

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held remotely on Wednesday 24 June 2020, at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Ashford (Chairman); Councillors Bartlett, Boad, Cooke, Cullinan, Davison, Day, A Dearing, J Dearing, K Dickson, R Dickson, Evans, Falp, B Gifford, C Gifford, Grainger, Grey, Hales, Heath, Illingworth, Jacques, Kennedy, Kohler, Leigh-Hunt, Luckhurst, Mangat, Margrave, Matecki, Milton, Murphy, Nicholls, Noone, Norris, Redford, Rhead, Roberts, Russell, Skinner, Syson, Tangri, Tracey and Weber.

8. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Morris and Wright

9. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on the 20 May 2020 were proposed, subject to the revised table as set out in the Addendum and included below, by Councillor Day, duly seconded by Councillor Cooke and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Minute 6 Appendix 2 Page 9 of the agenda be replaced as follows so that the role of Leader and Deputy Leader are shown in the correct section:

EXECUTIVE (7)

Councillor J Cooke
Councillor A Day
Councillor J Falp
Councillor M-A Grainger
Councillor R Hales
Councillor J Matecki
Councillor A Rhead

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, LEADER and DEPUTY LEADER OF THE EXECUTIVE

Strategic Leadership	Councillor	A Day (Leader)
Environment	Councillor	A Rhead
Culture and Neighbourhood Services	Councillor	M-A Grainger (Deputy Leader)
Development Services	Councillor	J Cooke
Finance & Business	Councillor	R Hales
Health & Community Protection	Councillor	J Falp
Housing & Property	Councillor	J Matecki

11. Communications and Announcements

The Chairman led a moment's reflection as a mark of respect for those who were affected by the terror attack in Reading.

The Chairman confirmed that the British Heart Foundation was his nominated Charity for the year.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that it was armed forces week, the armed forces day flag was being flown at the Town Hall, but the event to mark this had had to be cancelled.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank the staff of Warwick District Council and the wider community for all their work in responding to Covid 19.

The Chairman informed Council that he had attended the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association Online Seminar on the topic of Race, Equality & Faith on 13 June.

The Chairman informed Council that there was no business to be considered under agenda items: 5 Petitions, 7 Public submissions and 19 Common Seal.

12. **Notice of Motion**

The Notice of Motion, as follows, that was revised in the addendum to the agenda was proposed by Councillor Mangat and seconded by Councillor Tangri, that this Council:

- (1) reaffirms its commitment not to tolerate discrimination in any form, as defined in the Equality Act 2010;
- (2) will engage actively with both individuals and groups within the local BAME community in Warwick District to identify ways in which the Council can overcome the many disadvantages experienced by those communities;
- (3) requests that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee establish a Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group would be charged with undertaking a review of the Council's approach to equality and diversity, especially with regard to race. Its report to the Committee would include an action plan with a view to the Executive adopting the Committee's recommendations in the report and its action plan. The progress and outcomes of the action plan would be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the expectation that measurable improvements would be made by 2023;
- (4) proposes that, in order to support its consideration of the report and the monitoring of the action plan, the Council requires the publication of relevant annual data, including an Ethnicity Pay Gap report alongside the current Gender Pay Gap report.
- (5) resolves to work with other councils, authorities, and organisations to deliver its commitment to overcoming racial discrimination and inequality.

Councillors, Mangat, Tangri, Nicholls, Boad, R Dickson, Davison, Kohler, Weber and Day spoke on this item.

Councillor Grainger, raised a point of order that she did not have the revised motion.

The Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed for Council that it had been published online earlier in the day and that Councillor Mangat had read the revised version at the start of the debate.

At the request of the Chairman, Councillor Mangat read the motion to Council for their benefit.

Further points of clarification were made by Councillors Redford, Norris, B Gifford, Day and Nicholls in respect of the revised motion being available to Councillors and when it was circulated.

On being put to the vote it was

Resolved that the motion as set out above be approved.

