

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held remotely on Wednesday 2 September 2020, at 6.00pm which was broadcast live via the Council's YouTube Channel.

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, Grey, Hales, Heath, Illingworth, Jacques, Kennedy, Kohler, Leigh-Hunt, Luckhurst, Mangat, Margrave, Matecki, Milton, Morris, Murphy, Nicholls, Noone, Norris, Redford, Rhead, Roberts, Russell, Skinner, Syson, Tangri, Weber and Wright.

32. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Grainger and Tracey.

33. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

34. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 5 August 2020 were proposed by Councillor Day, duly seconded by Councillor Cooke and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35. **Communications and Announcements**

The Chairman took the opportunity to publicly record the thanks of the Council to all those who had been involved in delivering the Shielding Hub for Warwick District.

The Chairman informed Council that there was no business to be considered under agenda items: 5 – Petitions and 6 - Notices of Motion.

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

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

In response Councillor Wright asked the Portfolio Holder for Business & Finance if he could advise on the uptake of the grants available to businesses and, more importantly, if the Council was faced by the same in future, would we do differently to improve in the future?

In response, Councillor Hales explained that the grants were a Government scheme administered by the Council. 2,447 grants, totalling £31.6million had been awarded, which was a 95.6% uptake. He also took the opportunity to thank all the officers who had been involved in the process of making in the grant awards.

Councillor Rhead, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, updated Council on the progress regarding the Climate Emergency Action Plan. He summarised the work that had taken place since February 2020 on this programme of works: Planning

permission low carbon homes at Turpin Court; commissioned works to improve the EPC rating of Council homes to a C standard work: the citizens assembly had been commissioned and was due to start in October 2020; funding agreed for 48 electric vehicle charging points in car parks that would be installed in Spring 2021; from October 220 the Council would be moving to a sustainable electricity provider reducing carbon consumption by over 80%, the equivalent of 2470tonnes of CO₂; a report was due to Executive in October on the most energy -consuming Council buildings; the better points sustainable travel scheme would be rolled out more widely as part of common wealth games project; the tree planting scheme would start from this tree planting season, subject to Executive approval on 1 October; two electric pool cars were now in place for Council officers to use; funding established for electric charging points for taxis and incentives for them to switch to electric vehicles; the event guidance from the Council had been revised to support plastic free events; 85 locations in the District had adopted the water refill scheme; and the Council had removed 10 plastic sources from the organisation. Within the next couple of months, officers were to establish carbon monitoring procedure, and this could be reported on to Councillors.

Councillor Davison asked the Portfolio Holder for Environment, that with the new build properties it was recognised that the final build did not achieve the energy efficiency that the was anticipated in the plans, and therefore what steps would be taken to mitigate against this? He also asked that in respect of the 80% reduction in Carbon consumption, if the details could be shared with all Councillors.

In response, Councillor Rhead explained that the 80% reduction was from the switch to green energy.

In response, Councillor Matecki explained that the Council had engaged with a local specialist in this area of work to help mitigate any such performance gaps.

Councillor Day, the Leader of the Council, reminded Council that children were returning to schools and students back to university. This would impact on economy and public health and as a result the Council was working with the University and public health bodies to help protect public health but it needed all of us to follow government guidance. The Council would continue to remind people of the need to follow the guidance because this would help keep businesses open and as Councillor must support our officers in this work.

Superb work had been done by WDC officers who had gone above and well beyond to get work done to support our most vulnerable residents and our businesses during the first phases of this pandemic.

He acknowledged the regular work of the Council had not stopped and continued despite delivering the additional demands. The Council had continued to bring forward major projects which would help protect jobs and strengthen the economy across Warwick District and south Warwickshire.

The Local Government Review that was underway and the Council had engaged with our Borough and District Council neighbours across their leaderships and their Officers, working together on that joint research project, with the support of Deloittes, to look at all the options for local government reform in Warwickshire. Leaders had challenged Warwickshire County Council, who had adopted a unilateral approach to continue with the County Council and reform it as a unitary body for the whole of Warwickshire.

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

Councillor B Gifford asked the Portfolio Holder for Development if they had 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.

In response, Councillor Cooke explained that all Warwick District Councillors had been invited to a seminar on 9 September 2020 to discuss this legislation, and that he and Councillor B Gifford had been invited to a similar one, held by WCC on 15 September 2020.

