

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3 June 2025 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.03pm.

Present: Councillors Armstrong, Barton, Day, Kohler, Milton, Payne, and P Wightman.

Also Present: Councillors Chilvers, Davison, King, Melrose and Sinnott.

Officers: Josie Greenhalgh – Scrutiny Officer, Darren Knight – Deputy Chief Executive, Graham Leach – Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer, Andrew Rollins – Head of Finance, Liz Young – Safer Communities and Civil Contingencies Manager, and Jon Barnett – Community Safety Team Leader.

1. **Appointment of Chair**

Councillor Milton was appointed Chair of the Committee for the municipal year 2025/26.

2. **Appointment of Vice-Chair**

Councillor Armstrong was appointed Vice Chair for the Committee for the municipal year 2025/26.

3. **Apologies and Substitutes**

Apologies were received from Councillors Collins, Harrison, and Luckhurst.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

Cabinet Agenda Item 9 - LGI Business Case & Amendments to the CIL Projects List

Councillor Barton declared that he had an interest in the community stadium with his involvement in Leamington Football Club.

Councillor Armstrong declared that he was a member of Kenilworth Runners which use the athletic track.

5. **Appointment of Members to the Budget Review Group**

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee appointed five Members of the Committee, one from each Political Group to the Budget Review Group for the municipal year 2025/26.

Councillor Milton - Liberal Democrat
Councillor Luckhurst – Green Party
Councillor Barton – Whitnash Residents Association
Councillor Day - Conservative
Councillor P Wightman – Labour

6. **Appointment of the Children’s and Adult’s Safeguarding Champions**

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee appointed Councillor Yellapragada as the Council’s second Children’s and Adults’ Safeguarding Champion for the municipal year.

7. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2025 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

8. **Work Programme, Forward Plan, & Comments from Cabinet**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer which informed Members of the Committee’s work programme for 2025-2026, attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Chair explained that the Future High Street Fund Cabinet report had been moved to the July Cabinet meeting. He advised if Committee wanted to explore the report in more depth Members were invited to call-in the item at the next Committee meeting.

In answer to Members questions the Deputy Chief Executive and Chair explained that there was an extraordinary Overview & Scrutiny meeting to discuss the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) on 17 December 2025, ahead of the extraordinary Joint Cabinet meeting on 18 December 2025.

The Committee recognised the significance of the South Warwickshire Local Plan and requested the papers ahead of schedule, to allow sufficient time to scrutinise the agenda item.

Members requested officers share the papers and consultancy reports when ready as opposed to waiting until all papers were complete.

The Chair would request a briefing note beforehand, to allow Members to scrutinise the areas the Committee needed to focus on.

9. **South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership Annual Performance Report (2024/2025)**

Local Authorities had a legal duty to undertake scrutiny of crime and disorder at least every 12 months in accordance with the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

The South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (SWCSP) was the statutory body for reducing crime, disorder, substance misuse and reoffending in South Warwickshire therefore the Council had taken the view that by scrutinising the effectiveness and performance of the Partnership, it was fulfilling its legal duty.

The report highlighted performance against priorities from 1 June 2024 to 1 June 2025.

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were statutorily responsible for formulating and implementing strategies for:

- the reduction of crime and disorder, including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment;
- combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances;
- the reduction of reoffending; and
- preventing people from becoming involved in serious violence and reducing instances of serious violence.

The CSP produced or procured a Strategic Assessment detailing its priorities and updated the Partnership Plan which set out what the CSP was doing to address the priorities.

Following a comprehensive review of the Strategic Assessment process in Warwickshire during 2020, it was agreed that a full document would be produced for each CSP on a four yearly basis.

The Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan were reviewed annually against in-year reporting. These annual and biennial processes enabled any emerging issues to be identified and informed any new proposed priorities, ensuring that the Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan remained valid. Based on the four yearly cycle, the 6-month process began in September 2024. The Strategic Assessment report would inform the new CSP Priorities for 2025 to 2029.