13. **Leader's & Portfolio Holders' Statements**

There were statements from the Leader, Councillor Day and the Portfolio Holders for; Development, Councillor Cooke; Finance & Business, Councillor Hales; Health & Community Protection, Councillor Falp; Housing & Property, Councillor Matecki; and Culture & Neighbourhood, Councillor Grainger. These were shared before the meeting and are set out at Appendix 1 to the minutes.

In response to the statement from the Leader, Councillor Davison asked, if he was aware of the content of the devolution white paper, that other Councillors were not, will this work be a narrow view in the short term so resources were not used on reorganisation, and would the work be broader to consider work with other service providers?

In response the Leader, Councillor Day, explained that he was not aware of any more detail of the Government White Paper from the Government and that as soon as he had details he would share them. He had asked Senior Managers to look how we worked within the Council, with Stratford District Council there would be a report coming forward in July with more details. There were regular meetings with other District and Borough Council Leaders who had talked through these issues as well as other proposals. There was a different mix of businesses and communities across the County with a much closer relationship and mix between Stratford District and Warwick District.

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

Councillor Skinner asked the Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Protection what were the recovery plans please to improve a resident's mental health and general well-being, that in addition to the economic recovery, could encourage and support people to find their way out of isolation, and for the Council to provide ongoing support to help relieve those anxieties and pressures the most vulnerable have?

In response the Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Protection, Councillor Falp, explained that she could understand the concern by some residents in coming out of their homes after many weeks of isolation. Mental well-being was one of the many issues that had arisen due to Covid 19. Loneliness had been an agenda item on the many health groups with a range of partners even before Covid.

The Council would look at the Covid Emergency Grant Criteria from activities by organisations to help during the crisis for activities to address issues such as loneliness and support. This should be ready in the next couple of weeks for Executive and Group leaders to agree. This would hopefully allow Charities and Voluntary organisations to support residents. Three years' funding was in place to Community Centres in Brunswick, Warwick and Lillington. There were also the job clubs funded by the Council in the centres. The Council had the Community Support team who when the law permitted, would restart their physical work in the Community as well as virtually.

The Council was supporting businesses to open safely with a range of measures to help keep infection down and they would enforce if needed. The Community Safety

Team along with the C.C.T.V control room would be monitoring Town Centres and measures had been put in place to help with social distancing.

The Executive had been working in their own Portfolio Areas to look at helping with finance, getting the economy going, parks and gardens, housing needs and of course the Environment. Communications were the key to all things so the Council would be working to make sure our residents knew where to go for support.

Councillor Skinner asked a supplementary question of Councillor Falp that considering the concerns mentioned and lessons the Council must understand, what action was the Council taking to help build trust in recovery and beyond

In response Councillor Falp explained community and voluntary groups' important part, and there was the grant money to support during an emergency. Just before lock down the South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership held events to promote awareness of County Lines with over 400 people attending each one. Work with partners to support mental health was being investigated.

Councillor Luckhurst asked the Leader that in light of the climate emergency and new ways of working due to the coronavirus lockdown, could you please update us on these plans, specifically?

1. When were these plans going ahead?
2. Would all the new buildings be designed and built to be carbon neutral in use?
3. Would all new housing be 100% council housing offered at social or affordable rents?
4. Could the new offices be designed with 0.5 desks per council officer i.e. with approximately 50% working from home?
5. Could the car parking provision be redesigned to principally be an e-transport hub for electric vehicles (cars, taxis, buses and bikes)?

In response the Leader, Councillor Day, explained that the £300,000 was the estimated savings the Council would make if it moved to smaller premises. Likewise, the Town Hall saving was £85,000 per annum that would be achieved if the Council made the move it had previously proposed.

In February 2019 the then Executive agreed to pause the scheme and when I became Leader I said that there would be a review of the scheme with a particular view to maximising the community benefits. That review had not been concluded prior to the Coronavirus lockdown and as a result a further review of the plans was under way, that took advantage of the learning from the Coronavirus lockdown along with the advances that new technology offered. At present, there was a survey of all staff to understand what support could be provided so they could work more effectively at home but also in ways that helped to maintain the organisational 'glue' that enabled us to work cohesively.

