

**Minutes of the Meeting of Warwickshire County Council held on
29 March 2011**

Present:

Councillor Jose Compton (Chair)

Councillors John Appleton, Peter Balaam, Peter Barnes, Sarah Boad, Penny Bould, Les Caborn, Richard Chattaway, Jeff Clarke, Alan Cockburn, Ron Cockings, Chris Davis, Richard Dodd, Mike Doody, Alan Farnell, Jim Foster, Peter Fowler, Carol Fox, Eithne Goode, Colin Hayfield, Robin Hazelton, Bob Hicks, Richard Hobbs, Clare Hopkinson, Julie Jackson, David Johnston, Barry Lobbett, Barry Longden, Tilly May, Phillip Morris-Jones, Brian Moss, Tim Naylor, Mike Perry, Carolyn Robbins, Kate Rolfe, Jerry Roodhouse, John Ross, Chris Saint, Izzi Seccombe, Martin Shaw, Dave Shilton, Bob Stevens, Ray Sweet, B.E.M., June Tandy, Sid Tooth, John Vereker C.B.E., D.L., Angela Warner, Chris Williams, and David Wright.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Martyn Ashford, Peter Butlin, Mike Gittus, Martin Heatley, Bernard Kirton, Joan Lea, Frank McCarney, Clive Rickhards, Heather Timms, Helen Walton, Claire Watson, John Whitehouse and Sonja Wilson.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Councillor Sarah Boad declared personal interest as a member of the Leamington and Warwick Children's centres.

Councillor Penny Bould declared personal interests as a recipient of Direct Payment via Warwickshire County Council as a disabled person; in view of her membership of GMB, Unite and NUJ Trade Unions and as a member locally and contributor nationally of Friends of the Earth.

Councillor Julie Jackson declared personal interest as a governor of Nicholas Chamberlain School Foundation.

(3) Minutes

Resolved

That, subject to the correction of the declaration of interest by Councillor Julie Jackson to refer to: 'Park House Youth Management Committee' the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2011 be approved as a correct record.

(4) Announcements

(i) Retirement of Pete Keeley, Principal Committee Administrator, Democratic Services

The Chair paid tribute to Pete Keeley who was retiring after 44 years service with the County Council. Pete joined the Council in 1967 as a junior clerk before joining the Planning and Transportation Committee Team in 1974 and went on to serve in every committee area.

The Chair, on behalf of the Council, expressed her very best wishes to Pete for his future.

(ii) Retirement of Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Democratic Services.

The Chair paid tribute to Jean Hardwick who was retiring in April, after 8 years with Warwickshire County Council and after serving 33 years in democratic services posts in local government.

The Chair, on behalf of the Council, expressed her best wishes to Jean for her future retirement.

(5) Petitions

(i) Petition against possible closure of Henley Library

Councillor Mike Perry presented a petition from residents of Henley in Arden, expressing their concern at the possible closure of Henley Library. The Chair announced that this petition would be considered as part of the consultation on the County Council transformation of library proposals.

2. Annual Report of the Audit and Standards Committee

Councillor Bob Stevens, presented the Annual Report of the Audit and Standards Committee on behalf of John Bridgeman, the Chair of the Committee, who was unable to attend this meeting.

Councillor Stevens thanked the Committee members for their work over the year.

Resolved

That the County Council notes the annual report of the Audit and Standards Committee.

3. Local Transport Plan 2011-2026

Councillor Alan Cockburn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Economy, presented the final version of the Local Transport Plan following its consideration by Cabinet on 17 March. Councillor Cockburn moved the recommendations in the report to adopt the plan and to note the submission of Stratford Parkway as the Council's bid for funding from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. Councillor Jim Foster seconded the recommendations.

Councillor Cockburn expressed his thanks to Councillors John Appleton, Michael Doody, Richard Hobbs, Ray Sweet and John Whitehouse for their work on the plan and to all who had taken part in the public consultation.

Councillor Sarah Boad expressed her regret that the Kenilworth to Leamington cycleway was not going forward as a bid, but recognised the importance of the Stratford Parkway project. Councillor Alan Cockburn explained that the Stratford Parkway project had been chosen as it would benefit a larger number of people but gave assurance that he supported the cycleway if funding could be found for it.