MoRiLE (Management of Risk in Law Enforcement) scoring sessions took place with partners and specialists discussed each of the community safety themes to complete a picture for each district and borough. This analysis also assisted in identifying specific issues in an area which informed priority setting. The final Strategic Assessment Report was presented to the SWCSP Board in February 2025 and the new Priorities for 2025 to 2029 were approved. In addition to the Board overseeing the Strategic Assessment process and approving the priorities for the next four years, it had also carried out the following activities:

- oversaw the effective and efficient use of external funding to deliver on priorities;
- received and scrutinised quarterly performance reports – directing action regarding highlighted areas of concern;
- considered national developments e.g. new bills, duties and the implications for CSPs;
- considered and signed up to the Warwickshire ASB Strategic Framework;
- ensured compliance and delivery on the Serious Violence Duty;
- considered the results of the Countywide 'Your Say on Community Safety' survey and implications for Warwick and Stratford Districts;
- commissioned, oversaw, and approved the Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR). Reports for submission to the Home Office – there were three ongoing DARDRs in Stratford District and four in Warwick District; and
- ongoing monitoring of South Warwickshire-wide and local emerging issues through the Violence Against Women and Girls Board, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Partnership, Hate Crime Partnership Board, Anti-Social Behaviour Steering Group, Modern Slavery Steering Group, Integrated

Offender Management Delivery Board, and local Community Safety Partnership operational and problem-solving meetings.

The South Warwickshire Operational Partnership (SWOP) was responsible for receiving the approved priorities from the Board and developing the action plans to deliver them. SWOP was made up of senior officers from the Responsible Authorities and housing providers, collectively these were the Relevant Authorities for information sharing.

Whilst the new Strategic Assessment process was being conducted, SWOP continued with the delivery of the action plans supporting the existing priorities:

- Serious Violence – comprised of six sub plans: Knife Crime, Night-time Economy, Domestic Abuse, Rape and Serious Sexual Offences, County Lines, Exploitation;
- Anti-social Behaviour; and
- Rural Crime.

In addition to the direct delivery of the action plans, there was also the requirement to contribute to and participate in the relevant County-wide Strategic Partnership Groups and ensure delivery of local interventions across these community safety themes:

- Hate Crime
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Reducing Reoffending
- Cyber Crime
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Prevent

The SWCSP did not have its own budget. The work of the SWCSP was funded through the core budgets of partners, via an annual bid to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and through external government funding opportunities.

During 2024/25 the SWCSP had been successful in bids to the OPCC, Safer Streets Round 5, the Serious Violence Fund, and Hotspot Response totalling £306,842 allocated to Warwick District.

The Council's Community Safety Team had also benefitted from UKSPF funding for the previous three years. The allocation for 2024/25 (Year 3) of £368,600 had resourced a raft of community safety interventions, projects and initiatives, all aligned to the delivery of the SWCSP Priority Action Plans. Table 1 in the report showed the breakdown of the total funding of £675,442 for community safety for Warwick District, the interventions delivered as detailed within the relevant CSP Action Plans, and the CSP priorities to which they had related to.

The Community Warden service has continued to deliver visible, impactful community safety work across Warwick district throughout 2024–25. Wardens had provided a consistent, uniformed presence across towns and neighbourhoods, patrolling high footfall areas, antisocial behaviour hotspots, and key public spaces. Their approachability and visibility had helped build

trust within local communities, contributing to increased feelings of safety among residents and visitors alike.

Wardens had supported vulnerable individuals through direct engagement and by signposting to relevant services, including housing support, mental health provision, substance misuse teams, and local charities. They played a crucial role in early intervention, often de-escalating situations before they required police involvement.

The service continued to work closely with a wide range of partners including Warwickshire Police, elected members, children's services, community safety officers, local schools, housing associations, businesses, and voluntary organisations. This joined-up approach ensured that responses to antisocial behaviour and community concerns were coordinated and effective.