The aim was to achieve net zero carbon emission overall as an organisation and our buildings needed to be used and/or designed in a way that helped achieve that objective. This would be influenced by our experience of working in the lockdown.

At the moment planning policy required that all new housing on sites above 10 properties, to be 40% affordable. This included a mixture of shared ownership, affordable rented and social rented housing, with the latter as the largest proportion.

In the light of our lockdown experience it was likely that offices would be for customer/community engagement; those who could not work at home; and, for

collaboration of teams and of project teams rather than the traditional rows of desks as before. It was likely there would be an even higher proportion of staff based at home visiting offices when needed. In the short term the plan for officers to return to the existing building was being worked on to ensure that it was properly managed to allow for social distancing and maintain staff safety.

Ideally any new structure would be designed to offer charging facilities for cars; and for bikes. Whether it was the right place for buses and taxis was a moot point and one that would need to be explored further.

In response Councillor Luckhurst asked a supplementary question of the Leader , that sought clarification on the time frame and if heat source or hydro energy would be considered for the development on the Riverside House site?

In response Councillor Day explained that any proposals would come forward in line with the climate change emergency declaration and once the review was completed, Members would be informed.

Councillor Kennedy asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property that in view of our declared climate emergency and unanimously agreed Climate Emergency Action Programme which aimed for zero carbon in the Council by 2025, was the application for six social-rent houses on Land East of Turpin Court, a missed opportunity to achieve this standard in the first buildings to be erected by the Council since the Emergency was declared? In view of the proposed Council Tax referendum next year, was it not important that the Council demonstrated its commitment to zero carbon buildings? Would the Council publish quantitative data on performance-in-use carbon emissions using robust methodologies for this development? Would all future planning applications by the District Council for social housing or other buildings be net zero carbon both by design and in use?

In response the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property, Councillor Matecki explained that Turpin Court was a pilot scheme which had changed a number of times through the planning process to address the concerns of surrounding neighbours and take account of planning advice. The project aimed to achieve net zero carbon and was using specialist consultants to provide advice and assessed outcomes so that the Council could identify the best product for the future housing programme. Now planning permission had been obtained, Officers would move to the detailed design of the scheme.

The project met a number of aims, such as regenerating a vacant garage site, increasing affordable housing supply and achieving value for money for the HRA which all had to be taken into account when developing new affordable housing.

Councillor Kennedy asked a supplementary question if it would it be possible to set a contract for District Council housing developments that required them to be net zero carbon so the designers had the challenge?

In response Councillor Matecki explained that the aim was to deliver social housing at net zero carbon.

Councillor Boad asked the Leader if he would consider setting up a working party comprised of administration and three opposition parties?

In response the Leader, Councillor Day, explained that how to progress this proposal and the associated work streams would be discussed at the Leadership Coordination Group.

Councillor Boad asked the Finance and Business Portfolio Holder to tell the Council what were the additional costs incurred by this Council following the Government's instruction 'to do whatever is necessary' to tackle issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic?

In response Councillor, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business, Councillor Hales, explained that it was circa £34.5million at present.

Councillor Boad asked the Finance and Business Portfolio Holder if he could inform Council of the current value of the lost income due to the shut down?

In response Councillor Hales explained that at present it was circa £39million but this excluded income from Everyone Active and any reduction in Council Tax and business rates receipts.

Councillor Boad asked the Finance and Business Portfolio Holder if he could inform the Council of the value of the additional grants received by this Council to directly a) offset these costs, and b) provide support for the Council's lost income?

In response Councillor Hales explained that circa £71million had been received from the Government but after removing the losses, the Council was roughly £2.5 million down, based on current estimates.

Councillor Boad asked the Finance and Business Portfolio Holder that in the light of the additional unplanned expenditure this year, was there a need to review current planned expenditure and introduce an emergency budget for the remainder of 2020/21 which could reduce this year's impact on the 2021/22 budget?

