



**Addendum for Council
2 September 2020**

Item 7 Portfolio Holder Statements

Attached are the statements circulated in advance by Portfolio Holders

Item 8 Questions to the Leader & Portfolio Holder

Questions received in advance and, where provided, responses to these.

Item 10 – Executive 24 August 2020 - Minute 29

The decision of Executive for the above item as follows should also ask Council to amend the Constitution to reflect this Delegated Authority from the Executive. This amendment to the Constitution will be proposed by the Leader at the meeting.

“Resolved that: (3) delegated authority be given to the Head of Cultural Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture, for the decision as to the future inclusion of new areas of the Council’s Parks and Open Spaces within the remit of this policy.”

Warwick District Council

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Item 7 Leader's and Portfolio Holders' Statements

Portfolio Holder for Business & Finance (Councillor Hales)

I would like to pay credit to the great work done by the council and its partners to reopen the High Streets, retail hospitality and leisure sectors has led to a significant increase in footfall and businesses opening up in the high 80% now. We continue to work very closely with all these sectors and also the tourism industry as green shoots start to appear.

Small Business & Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant Funds - We have now completed the grants and am delighted to announce that the team made 2,447 payments and a total of £31,690,000. Based on the original total grant received of £33,124,000, this equates to over 95.6% paid to businesses in our area. There has been a huge amount of work contacting businesses who qualify for this grant from Paul Town/Steve Marshall & their team & also the team processing all the grants and ensuring these businesses receive these grants into their accounts as quickly as possible, so my thanks to Jon Dawson and his team as well.

Discretionary Grants – We have now launched our final scheme, and have opened it up to all businesses, whether they be based from offices or home, who have had their business income affected by Covid 19. Can I pay credit to Gayle Spencer and her team for all their hard work so far and will update figures at meeting.

Finance Systems Replacement Project – Warwick District Council have signed a £489,000 with enterprise provider Technology One, which will help digitally transform the council IT systems. My thanks to all the project board for their hard work & also Keith Eales for leading this and his hard work in making sure this important project has been kept on track.

In terms of finance, I would like to thank the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee and especially the Head of Finance for their hard work as we continue to review our finances and the challenges that lie ahead, and am looking forward at working with Councillor Bartlett and the Programme Advisory Board and reporting back with how we are going to deal with these pressing issues.

Portfolio Report Development Services (Councillor Cooke)

Planning Enforcement

I have asked the Development Manager Gary Fisher to review the entire operation of our Enforcement Team and bring forward proposals aimed at lowering the backlog of outstanding cases which currently stands at about 250. This is in spite of us increasing staffing last year. I have received complaints from several Council members about a lack of progress on cases they have reported, but also from some of our Parish Councils.

I have asked Mr Fisher to also consider not only how we prioritise the order of dealing with cases but how we communicate to private complainants and to Parish Councils. We need to keep them informed as to how the complaint will be handled and progressed.

I have also asked Mr Fisher to arrange a briefing for all members on enforcement matters. It is clear to me that some council members do not understand how the system works and the information that **they** should provide when they submit a complaint.

Local Plan Review

Irrespective of what happens with our proposed merger with Stratford we have always intended to work together and do our Local Plan Review jointly. The joint review would eventually lead to producing a South Warwickshire Local Plan.

Discussions are currently taking place between Dave Barber, Phil Clarke and senior officers at Stratford.

Discussions are progressing positively and although it is early days, it looks likely that there would be a Joint Local Plan Team, resourced from within the existing staff resources of each Council. Possibly a requirement for a total of 3 or 4 members of staff, and that during periods of intense activity, this team is supported by the remaining planning policy staff of each Council.

In terms of governance, sovereignty would stay with each Council, in that Plan Submission and Adoption should be decided independently by each Council. However, feeding in to sign off of key decisions by the respective Councils a number of other measures would need to be put in place which are still being discussed.

Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection (Councillor Falp)

Pavement Licences

The regulatory section is extremely busy at the moment but with support from colleagues the web site is being updated regularly with information on Pavement Furniture licences , how to apply and who has applied. As you know there is only a two week turn around for pavement furniture licences. If Councillors search for pavement licences on the District Council website it will give you information on what premises have applied for a licence.

Up to last Thursday 27th August 12 applications have been received so far (the largest number in Warwickshire). 8 have been determined (with one refusal and one partial issue), two are in Consultation and two are in Determination.

The process has also begun to contact premises around the Town centres (to start with) who have not obtained a licence but are using the pavements, about ensuring compliance with the law. So there is an expectation that numbers of applications will rise.