Councillor Ron Cockings requested that there is clear communication with the public on the benefits of the Stratford Parkway project and that this could possibly be undertaken through a member group.

During the discussion, Councillor Alan Cockburn advised that the Government had announced that the Council would receive £183,000 for Community Transport and that this would enable the Council to continue to support the schemes for a year, allowing more time for consideration of future options for the services.

The Council would also be receiving £100,000 towards pot hole repairs.

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed as set out below.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council adopts the Final Local Transport Plan (including any minor modifications proposed by the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy).
- (2) That Council adopts the Rights of Way and Recreational Highway Strategy contained within the Local Transport Plan as a revision to the Authority's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- (3) That Council notes the decision of Cabinet to submit Stratford Parkway as our bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

4. Managing the Reductions in 2011/12 Grant Funding

Councillor David Wright presented a report approved by Cabinet on 17 March that set out how services intend to manage the reductions in core grant funding. Councillor David Wright moved the recommendations in the report and was seconded by Councillor Jim Foster.

During discussion members requested a breakdown of what specific services had been reduced (including which children centres and bus services).

Councillor Carolyn Robbins advised that the grant cuts were being absorbed 'where they fall', although there would continue to be support for early intervention as this was being looked at corporately. Councillor Robbins undertook to ensure members were circulated with a list of the children centres affected. Councillor Alan Cockburn reminded members that a list of changes to bus services had been circulated but that he would ensure this was sent out again.

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed as set out below.

Resolved

- (1) That Council notes the additional grant allocations to services as set out in paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 of the report.
- (2) That Council supports the proposals, by services, to manage the reductions in 2011/12 core grant funding.

5. Service Estimates 2011/12

Councillor Alan Farnell, Leader of the Council, presented the service estimates for 2011/12 consistent with the Council's budget but recast to reflect the new organisational structure. Councillor Farnell moved the recommendations in the report and was seconded by Councillor David Wright.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, requested that an opportunity should be provided for all members to consider progress against the service plans and that this would be best undertaken at a meeting of full Council rather than monitoring reports going to Cabinet only. Councillor Chris Saint, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, suggested that the Board should be undertaking a closer scrutiny of finance and that this could be built into the Board's work programme.

Councillor Alan Farnell advised that he would be looking at how best to monitor the service estimates and savings plans and ensure that this is undertaken in a robust, transparent and open manner. This could include

a role for the Overview and Scrutiny Board and it may be appropriate for a wider discussion at full Council. Councillor Farnell undertook to discuss options with Leaders at a future Leaders Liaison Group.

Councillor Farnell also gave assurance that a report would come back in 12 months on the emerging organisation.

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed as set out below:

Resolved

- (1) That Council approves the detailed revenue spending estimates, capital programme and medium term savings plan for each of the authority's services as outlined in appendices A to S of the report.
- (2) That Council notes that the position detailed in the appendices is an interim position, until the implementation of the new organisational structure is complete, and any further adjustments will be completed prior to members receiving the first 2011/12 monitoring report in September.

6. Medium Term Financial Plan 2011/12-2013/14

Councillor David Wright presented the Medium Term Financial Plan and recommended its adoption by the Council. Councillor Alan Farnell seconded the proposal and it was put to the vote and agreed as set out below.

Resolved

That the Council approves the Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in Appendix A of the report.

7. Flood and Water Risk Management – New Powers for Overview and Scrutiny.

Councillor Alan Cockburn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Economy, presented the report that advised the Council that it needs to have overview and scrutiny arrangements that include responsibility for the scrutiny of flood risk management. Councillor Alan Farnell, seconded by Councillor Chris Saint, proposed that this delegation of power be to the Overview and Scrutiny Board rather than the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee as suggested in the report and that it should include the emergency planning function. Councillor Alan Farnell reminded the Council that a single management structure would be in place for emergency planning from 1 April.

The proposal was put to the vote and agreed as follows.