In response Councillor Hales, explained that the Council should be able to balance the budget this year by using the Business Rate volatility reserve but there would be a report to the Executive in August and there would be cross party working to look at a wider strategy coming forward.

Councillor Milton asked the Portfolio Holder of Culture & Neighbourhood as the Castle Farm Leisure Centre project reached a crucial stage could you outline to Council what would be done to keep residents informed?

In response the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood, Councillor Grainger explained that there had been significant work to ensure residents and stakeholders had been kept informed on both the Castle Farm and Abbey Fields proposals. For example, there had been two stages of consultation, media briefings, targeted residents and stake holders briefings and bin hanger promoting the consultation to every house in Kenilworth. Lockdown had impacted on work but steps had been taken to arrange a briefing with Kenilworth Town Council, prior to its recent Notice of Motion, and work was underway for a further briefing of residents before the planning applications were submitted. It should also be noted the designs had changed significantly since they were last shared in public.

Councillor Milton asked the Portfolio Holder of Culture & Neighbourhood if she could tell Council when a timescale for the Abbey Fields Management Plan to be produced would be available?

In response Councillor Grainger explained that initial consultation was undertaken in late 2019 with an intended response in February 2020. This was delayed due to

lockdown and a revised programme has been produced. The Ecology survey and the issue of cycling were the primary points that needed time. Cycling was being looked at across the District by the Environment Portfolio Holder and she was leading on the Ecology survey. A further update would be provided to Councillors and stake holders as work progressed in these areas.

Councillor Weber asked the Leader that in view of the tweets by Alexander Hall who was the Conservative Party agent and paid for by the party on 20 June 2020, did he agree they were shocking, inappropriate and insensitive and that Mr Hall should receive E&D training?

In response the Leader, Councillor Day, thanked Councillor Weber for the courtesy of advising that he would be asking a question about the 20 June in respect of Twitter comments made by our local Conservative Agent, Alexander Hall.

The Leader offered all Councillors a clear and unambiguous response that he found the comments, by Mr Hall, utterly offensive and unacceptable; the Conservative Group of Warwick District Councillors was appalled by these Tweets and if Mr Hall had been a member of our group, they would have had no hesitation in removing the whip and explaining that the Council did not tolerate bigotry in any of its forms. He asked Councillors to act together to champion equality and seek out intolerance wherever it was encountered.

The Leader explained that this District was a diverse, well-educated and largely cohesive community; the incident highlighted, that it could not be complacent in protecting our values. It was important to confront and 'call-out' anyone who degraded community diversity (in all forms) whether it be on Twitter or in any place where these corrosive views could ferment.

Councillor R Dickson asked the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection would you join with me in also praising the magnificent unpaid work done by a range of voluntary community groups across the District during lockdown and what plans existed for the Council to carry out a review of its Covid-19 activities so far so that the District was as fully prepared as possible for any second spike later this year and for any subsequent civil emergency?

In response the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection, Councillor Falp, explained that the Council continued to work as part of the Local Resilience Forum to manage the local response to the Covid 19 emergency including planning for possible spikes or other civil emergencies. In addition, the Council was planning and delivering recovery works to support the residents, communities, businesses and our own organisation both in its own right and as part of the wider multi agency arena.

Councillor R Dickson asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood and Culture to advise Council when the residents close to Glendale Avenue park in Kenilworth would have the new children's play equipment that, in November 2018, was promised would be delivered by May 2019, more than 12 months ago?

In response the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood, Councillor Grainger explained they did not know but would get a written response for all Councillors. (The written response is set out at Appendix 2 to the minutes.)

Councillor Norris asked the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood, if she could provide an update on the status of the Major Contracts tender process?

In response the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood, Councillor Grainger explained that a small working party had reviewed the three contracts and two would be awarded in near future. The third contract was being reviewed with further legal advice being taken at this time. Councillors would be provided with updates as soon as possible.

Councillor K Dickson asked the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood when the street information boards and road system changes would be in place and if the contractors manning them would be trained to ensure key workers could get through to those who needed them and lived in the traffic free areas??