The consultation on the White Paper closed on 29 October 2020 and he wanted to hear what was said at these seminars before responding. He also had a meeting scheduled with officers to discuss the White Paper, and in particular how this Council should respond. He also welcomed the suggestion of discussing this with colleagues at Stratford District to explore the potential for a joint approach.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor B Gifford, Councillor Cooke stated that he would not rule out discussing this matter with the Development Programme Advisory Board but wanted to review this first with all Councillors.

Councillor C Gifford asked the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection that with the reopening of pubs, clubs and restaurants and the return of University Students, there appeared to be increased numbers of Street Marshals on duty on Saturday evenings. To support this work, she asked if the mid-week numbers would be increased as well, and if the University would be paying for an increased number during the week?

In response, Councillor Falp explained that the Council was working with the university to ensure that returning and new students were provided with information to advise them about Covid-19, and the procedures in place. Additional street marshals had been deployed when lockdown restrictions eased, to allow the opening of pubs and restaurants, however the number of marshals had since returned to routine numbers. The number of marshals deployed was based on intelligence, recognising events in the town, special nights, pay days etc. The university paid for the marshals deployed on Monday to Thursday evenings during term time. Routinely, in the first weeks of a new academic year there were enhanced numbers and hours of deployment. The operational schedule for the marshals had been agreed with the university.

In addition, the Council had a new Student Housing Enforcement Officer post within the Private Sector Housing Team. The university and Warwick District Council had agreed to jointly fund a one year extension of this post from 1 October 2020.

Councillor Kohler asked the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection:

- a) Had these triggers now been agreed?
- b) Were you clear on the Council's role and responsibilities if a local lockdown was required in our District?
- c) Were officers happy that they had access to all of the resources that would be required if a local lockdown was required?
- d) Had the issues around data sharing mentioned at the last Council now been resolved?

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

Councillor Skinner asked the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection in the light of much adverse publicity created by the proposed update of the draft Dog Control Orders being put into the public domain, whether it would be appropriate for the Council to completely withdraw this current draft. A new draft could then be worked on, taking into account stakeholder group's consultations before any further changes are made to the Orders.

He also asked if there was a time element to consider, and if so could the current Orders be kept and set for review following a new draft in a year's time.

In response, Councillor Falp explained that it was extremely unfortunate that the stakeholder pre-consultation suggestions were placed into the public domain, and as a result, had created the misunderstanding. 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 required public consultation for the revocation, extension of existing or changing of the requirements. The Council was reviewing the options in regard to the approach to these public space protection orders, in order to move forward positively.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Skinner, Councillor Falp explained that it was not possible to amend the orders in anyway and carry out the consultation then required within the limited time available. Therefore, to do so would see all the orders cease to exist and no orders would be in place to, as an example, prevent dogs being in play areas.

Councillor Davison stated that with schools and universities reopening, there was the risk that COVID would be detected in these student populations. Recent news items suggested that school classes or even whole year groups would need to self-isolate in this case. With universities, the challenges were even greater as one student could have multiple contacts from teaching groups, university activities, social groups and accommodation. He asked the Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Protection as to 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.

In response, Councillor Falp explained that the Council was part of the local track and trace programme which had been developed with all health protection partners. The initial tracing of contacts in complex cases was undertaken by the public health tracers where additional support was required in large complex cases, and environmental health colleagues had assisted. The local processes for workplaces and schools environments with cases, clusters or outbreaks had been established procedures and processes which had been tested and challenged. The Council

formed part of the incident management groups established to address cases which would take the decisions as to who would be required to self-isolate.

In response to a supplementary from Councillor Davison, Councillor Falp explained that after working with our neighbouring Districts, there had been a review to reflect on the process of local restrictions being introduced in Leicester, to see how to respond if a similar position occurred in this District. Councillor Day added to this, encouraging Councillors to promote the weekly newsletter from this Council, as this was a vital way of disseminating information to residents.

Councillor Davison asked the Leader that as many national restrictions had been lifted and all were being encouraged to visit restaurants, bars etc, could the Council revise its guidance to officers so that site visits were less difficult to arrange. He felt that Councillors needed to be addressing their residents needs effectively, which often required visiting them, and that the Council could not wait for Covid-19 to be over as it was likely to be around for some time.

In response, Councillor Day explained that officers would review the current guidance to ensure safety for all.

Councillor Milton asked the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood if they agreed that the recent Traffic Assessment relating to the Castle Farm Leisure Development conducted on behalf of the Council was inaccurate.

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood, Councillor Day explained that there were some inaccuracies, which had now been corrected, but methodology and technical were sound. The second draft of the report would include additional information to explain the conclusions more clearly and details of impact of move of Kenilworth Wardens to the site.

