or never campaign in Leamington Spa with a view to change behaviours in relation to plastic and environment.

88. Questions to the Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holders

Councillor Heath, asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services if the Council was aware of the new plastic recycling enzyme and the potential for this within our next recycling contract?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Grainger, explained that the enzyme was at an early stage of development and it would sometime before it was in use, but this type of initiative would be the level of expectation for the new tender.

Councillor Gifford asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, if she was aware of the delays in the refurbishment of the playing fields at the Holt, in Lillington; and Bates Memorial Field and Ebourn Rec in Kenilworth; and what action was being taken to progress these and what learning would be taken to ensure this type of delay was not repeated with future works?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Grainger, explained that she had not been aware of these problems until Monday 16 April 2018. The delays had been a result of parts not being delivered on time and the availability of contractor staff once the parts had been delivered. Discussions had taken place with the contractor and assurance provided the works would be completed by May Half Term.

Councillor Bromley asked the Portfolio Holder for Development why there was no allocation for a Gypsy & Traveller (permanent or transitional) in the Local Development scheme for the next three years and could CPO powers be used to secure, at least, a transition site?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Rhead explained the Council was at early stages of negotiations for a transition site and for a permanent site, but details could not be shared at this time. This need could not be avoided but it was a challenging issue.

Councillor Quinney asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing, what were housing associations doing in respect of trying to implement the standards within the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Phillips explained that if it was possible to establish he would, and would ask for details to be included within the report to our Executive on the regulations.

Councillor Quinney asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing, what steps were being taken by the Council to bring the empty homes back into use within Warwick District; and could compulsory purchase orders (CPO) be used to purchase them?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Phillips explained that the Council was not in the business of using CPO unless there were exceptional circumstances. Officers were encouraging property owners to bring properties back into use but individuals had choice to leave them empty if they wanted to.

Councillor Barrott asked the Leader, if he could clarify his article in the Courier of 30 March 2018 that stated the Labour Leader (which at the time was Councillor Barrott) supported the HQ relocation project at that time when actually at least two Group Leaders did not support the proposal when they were told about the lack of affordable homes on site?

In response Councillor Mobbs explained his quote was holistic and from recollection when the proposal came to Council it was supported by all Councillors.

Councillor Barrott asked the Leader if he could share the details of the positive feedback he had received from businesses about the relocation of the Council HQ?

In response Councillor Mobbs explained that the concern from the seven businesses related to car parking and he was in the process of arranging to meet with them. He was unable to provide the names or exact number of the positive comments because this was part of the Leamington Business Forum. He took the opportunity to remind Council that; there was a need to replace Covent Garden Car Park, because any proposed repair would cost circa £2million and would last for no more than 10 years; and that the decision on the HQ was now done and the project was moving forward.

Councillor Shilton asked the Portfolio Holder for Business how finance would be provided to enable the District to be promoted when it hosted the 2022 Commonwealth Games Lawn Bowls?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Butler highlighted that the Executive had allocated £400,000 to a specific reserve for this and it was anticipated a similar amount would be allocated for each of the next four years.

Councillor Shilton asked the Portfolio Holder for Development if he could ensure the cycleway between towns were a priority and specifically the link between Kenilworth and Leamington?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Rhead explained there were early stage discussions with partners, including WCC and these would be shared in due course.

Councillor Shilton asked the Portfolio Holder for Culture that in light of the success of two local residents at the Commonwealth Games would they be invited to the Official Opening of St Nicholas Park Leisure Centre?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Coker, explained that the Council was trying to contact the individuals to invite them.

Councillor Shilton asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services if there was any progress on the works to Pump Room Gardens?

In response the Portfolio Holder Councillor Grainger, explained that the Council was waiting for Heritage Lottery to sign off the documents but work was expected to start shortly.

Councillor Naimo asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services whether in light of the recycling rate dropping from 56% to 53% in recent years what would the Council be doing to encourage more recycling?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Grainger, explained that further analysis of these was being undertaken and details would be circulated and further initiatives were being considered to increase recycling rates.

Councillor Gill asked the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection, what the Police & Crime Panel was doing about the significant increase in burglaries and car theft in Brunswick Ward?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Thompson explained that the Community Safety Partnership was aware of the issue and partners were working together to address the issues. In addition the Police and Crime Commissioner

had been questioned on this and it had been raised regionally because the crime was a cross boundary issue.

Councillor Heath asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing if he could remind the Council of the time limit a property could be left empty before the Council Tax increased?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Phillips explained that all empty properties were charged at 100% once they were empty and after two years this increased to 150%.

Councillor Heath asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services what action was being taken with regard to recycling rates at HMO properties?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Grainger explained that not all HMO property residents were bad at recycling and where appropriate, enforcement letters had been issued and some matters were being progressed with the landlords of properties.

Councillor Mrs Knight asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services why more material was not available on the plastics that could be recycled by the Council?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Grainger explained that material was provided in relationship to specific campaigns.

Councillor Quinney asked the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection if there was potential for frontline Policing to be increased?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Thompson explained that the Warwickshire Police Precept had been increased specifically to enable 50 frontline officers and he would lobby for some of these to be located in Warwick District.

Councillor Quinney asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services if it would be possible for the Council to introduce recycling of tetra packs?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Grainger explained that this was not part of the current contract but was an area under consideration.

Councillor Gallagher asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services if Councillors could take a lead on plastic reduction by getting rid of disposable plastic cups at Council meetings and other similar items?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Grainger explained that the Council was looking at all aspects and it was expected the Council to be plastic free by 2020.

(Councillor Rhead left the meeting at the end of this item.)

89. **Executive Report**

The reports of the Executive meetings on 7 February 2018 Executive (excluding Minutes 105 to 109 which were considered by Council on 21 February 2018), Excerpt of the Executive minutes of 7 March 2018, and Excerpt of the Executive minutes of 5 April 2018, were proposed duly seconded and

Resolved that the reports be approved.

90. **Employment Committee Report**

The report of the Employment Committee on 21 March was moved by Councillor Mrs Bunker and duly seconded.

Resolved that the report be approved.

91. **Overview & Scrutiny Committees End of Term reports**

It was moved by Councillor Barrott and duly seconded; and

Resolved that the end of term report of the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee be noted.

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Falp and duly seconded and

Resolved that end of term report of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee be noted.

92. **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 8.02 pm)

Chairman
9 May 2018