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood, Councillor Grainger, replied that the work should be in place within the next week and the contractor would be trained.

Councillor A Dearing asked the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection when the walking for health walks would restart?

In response the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection, Mrs Falp, recognised the impact on all who had been shielding and explained that officers were waiting for guidance on when walks could start again.

Councillor Norris asked the Portfolio Holder for Environment what projects on carbon neutrality were being developed?

In response the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Councillor Rhead, explained that at present he was reviewing the programme for work with the Climate Change Director because much has changed due to the lockdown. However, it was anticipated that a report would come forward in the next two months with regard to tree planting.

15. **Appointment to Outside Bodies**

The Chairman informed Council of the Executive appointment of Councillor Matecki as substitute representative for all District Councils to West Midlands Employers for 2020/21, as set out on the agenda.

16. **Independent Person for Standards Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor Illingworth, seconded by Councillor Murphy and

Resolved that Belinda Pyke be appointed as Independent Person to the Council under the Localism Act 2011.

The Chairman had agreed to take this as an urgent item to enable the Council to have two Independent Persons in place as soon as possible.

17. **Change to the Scheme of Delegation**

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

Resolved that the wording of Executive delegation DS (84) be amended in the Constitution to read as follows: the Head of Development Services has authority to enter into agreements providing for the transfer of funds received, as a result of payments to the Council under the Community

Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (CIL), to an infrastructure provider for a scheme which has been agreed by the Council.

(The Chairman had agreed to take this as an urgent item to ensure that the Constitution reflected the delegated authority in place.)

18. **Licensing and Regulatory Committee**

At the request of the Chairman, the Chairman of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee explained that late last week officers identified that there was not authority in place to undertake consultation on the proposed revisions to the Public Space Protection Orders. This occurred due to a genuine oversight.

On reviewing where the authority rested it was identified that Licensing & Regulatory Committee did not explicitly hold delegated authority to approve consultation on any revisions to existing orders or any new orders or authority to revise any current Public Space Protection Orders.

Officers considered the intention of Council was to provide this authority to Licensing and Regulatory Committee based on the delegation as at present to the Committee. While the current delegation could be interpreted as being suitable they, along with work completed under them, could be subject to challenge if not amended.

Due to the ambiguity it was considered at present the authority to approve going out to consultation or amending any orders rested with Council but confirmation of any new orders rested with the Licensing & Regulatory Committee

The next Council meeting was not until 2 September and there was an understanding that the Council wanted the orders consulted on and in place as soon as possible. There was no reasonable way that a report proposing the draft orders could have come to Council tonight at such short notice.

Therefore, the proposal was that the remit of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee was amended to enable it to undertake this work. If Council approved the change then an urgent meeting of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee would be arranged within the next two weeks to look at the proposals for consultation.

The Council's legal team agreed with this approach and interpretation, which also minimised risk to the Council from any challenge.

Councillor Heath therefore proposed revision to the remit of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee from "All powers and duties of the Council relating to the making of Public Spaces Protection Orders under the Anti-Social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014" to "All powers and duties of the Council relating to the making, variation or discharge of Public Spaces Protection Orders under the Anti-Social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014.

This was duly seconded by Councillor Murphy and

Resolved that the responsibility for Licensing & Regulatory Committee be amended to read as follows: All powers and duties of the Council relating to the making, variation or discharge of Public Spaces Protection Orders under the Anti-Social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014.

(The meeting ended at 8.25pm)

CHAIRMAN
2 September 2020

Minute 14 Leader's and Portfolio Holders' Statements

Joint statement from the Leader of Warwick District & Stratford on Avon District Councils

Taking a fresh look at local government in South Warwickshire

The Stratford on Avon District Council Cabinet met informally with the Executive from Warwick District Council to explore ways to work together for the benefit of the people of South Warwickshire and indeed the wider County.

The purpose of these discussions was to consider the best way for our local government to evolve for the benefit of our residents ahead of an expected white paper in relation to devolution scheduled to be released by government later this year.