Community Wardens had been central to Operation Resolve, working collaboratively with police and enforcement partners to disrupt and deter antisocial behaviour and serious violence. Their local knowledge and regular engagement had contributed to early identification of emerging issues and supported targeted interventions.

In 2024/25, WDCs Community Wardens frequently matched, and in many instances, surpassed police colleagues in outcomes such as the use of ASB powers and the seizure of weapons. This has contributed to consistent reductions in both Serious Violence and ASB across all designated hotspot zones.

Wardens had played an instrumental role in managing the night-time economy, working alongside partners including Street Pastors and Safe Space volunteers. Their presence during weekend evenings had helped maintain public order, offer reassurance, and support those who were vulnerable or in need of assistance. Their involvement in the Safe Space initiative at South Lodge had been vital to its continued success.

The Community Warden service had been highly effective in gathering local intelligence, which had directly supported the wider Community Safety Team in identifying persistent offenders and taking proportionate enforcement action. Through their daily engagement with residents, businesses, and partners, Wardens had built a trusted presence that encouraged the sharing of information relating to antisocial behaviour and criminal activity. This intelligence had informed the use of key antisocial behaviour tools and powers, including Community Protection Warnings and Notices, as well as supporting case building for joint enforcement action. Wardens had also played an instrumental role in enforcing the District's Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), issuing fixed penalty notices for breaches such as street drinking, dog control violations, and antisocial behaviour in public spaces.

Their enforcement activity not only addressed harmful behaviour but reinforced public confidence that concerns were being acted upon quickly and visibly.

Community Wardens had provided vital support to the Council's Animal Warden service, increasing operational resilience and ensuring timely responses to reports of stray or lost dogs. Working closely with the Animal Warden and local kennels, Wardens had helped ensure that dogs were safely collected, cared for, and reunited with their owners or transferred to

appropriate facilities. Their involvement has enhanced the Council's ability to respond to animal welfare concerns efficiently, especially during peak times or during out-of-hours situations.

Crime occurring in rural areas accounted for one-third of all recorded crime in South Warwickshire. This was due to the large area classified as rural in Stratford-upon-Avon District, with nearly two-thirds of the total recorded crime in this district alone occurring in rural areas.

Within South Warwickshire there were two Rural Crime Advisors (RCAs) based in the Stratford District Council Community Safety Team who carried out dedicated work with individuals, businesses, and communities to reduce the impact of crime in rural areas.

The posts were jointly funded by Stratford District Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), who also created the Warwickshire Police Rural Crime Team (RCT). The RCAs worked alongside the RCT and local policing teams, as well as with other partner agencies, to deliver the CSP Rural Crime Action Plan.

Warwick District benefited from a proportionate allocation of RCA resource, covering the SNT geographies of Warwick Rural West and Warwick Rural East. Quarterly performance reports for 24/25 were submitted against the following KPIs:

- *Number of rural crime victim referrals received, and visits conducted*

There had been 12 referrals received, and subsequent visits carried out. These had involved visits to farms, residential properties, heritage sites and small businesses. Support provided included crime prevention advice and information packs, loan of crime prevention equipment (cameras and alert systems, monitoring and updates to the police). There had also been a visit to Newbold Comyn to assess and input into actions to address disruption to badger sets and cycle trails.

- *Number of rural crime awareness events held*

- Attendance at Kenilworth Livestock Market. At this event they specifically focussed on the stall holders who were either farmers or small business owners, visiting each stand discussing crime prevention and handing out farming/business crime prevention information packs.
- Attendance at the Van and Caravan Crime Prevention Event at Weston under Wetherley/Hunningham.
- Attendance at the NFU Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Event at NAC.
- Also assisted police with Operation Recall which involved raising awareness with the public for the need to keep dogs on leads around livestock. Work included discussions with National Trust properties (x2), veterinary practices (x4) and public houses (on dog walking routes).