Councillor A Dearing asked the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood if they could provide details of why the idVerde Abbey Fields Management Plan had been delayed, as it was it was very overdue and it was needed to inform the Travel Plan to the new Kenilworth Leisure Facilities.

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood, Councillor Day explained that the idVerde team had been impacted because they were furloughed in March. The draft plan had been completed, and as a result an agreed ecological survey had been awarded and completed, and once concluded this would be published.

There was, however, no direct link to travel plan and the planning applications could be submitted without this.

Councillor Wright asked the Leader if they would formally thank Jeremy Wright MP right for raising the significant issues caused by the development of HS2 in the District, including road closures without notice, which had a significant impact on local residents and had resulted in high level review of with a view to improvement locally.

In response, Councillor Day agreed and thanked Councillors Wright, Redford and Illingworth for their work in supporting their communities during the construction of HS2, because of the impact this was having on quality of life for our residents in the District.

Councillor Tangri asked the Portfolio Holder for Environment if he was able to attend the fuel poverty strategy webinar later in that week that officers were attending.

In response, Councillor Rhead said that he would investigate and respond to Councillor Tangri directly.

Councillor R Dickson asked the Leader if he could confirm when the residents meeting to discuss the Castle Farm traffic survey due would take place.

In response, Councillor R Dickson explained that he was not aware, but that he would find out and share with Councillors.

Councillor Weber asked that the Chairman could review the approach to written questions and statements ahead of Council in November and feedback to all Councillors. The Chairman agreed to this.

38. **Special Responsibility Allowance for Programme Advisory Board Chairs**

At its meeting on 5 August 2020, on the advice of officers, Council had deferred consideration of a recommendation from the Executive in respect of a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA), so that the view of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), which had not been received at that date, could be considered.

The proposal for a small SRA was for the Chair of Programme Advisory Boards, in recognition of the responsibility for coordinating work, regular liaison with officers and the potential number of meetings each year. The allowance proposed was the same level as that of the Members of the Planning Committee and the lowest value offered by the Council. By law, the proposals needed referring to the Council's IRP for it to provide a view before Council took a decision on this.

An SRA of £260.10 per annum for the Chairman of a Programme Advisory Board, had been recommended for approval and this had been reviewed by the Chairman of the IRP who had raised no objection. This was on the understanding that this, along with all other Members' Allowances, would be reviewed as part of the wider review starting in December 2020.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Day, seconded by Councillor Cooke and

Resolved that the Special responsibility Allowance of £260.10 per annum for the Chairman of a Programme Advisory Board, be approved.

39. **Executive Reports**

It was proposed by Councillor Day and seconded by Councillor Cooke that the reports of the Executive on 24 August 2020 should be approved subject to the including of Minute 29.

Minute 29 was also included because the decision of Executive should have asked Council to amend the Constitution to reflect the Delegated Authority from the Executive. This amendment to the Constitution was 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.”

Councillors Milton and B Gifford spoke on this item regarding the proposed fees for Park Exercise Permits, as set out in Minute 29.

Resolved that the reports of the Executive of 24 August 2020 be approved, subject to the amendment above.

(Agenda item 11 Extension of Delegated Authority DS(70) was not proposed at the meeting and therefore the item was not considered, the time limited delegations within this, therefore, fell away)

40. **Programme Advisory Boards**

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

Resolved that the membership of the six programme advisory Boards as set out below:

- (1) Climate Emergency- Councillors J Dearing (Chair), Kohler, Milton, Murphy, Skinner & Tracy;
- (2) Culture & Neighbourhood - Councillors Noone (Chair), A Dearing, Jacques, Murphy, Russell and Skinner
- (3) Finance & Business - Councillors Bartlett (Chair), R Dickson, Luckhurst, Syson, Tracy & Weber;
- (4) Development - Councillors Grey (Chair), B Gifford, Jacques, Leigh-Hunt, Tangri, weber;
- (5) Health & Community Protection - Councillor Mangat (Chair), C Gifford, Evans, Ashford and Illingworth;
- (6) Housing & Property, Councillors Roberts (Chair), Cullinan, K Dickson, Kennedy, Leigh-Hunt and Margrave.

41. **Common Seal**

It was proposed by Councillor Ashford, seconded by Councillor Day and

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

(The meeting ended at 7.22pm)

CHAIRMAN

2 September 2020

Minute 36 Leader's and Portfolio Holders' Statements

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