We already have successful experience of working together, through the South Warwickshire Health Improvement Partnership; the South Warwickshire Crime reduction partnership and Shakespeare's England, our destination management organisation which we jointly founded to promote our local tourism offer around the World. The two authorities share a number of characteristics and a large proportion of our residents live in one authority area and travel to work in the other.

As we look to the future of our communities across South Warwickshire now is the time to capture the lessons learnt from the current COVID crisis and review the way our Councils could better meet the needs of our residents, taking advantage of new opportunities that are emerging for our communities and businesses.

Local government is playing a significant role in positively addressing the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our way of life. Supporting our businesses and communities as we adjust during this period of uncertainty, has required our Councils to embrace changes to the way we work.

Like so many other organisations at this time, our Councils are looking to be more agile and efficient, to address the emerging economic challenges and capitalising on the issues around the climate emergency, all the while providing the best possible services to you. There are also a number of opportunities which could be developed quickly including jointly procuring contracts; addressing a number of vacancies at senior officer level that could lead to the possibility of sharing posts across the two management teams, as well as the possibility of producing a joint Core Strategy / Local Plan for our communities to secure long-term benefits.

These initial discussions are at an early stage and would need to be subject to formal decisions at both authorities. However, our discussions will hopefully pave the way for a wider dialogue with other local government partners with the view of forming a common position for debate with central government as the anticipated devolution white paper comes forward, which is expected in the Autumn.

Portfolio Holder Development Councillor Cooke

Building Control

Warwick Building Control are in the process of securing the new Development for Kenilworth School and providing the Building Control Service. This is a great achievement as this site was previously awarded to an Independent Approved Inspector. The Scheme is due to change and we were asked if we could assist in the redesign of certain elements of the development in the interest of reducing overall build costs. We were able to promote that we were already working with Developer Morgan Sindall at the new Rugby Radio School Development and that we can remain competitive and practical when it comes to finding design solutions.

Planning Committee Back in Action

The Council successfully delivered the first 2 full virtual Planning Committee meetings last week which included the consideration of some challenging and controversial cases. Whilst the meetings were not without technical challenge, everyone persevered, especially the Chairman who calmly kept his cool during the technical issues and at both meetings decisions were made on all of the items. There were, as is to be expected a number of learning points which have been identified and are being kept under review. Mr Leach feels he might have some solutions for some of the technical issues.

Portfolio Holder Finance & Business Councillor Hales

Phased Market Return Plan

Very positive feedback following the first food-only market in Warwick (23rd May) and Kenilworth (28th). Reviewing how these can be broadened out, following announcement by Prime Minister to re-open all markets in June (including for the sale of non-food and non-essential items). Government is using our work as a case study of good practice.

Local business grant funds scheme

Business Grant Scheme has distributed over £30.5m to more than 2350 local businesses, which is over 92% of the funds that were distributed by central government to us. The Council was amongst the very first local authorities to commence these grants payments, and has continued to be amongst top local authorities in terms of allocating the funding in accordance with the scheme. This is a phenomenal achievement and I would like to thank all the hard work of officers, especially Paul Town.

In regards to the discretionary Business Grant Scheme has had 102 bids & the team are now working through those bids, with aim of funds being distributed as quickly as possible, while ensuring they follow the right audit process. Again many thanks to the team for their hard work & will keep members updated.

Town Centre Reopening

WCC has also prepared some proposals for re-allocating road space to support social distancing and walking/cycling in all three town centres. Current situation is as follows:-

- **Leamington:** Road closures implemented on Sunday 14th and have now been in place for a week. Very regular liaison with BID Leamington. A review meeting with WCC and BID scheduled for Friday 26th.
- **Warwick:** Road closures partially implemented 18th/19th. Remainder due imminently (constrained by (national) shortage of signing etc).
- **Kenilworth:** new proposal (20 mph along Warwick Road) has been proposed by WCC for implementation shortly.
- **All town centres:-**
 - o Marshalls to control street closures are in place for Leamington and Warwick. WDC has agreed that from today (22nd), WDC (Events Team) will take over running of this service.
 - o Streetscape improvements (bunting, banners, pedestrian signage, street dressing, additional cycle parking, etc) are in preparation. Will also include Acre Close in **Whitnash**.
 - o WDC website pages created to support town centre re-opening. More proactive promotional campaign planned once lessons are learned from the initial re-opening.