The Business Intelligence Team (WCC) produced a series of quarterly reports and annual performance reports for the SWCSP providing an overview of crime and disorder data which they had obtained from the following sources:

- Police crime and incidents
- Children and Families Front Door referrals
- Child Exploitation, Missing and Trafficking Framework
- Youth Justice Service
- Probation Service
- Education Data
- Substance Misuse – CGL and Compass
- Domestic Abuse – Refuge and DACs: MARAC Performance Data
- Rural Crime Team, Warwickshire Police

In answer to questions from Members, the Safer Communities and Civil Contingencies Manager, Community Safety Team Leader, Portfolio Holder for Safer, Healthier and Active Communities and the Chief Inspector Southern Area Commander for Warwickshire Police advised that:

- the Council had secured external funding for Community Safety for the last three years;
- the Council had secured a further £95k from the Home Office to continue with hot spot response funding;
- the £95K funding from the Home Office was based on the success of last 12 months;
- the funding had enabled the team to recruit two additional fixed term contract Wardens for a period of 12 months;
- the Council had also received £35k PCC funding to enable the team to carry out a range of interventions;
- the Warden team consisted of eight wardens; four male Wardens and four female Wardens;
- four of the Wardens were permanent full-time members of staff, one Warden was a permanent part-time member of staff;
- the Council had evidenced the impact the Warden team had made since inception, 18 months ago;
- the impact the Wardens had made was considerable;
- working in partnership with the Police, the Council had to have very robust performance monitoring in terms of the number of patrols, incidents attended, anti-social behaviour (ASB) reduction, and crime type;
- there had been a 40% reduction in ASB in the past 12 months;
- the positive statistics had provided the Council with a strong business case to sustain and potentially increase the capacity of the Warden team;
- the team had received positive feedback from the public on how valuable the Warden team had been to community support;
- the Community Safety Partnership had been effective in responding quickly to funding opportunities;
- the Community Safety Partnership needed central government to provide further funding opportunities;
- in relation to South Lodge, the safe space had been open for 18 months;
- in 2024/25 there had been 506 visitors to the safe space, of which 42% were over the age of 25 and 58% under the age of 25;
- of the 506 visitors to the safe space, 46% identified as male and 54% identified as female;
- 54% of visitors to the safe space were University of Warwick students;
- there had been a broad and diverse range of reasons people visited the safe space; some were as simple as charging their mobile phone to enable them to call someone to enable them to get home safely. Others had reported domestic abuse, exploitation, or had been members of the

- community suffering with mental health;
- staff had been proficient in responding to visitor's needs, to support and signpost to the relevant agencies;
- at the end of the evening, staff would stay until each situation has been resolved;
- the Community Safety Team worked closely with the Warwickshire based charity Silence of Suicide;
- Silence of Suicide delivered a training course to all Wardens and PCSO colleagues covering support plans and conversations to have with people with mental health challenges and those with suicidal thoughts;
- the training had been beneficial to the team and had given staff the confidence to have those conversations with visitors to the safe space;
- Silence of Suicide provided a welfare hub, in a converted van. They had worked closely with the Wardens during the nighttime economy, on specific dates, to engage with the community and help breakdown the stigma with mental health and suicide;
- the team recognised they needed to advertise the service more widely, and were working with the media team to develop a promotional video on the safe space;
- a press release had been drafted which was waiting approval from the Head of Service;
- the safe space was the first in Warwickshire and would lead the way for other towns across the County;
- as a result of the Home Office agenda for keeping town centres safe, the Police were exploring the need for further safe spaces across other boroughs and districts;
- the Wardens had powers bestowed upon them from the Chief Officer Team at Warwickshire Police. This had enabled the Wardens to deal with incidents and there had not been a need for either a PCSO or Police Officer to attend;
- the infographic in the report had shown the weapons and drugs that Wardens had seized and the anti-social behaviour that had been tackled;
- the Partnership was working well. The Police would like it developed across other areas in the County;
- the Police were exploring how the Partnership would work in Stratford;
- Leamington was the outlier. There was a significant student population and nighttime economy in Royal Leamington Spa. The Police would like to see the Partnership rolled out in other towns in the County;
- in respect to ward level data, analysts would provide the Committee with information relating to the trend over the last three years, broken down by ward, by the end of the week;
- the Committee were welcome to contact the Safer Communities and Civil Contingencies Manager with further questions once they had reviewed the ward level data;
- there were external factors that had a causal effect on the increase and decrease in crime. It was important to look at the overall picture not just the statistics and establish the reasons and what interventions had been put in place;
- the team were putting together the new community safety action plans and focusing on how to measure the priorities;
- there were action plans for business crime, anti-social behaviour, rural crime, and violent crime. These were the four key streams;
- the strength of the partnership was sharing intelligence between the CCTV team, the safe space, the Wardens, the Police, the Pub watch, and the street Pastors;