I would like to thank Kathleen Rose the Licensing Team Leader and all the staff working on this for the speed and efficient way it is being handled.

Dog Control Orders

Councillors have been receiving e mails from residents re these orders. The Licence and Regulatory Committee asked at a recent meeting, before the Dog Control Orders current regulations and suggestions for possible changes went out to public consultation, that Land Owners, Parish and Town Councils and other key stakeholders were consulted. This was before they would meet to debate what may or may not be included in the proposals that would then go out for Public Consultation.

One of my residents contacted me and asked why the District Council were banning dogs from Newbold Comyn. That is not happening and never was but when some people choose to raise alarm without all the facts known and before what is being consulted on is even agreed miss information happens. I am sorry that dog owners have been upset by what has happened but I can assure them when the time is right they will be properly consulted so the committee can have an informed debate with their views rightly heard

Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property (Councillor Matecki)

I am delighted to tell you that we completed on the former Waverley riding school in Cubbington, a residential development site which has existing planning permission for 17 dwellings including 7 affordable homes providing a mix of units. This is a positive step forward, boosting the number of affordable homes and for our wider plans to enable local people to have high quality, modern, energy efficient homes within the district.

With over 60 former rough sleepers/single homeless people now accommodated as part of the Council's everyone in initiative, the team have been working on the provision of move on solutions and last month submitted a bid to Government. This sought financial help with securing appropriate accommodation and the provision of support to enable people to maintain their homes. The bid has been 'co-produced' with MHCLG advisors who are happy with our approach. We should hear more about this at the end of the month.

The Council's Housing Allocation Policy has now been in place for four years and was geared to address the conditions that prevailed at the beginning of the decade. Much has changed since then and to ensure that our policy is better aligned, we have been reviewing the policy so that it is flexible and responsive to the contemporary challenges that our society faces. I have already invited the Shadow Portfolio Holders to put forward thoughts or ideas and will be putting our ideas for change to our first Housing Policy Board. The Allocation Policy sets out to ensure that the scarce resource of social housing is allocated fairly, transparently and legally, balancing all the complex and competing issues

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Item 8 Questions to the Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holders

Councillor B Gifford question for Portfolio Holder for Development

I welcome the proposed briefing on the Government's White Paper - Planning for the Future. Has the Portfolio Holder yet responded to the Government's consultation on Planning for the Future, and if so did the Portfolio Holder consult with Stratford District Council about the proposed responses?

Response from Councillor Cooke

I thank Councillor Bill Gifford for giving me advance notice of his question.

As he makes clear in his question all Council members have been invited to a seminar next Monday at 6pm to discuss this legislation, plus both he and I have also been invited to a similar one to be held by WCC on September 15th.

The consultation on the White Paper closes on 29th October. So at present, I have not personally responded to the consultation as before doing so I would wish to hear what is said at these seminars. Like other members I have read much in the media and online and have my own views.

However, I have a meeting on Friday with officers to discuss the White Paper and in particular how we as a Council should choose to respond.

Following on from my statement earlier in the meeting I welcome the suggestion of discussing this with colleagues at SDC to explore the potential for a joint approach

Councillor C Gifford question for Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection

We understand that the Universities are putting plans in place for their campuses, but with large numbers of students coming to Leamington, we wonder whether the Portfolio holder is aware of any specific plans being put in place in Leamington. With the reopening of pubs and bars and the ongoing need for social distancing, there appear to be increased numbers of Street Marshalls on duty on Saturday evenings, which is to be welcomed. Will the mid-week numbers be increased as well, and will the University be paying for an increased number during the week?

Response from Councillor Falp

We are working with the university to ensure that returning and new students are provide with information to advise them in regard to Covid and procedures in place locally (which may be different to their home towns). We deployed additional street marshals when lockdown restrictions eased to allow the opening of pubs and restaurants, however the number of marshals have since returned to routine numbers. The numbers of marshals both for us and for the university are deployed based on intelligence (takes into account events in the town, special nights, pay days etc) The university pays for the marshals deployed on a Monday- Thursday evening during terms. Routinely, in the first weeks of a new academic years there are always enhanced numbers & hours of marshals deployment than intelligence suggests are required. The operational schedule for the marshals has already been agreed with the

university (subject to change up to last minute based on intelligence, lockdown restrictions etc).

In addition the new Student Housing Enforcement Officer post within the Private Sector Housing Team has well been received and the University and Warwick District Council have agreed to jointly fund a one year extension of this post from 1 October 2020.

Councillor Kohler question for Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection

In the 'CSW Test and Trace Member Briefing' dated 21st August, one of the priority actions was to "agree triggers for enforcement/lockdown".