Teams of ambassadors will be working on the ground in each of the three towns over the next couple of weeks to support public confidence. This includes the Events Team, Rangers and staff from the Deployment Pool. Training of these has taken place in Leamington.

The team are working with other partners, including Shakespeare England & Stratford District Council, with regards to tourism and both Castles have now partially reopened, which is great news for the district.

2019/20 draft Statement of Accounts

The Draft Statement of Accounts was published on website on 18 June. Whilst this is outside of the previous deadline of 31 May, it is well ahead of the new date agreed by the Government of end of August. In view of the current circumstances, and the

challenge of completing the Statement of Accounts promptly, this an excellent achievement. This reflects the hard work of the Accountancy Team, and the contributions that need to be made from officers across the Council.

The Accounts are currently being audited, with the audited Statements of Accounts due to be reported to Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 19 August.

Council Finances

Like all business and local authorities, the Council has been severely impacted financially as a result of the current pandemic. Income streams have been severely hit, notably parking fees, planning fees income from the Spa Centre and Pump Room. In addition council tax and business rates cashflow has been adversely impacted.

The Council has received £1.48m additional grant from the Government towards increased costs and reduced income. However, this one-off funding is totally insufficient to make up for the income losses that the Council is facing.

The overall impact continues to be studied. However, there is total uncertainty over how long the various income streams will be suppressed and when, if ever, they revert to their previous levels as the Country recovers from the pandemic.

Fortunately the Council does have some reserves which it can utilise in the short term to protect its position in 2020/21. However, as these reserves can only be utilised once, using the reserves now will impact on the Council's financial position for the future. Significant savings still remain to be found. Using the reserves in 2020/21 will undoubtedly make the Budget setting process for 2021/22 that much harder. In addition, the Council will have less resources to invest in various projects and initiatives.

Whilst the Council is in a better place financially than many local authorities, we as members will have to face difficult decisions in the future in terms of agreeing Council Budgets and the potential impact on services and projects.

Portfolio Holder Health & Community Protection Councillor Falp

I would like to give thanks to all the Health and Community Protection team for their work during the Covid emergency.

Just a brief update on what they undertook since March. Co-ordinating and working in the Shielding Hub, producing policy within a daily changing regime that was used across the County, supporting our residents who had concerns, helping in awarding grants to Community groups, giving advice to businesses and enforcement. They were an important part of the health agenda and Marianne Rolfe is involved with Test, Track and Trace along with leading on the recovery plans for the District. Oh and they also wherever possible continued with the day job. This was a brilliant team effort and along with many other officers of this Council a credit to the District.

I would like to inform members that the CCTV project upgrade that had been on hold due to Covid and Falcons will commence again in July. The bell tower will not be touched until it is clear the Falcons have flown the nest. While there was a delay to the project we are now looking forward to progressing as fast as we can while still allowing for the special circumstances.

I know a number of you have had issues with residents reporting rat infestations. Can I just inform the Council that the statutory duty we have is to inform land owners they have a rat problem and that they need to deal with it. That includes District Council land and we employ a private firm to deal with our land. We would then take the land owners to court if they failed to comply. We have only one officer who gives advice and if he can, will visit the property/properties affected. There has been no charge but we did bring a paper to Scrutiny to look to start to charge for rat treatment. We currently charge for all other pest control. Visits have not been possible during the Covid crisis and a full risk assessment will be undertaken before we can consider the return of any visits.

Portfolio Holder Housing and Property Services Councillor Matecki

Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to thank those officers who, on behalf of the Council, have worked so hard to ensure that all rough sleepers were offered accommodation to enable them to be safe during this Coronavirus Pandemic. I would also like to thank the staff of the County Council, voluntary sector and businesses, all of who have gone above and beyond to provide support, meals and goods to those coming off the streets.