- the Police had regular meetings with the joint emergency partnership groups, and with Local Authority partners at both senior and Chief Executive level to analyse and review performance;
- the Police had become smarter with their problem-solving approach and hosted regular partnership meetings with Parish, Town, and District Councils. The Police liked to be open and transparent if something was not working and was able to be held to account to build trust and confidence within the community;
- the only way the Police could deliver the ambitious targets set by the Home Office, particularly the metric expectations from the neighbourhood teams, was with support from local partners, for example WRCI, BIDs, the Community Safety Team, Business Crime Teams, and Rural Crime Teams;
- the new Chief of Warwickshire Police had a five-year plan which coincided with the time frames of the District's Community Safety Partnership's plan;
- the policing response in Warwick District was fully staffed by 13 Police Officers, an increase of two Police Officers;
- there had been eight new PCSOs recruited in the last four weeks;
- there would be another recruitment drive for PCSOs in September 2025. Some of these new posts would be recruited, with Home Office funding, to serve the new communities that had proven harder to reach;
- the Police were adapting to new technology. The Warwickshire Police websites Warwickshire Connected and Single Online Home had been great mechanisms for engagement with the community;
- there were two civilian rural crime advisors funded by the OPCC, who were assigned to Stratford District Council. Warwick District Council received a small proportion of their time due to the differing geography of the two districts. This was the reason for the minimal referrals referenced in the report;
- in addition to the rural crime advisors, there was also the Rural Crime Team. The team consisted of eight Police Constables, a Sargent and an Inspector; and
- via the Prevention Hub, the Police had two further officers to support crime prevention on building, premises and rural locations.

The Committee thanked staff for the report and the important work for the residents across the district with specific appreciation to the Wardens.

10. **Cabinet Agenda (Non-Confidential Items and Reports) Wednesday 4 June 2025**

The Committee considered the following non-confidential items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Cabinet:

Item 9 – LGI Business Case & Amendments to the CIL Projects List

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

The Committee were concerned that information that could have been put in the public domain was kept confidential and asked officers to consider this in future.

Due to the multiple projects, political bodies, and the upcoming Local Government Reform, Committee advised Cabinet to ensure that it has clear advice on the potential risks involved.

Committee Members were concerned about the balance between capital expenditure and the cost of interest payments.

Committee Members also emphasised the need for proper scrutiny of the individual projects when they come forward.

The Committee asked Cabinet to reflect on its delivery commitments in the 2017 Local Plan, and whether these had been fulfilled, before pursuing new initiatives, in particular the gypsy and traveller site, and the community stadium.

11. **Public & Press**

Resolved 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:

Minute Number	Paragraph Number	Reason
12	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

12. **Cabinet Agenda (Confidential Items and Reports) Wednesday 4 June 2025**

The Committee considered the following confidential items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Cabinet:

Item 12 – Improvements to sporting facilities at Kenilworth Wardens Sports Club

This was detailed in the confidential minutes of the meeting.

(The meeting ended at 8.24pm.)

CHAIR
8 July 2025