Resolved

That, when brought into force, the powers to review and scrutinise the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management functions under section 21 F of the Local Government Act 2000 and the emergency planning function, be delegated to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

8. Member Question Time

(1) Out county placements of individuals with chronic or long term mental health needs.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse asked the following question of councillor Izzi Seccombe, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care:

“Can the portfolio holder confirm whether this Council places individuals who have chronic or long term mental health needs into out-of-county provision, if so how many people are out- of- county and at what cost?”

Councillor Izzi Seccombe gave the following reply:

“ There are currently 92 people in adult mental health care receiving care in a residential setting and of these 62 are placed in Warwickshire and 30 out of the County (mostly at the border of neighbouring counties). The 30 out of county cost the County Council £581,000 per annum at present.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse asked the following supplementary question:

“Given that is better to keep people within the County, what assurances can the portfolio holder give that the directorate are doing all they can to ensure this?”

Councillor Izzi Seccombe replied:

“ Yes it is our aim to keep people in the County, but actually it is primarily our aim to keep people out of care and to support them to be living independently, and for this to be as long as possible. However there are people who will need placements and they are placed taking into account their personal choice (and that of their families) and also cost ,as in some cases out- of- county provision is cheaper than in-county”.

Councillor Penny Bould asked the following supplementary question:

“ Please can you clarify whether you intend to remove provision for those with mental health problems?”

Councillor Izzi Seccombe replied:

“ It is our ambition, wherever possible, to keep people as independent as possible. However, we do recognise that there is a need for residential placements for a small number of people.”

(2) Out County placements for looked after children.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse asked the following question:

“Can the portfolio holder confirm the cost of out-of-county placements for looked after children, and how many children are affected.”

Councillor Carolyn Robbins gave the following reply on behalf of Councillor Heather Timms, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Families:

“ There are 19 in residential placements (3% of looked after children). 11 are joint funded (as have profound health needs or is needed in accordance with statements of Special Educational Needs or for social care reasons). The cost is £2.024m per annum, averaging £109,529 per child per year or £2048 per week”.

9. Leader Question Time

(1) Standing Orders

Councillor June Tandy, Leader of the Labour Group, asked the following question:

“Given that not all members use tablet pcs, and that paper access can be easier during meetings, can the Leader advise on the possibility of issuing members with paper copies of the Council’s standing orders?”

Councillor Alan Farnell replied:

“ There may be a need for training on access to the intranet. However we can look at whether paper copies would be possible and can discuss this at Leaders Liaison Group.”

(2) The future of Area Committees

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse asked:

“When will the future of Area Committees and proposals for delegating budgets to local forums be considered by the Council?”

Councillor Alan Farnell replied:

“ I am unsure of the timetable but proposals will be brought to Council as soon as possible”.

(3) Southern Cross

Councillor Sid Tooth asked the following question:

“ Is the Leader able to give the Council information on the future for the residents receiving care in the five homes in Warwickshire operated by Southern Cross, following the revelation that the company is facing serious financial difficulties?”

Councillor Izzi Seccombe answered on behalf of Councillor Farnell:

“The Council has bought 100 beds from Southern Cross, who operate 6 homes in Warwickshire. We are working with Government on this and will need to await that outcome. The directorate is continuing to work with the PCT to ensure that the 100 we have bought, and that all of the 250 Warwickshire residents have security of tender.”

Councillor Alan Farnell added that the Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee may also wish to consider scrutiny of this.

10. Any other items of urgent business.

None

11. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

12. Newton and Faraday Halls, Lower Hillmorton Road, Rugby

Councillor Colin Hayfield presented proposals for the future of the site of Newton and Faraday Halls. This was seconded by Councillor Alan Farnell and agreed as set out in the exempt minutes of this meeting.

During discussion Councillor Jerry Roodhouse stressed his concern that Councillor Dodd and he had been given only hours notice of this item and sought assurance that local members would receive notification of issues and service changes affecting their divisions.

Councillor Alan Farnell agreed that it is essential all that local members are kept properly informed of changes in their areas and that this message would be reiterated to officers.

The Council rose at 11.45 p.m.

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Chair