Our next goal is to keep rough sleeping in our District a thing of the past. Officers have already found permanent accommodation for 8 former rough sleepers, another 6 are in the process of being matched for their new homes. The officers are now working to find more settled accommodation for the remaining 40.

Next I would like to report that at Planning Committee on 17 June 2020, Members resolved to grant planning permission for Council-led affordable housing at land East of Turpin Court, Leamington Spa. This allows the Council to deliver on its ambitions to develop affordable homes to address the District's need, whilst progressing toward the Council's wider strategy for carbon neutrality. The development will provide two 1-bedroom bungalows and four 2-bedroom properties along with associated infrastructure including electric charge points, plot-specific cycle storage and accessible parking bays.

The design of the buildings seeks to diversify the type of homes built in the District both in design and construction. The homes will be built using timber structurally insulated panels, produced by Innovare Systems Ltd. This partnership means that the new homes will be manufactured and built within the District, adopting modern methods of construction to deliver energy efficient, spacious homes of a modern design that strive toward net carbon zero.

Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood & Culture Councillor Grainger

As you can imagine in this ever-changing situation has kept our Officers in Culture, Amenities and Neighbourhood Services fully occupied, not just with their normal WDC work now taking place from the new environment of their homes but for taking on many extra, varied and often very challenging new covid related activities

they have proved to be a fantastic team of which I'm very proud. I would like to thank everyone one of them for stepping up.

I'd also like to thank our contractors who have had to review and change their working methods to accommodate new restrictions but we got our public toilets open ahead of most LA's and apart from two weeks kept a full refuse and recycling service to our residents.

So far we have re-opened the boats on the Avon, the park cafes for take away drinks, food and ice creams, the fun golf in St Nicholas park, the bowling greens, the skate parks and as I'm sure you've all seen that our tennis courts are very busy, our car parks have been free during lockdown and remain so until 1st August. Officers are now busily trying to find extra space and time to accommodate the many local football teams who can now train not easy when school sites are still not available. With every Government announcement relaxing the lockdown our Officers are presented with a new set of issues to accommodate social distancing etc.

This week's announcements certainly came with some surprises as from the 4th July cinemas, museums, libraries and art galleries can open (we were expecting Gyms!) and David Guilding's team will be working as quickly as they can to open our culture offer to residents at the Pump Rooms. The new leaseholder of the Pump Room Café p should also relaunch toward the middle of July.

And from the 4th we can thankfully remove the tape from all play equipment and adult gyms!!!

During all this period of uncertainty the only real issue has been the rather sad instances of people leaving their litter for others to clear up. Thanks to the members of the public who have alerted us to the real problem's areas particularly in Newbold Comyn we are doing our best to keep the parks litter free – but everyone is responsible not just the council – please use a bin or better still take your litter home!!

While all this has been going on work has continued to on our major projects and we hope to bring to planning the application for both Castle Farm and Abbey Fields Leisure facilities in early autumn. There has been short delay due to the Covid situation and to ensure that final consultation with KTC and residents goes ahead as planned before submission.

Finally, this is the last week to have your say for both the Newbold Comyn and Country Park consultations; if you haven't yet completed the consultation document then please visit our website consultation closes 30th June - your views do matter

Minute 14 - Questions to the Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holders

Response from Councillor Grainger, portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood to Councillor Dickson, regarding Glendale Avenue Play Area, circulated after the meeting.

"There have been two Public Amenity Reserve schemes; Glendale Avenue and Weston Under Wetherley play areas which have been delayed out of the 6 in the original programme. Both projects have slipped due to the loss of officers in the Green Spaces team over the last 18 months. We have a new Officer taking up post and joining the Greenspace team on 13July and I have asked for the delivery of these two projects to be high on her priority as soon as she is settled in. I have also asked that local councillors are kept fully informed of the progress and expected implementation dates!"

*Councillor Moira-Ann Grainger
Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood"*