- a) Have these triggers now been agreed?
- b) Are you clear on the council's role and responsibilities if a local lockdown is required in our district?
- c) Are officers happy that they have access to all of the resources that will be required if a local lockdown is required?
- d) Have the issues around data sharing mentioned at the last Full Council now been resolved?

Response from Councillor Falp

The criteria for triggers have been established however each case will need to be assessed on its own merits. The role of the council and its responsibilities are clearly laid out in the local outbreak management plans and supporting standard operating procedures which have been established. We have participated in a exercise to test all of the procedures in addition to responding to individual cases, clusters and outbreaks in environments. We have recruited additional environmental staff to work centrally at a county level to provide support to each district and borough. The data sharing agreements are being worked upon.

Councillor Skinner question for Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection

In the light of much adverse publicity created by the proposed update of the Dog Control Orders having been inadvertently put into the public domain, would it be appropriate for the Council to completely withdraw this current draft? A new draft can then be worked on, taking in to account stakeholder group's consultations before any further changes are made to the Orders.

If there is a time element to consider, then can the current Orders not be kept and set for review following a new draft in say a year's time?

As it stands, this proposal will (rightly) meet considerable opposition if it finally goes to the public consultation officially. It has been likened already to when Dog Control orders were proposed in Newbold Comyn back around 2011 and there is currently a petition opposing any dogs on leads proposals that stands at over 3,300 signatures within days of starting.

At this time of Covid-19 recovery, more than any other, we should be actively encouraging ways of helping improve people's mental health and it is well known that dog walking / owning is one of the best ways to do so. Much of this proposed update is going the opposite way of thinking.

The reason behind suggesting dogs on leads for the protection of breeding birds at St Mary's Land had not been discussed at the SML Working Party and has not taken in

any of the recommendations a recent consultation report had produced on the matter. This example alone suggests that before a reasonable draft is put out, stakeholder groups such as SMLWG should be consulted first.

Response from Councillor Falp

It is extremely unfortunate that the stakeholder pre-consultation suggestions were placed into the public domain and as a result created the misunderstanding we are currently seeing. The pre consultation with stakeholders as requested by the licensing and regulatory committee was designed to gather stakeholder thoughts in order to formulate the final proposals for the new public space protection orders (previously known as Dog control orders) to be agreed by the committee before going out to public consultation.

Legislation requires public consultation for the revocation, extension of existing or changing of the requirements. We are reviewing the options in regard to the approach to these public space protection orders in order to move forward positively.

Councillor Davison question for Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection

With schools and universities reopening, there is the risk that COVID will be detected in these student populations. Recent news items suggest that school classes or even whole year groups may need to self-isolate in this case. With universities, the challenges are even greater as one student may have multiple contacts from teaching groups, university activities, social groups and accommodation. What part would the council play in these scenarios, for example in terms of test, track and trace as well as deciding which groups of students need to self-isolate?

Response from Councillor Falp:

The council is part of the local track and trace programme which has been developed with all health protection partners. The initial tracing of contacts in complex cases is undertaken by the public health tracers where additional support is required in large complex cases environmental health colleagues have assisted. The local processes for workplaces and schools environments with cases, clusters or outbreaks have been established procedures and processes which have been tested and challenged. The council form part of the incident management groups established to address cases which would take the decisions as to who would be required to self isolate.

Councillor Davison question for Portfolio Holder for the Leader

COVID has been extremely challenging for all of us, and we'd like to thank officers for the excellent work they have continued to do, whilst developing new ways of working. Currently some groups of officers are undertaking site visits whilst others are saying that they are not conducting any visits at all. Now that many national restrictions have been lifted and we are being encouraged to visit restaurants, bars etc, can the council revise its guidance to officers so that site visits are less difficult to arrange? We need to be addressing our residents needs effectively, which often requires visiting them; we cannot wait for COVID to be over as it is likely to be with us for some time.

Response from Councillor Day

In the light of the issue raised, officers will review the current guidance to ensure safety for all but that officers can do more site visits more effectively

Councillor Milton question for Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood

Does the portfolio holder agree that the recent Traffic Assessment relating to the Castle Farm Leisure Development conducted on behalf of the Council was inaccurate?

Councillor A Dearing question for Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood

The idVerde Abbey Fields Management Plan is very overdue and it is needed to inform the Travel Plan to the new Kenilworth Leisure Facilities. Its supposed date for publication was February. Given officers are working from home, and the research was based on Consultation done before Christmas, I do not think Covid can be relevant here. Could the Portfolio Holder account for the delay?