# WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21 June 2017, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Boad (Chair); Councillors Ashford, Barrott, Mrs Bunker, Coker, Cooke, Davison, Doody, Edgington, Mrs Evetts, Mrs Falp, Gifford, Gill, Miss Grainger, Grainger, Heath, Mrs Hill, Howe, Illingworth, Margrave, Murphy, Noone, Parkins, Phillips, Quinney, Mrs Stevens, Thompson and Weed.

Before the start of the meeting the Chairman led a minute's silence in respect of the terror attacks in London and Manchester as well as the fire at Grenfell Tower.

8. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bromley, Cain, Mrs Cain, Cross, D'Arcy, Davies, Day, Mrs Knight, Mobbs, Naimo, Rhead, Mrs Redford, Shilton and Whiting.

9. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

10. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10 May 2017 were taken as read and duly signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

11. **Communications & Announcements**

The Chairman informed Council that six members of staff were present as representatives of all the staff who on 1 June 2016 had transferred from the Council to Sports and Leisure Management Ltd which would now be managing the six leisure centres in the district on behalf of the Council.

The Council recognised that its staff were its most valuable resource, and certainly over the years this had been the case in the leisure centres. Operating leisure centres seven days a week, only being closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. The Council staff were face to face with customers, responsible for the safe management of facilities, and for the promotion of healthy lifestyles by providing a wide range of activities. Over the years, the service had grown and diversified, and staff had been required to learn new skills. It was a testament to all staff that they had handled the uncertainty of the last two years with such patience and resilience, and were now working for their new employers and looking forward to the new challenges that were around the corner as the building works were completed at Newbold Comyn and St Nicholas Park.

In recognition of this the Chairman presented each of the representatives with a certificate of thanks from the Council to be displayed in each of the six centres.

The Chairman informed Council that there was no business to be conducted under Item 5 Petitions, Item 6 Notices of Motion and Item 7 Public Submissions.

12. **Leader's and Portfolio Holders' Statements**

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Councillor Coker, informed Council that the contract for the new management arrangements had been signed and the transfer of the management of the Council's six leisure centres had taken place. The changeover had been seamless and everyone was happy with how this had taken place and both former Council Staff and contractors have been pleased with how this had worked. To date over 5000 Everyone Active cards had been issued which was above what was expected and in addition new equipment was now going into the centres.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services, Councillor Phillips, circulated a statement, set out at Appendix 1 to the Minutes, regarding the recent fire at Grenfell Tower in London and the work this Council had undertaken in respect of its high-rise buildings. In addition he recorded his thanks to the Asset Manager and Sustaining Tenancies Manager and their teams in the last seven days to reassure tenants and keep everyone informed.

Councillor Phillips, informed Council that a successful candidate had been offered the post of Head of Housing and full details would be circulated in due course to all Councillors.

The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Grainger, informed Council that a letter had been sent to students and landlords, ahead of the end of term, to highlight refuse and recycling facilities. However if there were issues she asked to be kept informed as well as the Contract Services Team.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Councillor Butler, informed the Council about a new role that had been approved, for a fixed term of three years, of site delivery officer in Kenilworth in recognition of the Local Plan development in and around the town. However this officer would also be working to ensure the town continued to thrive and the new development, A46 improvement work, University Campus, HS2, railway station and cycle route provided benefit in town. The postholder would work with the Kenilworth Partnership encompassing the town centre partnership plus developer interest and infrastructure providers.

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

Councillor Mrs Falp, asked the Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Culture, Councillor Coker, about her Motion to Council 12 months ago, regarding the recording and broadcasting of Council meetings.

In response, Councillor Coker, explained that he would find out and respond within 24 hours to all Councillors. (The response to this question is set out at Appendix 2 to the minutes).

Councillor Margrave asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Grainger, if there was an issue regarding the emptying of bins on the street and street cleaning, as there had been a number of issues raised with him recently?

In response, Councillor Grainger explained there had been some localised issues where bins had been missed. All WDC street bins should had a three digit

number on them and a notice on the bin asked people to inform officers of this number if there was a problem with a bin.

Councillor Quinney thanked the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services, Councillor Phillips, for the work his officers had undertaken on high rise properties and for the statement he had made earlier in the meeting. He also asked whether the rubbish shoots in Council buildings had fire protection systems in place and would having a care taker on site help monitor some situations in buildings.

Councillor Phillips thanked Councillor Quinney for his praise which he would pass on to his teams. He did not know the answer with regard to rubbish shoots but would check and circulate the answer to all Councillors. With regard to the care takers the Council regularly inspected communal areas and followed up issues for this very reason and this work would continue.
(The response to the questions regarding rubbish shoots is set out at Appendix 3 to the minutes.)

Councillor Parkins, asked the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection, Councillor Thompson, which officer would now lead on sustainability following the restructure of his service area.

In response, Councillor Thompson explained that this was one of the posts that had not been filled at present. In the interim, if there were questions, these could be passed to him as the Portfolio Holder.

Councillor Barrott asked the Deputy Leader, Councillor Coker, about the future of the Enforcement report and when would it come forward?

Councillor Coker, informed Council that it was under consideration and would come forward in due course but as yet a date had not been fixed for this.

Councillor Gill sought confirmation from the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection that Warwickshire Police had plans in place to respond to hate crimes or any major emergency within the District?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Thompson, explained that reassurance work was undertaken by the Police as appropriate and reminded the Council that we lived in a great place where levels of hate crime were not as a high as other places. The Deputy Leader added that the District was a happy and diverse community and that there was no place in this district for any hate crime.

Councillor Quinney asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services, Councillor Phillips, when the priority target of eliminating the need for this Council to use bed and breakfast for emergency accommodation would be fully implemented?

In response, Councillor Phillips, explained that at present the Council had no person in bed and breakfast accommodation and the aim was to maintain this. There was a need to look at further solutions and work was ongoing with updates due later in the year.

Councillor Quinney asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services when the Council would be building more council houses? This was because

there were 2,546 people waiting for one or two bed accommodation on HomeChoice and the Council had £30 to £40million available for housing, therefore with national developments could we move away from austerity?

In response the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Phillips, explained that the Council intended to build more Council houses but while the money was available, the problem was finding land at suitable at cost. There was opportunity to look to provide housing need in other ways, for example the Europa Way project, purchasing small blocks of houses such as Cloister Way. There was a potential scheme, similar to Cloister Way, which officers were working on and details would be brought forward of this and other similar schemes as appropriate.

14. **Report of the Executive**

*Council considered the minutes of the Executive meetings held on 8 March 2017 (excluding minutes 98 to 103 that were considered by Council on 12 April 2017) and 5 April 2017 (excluding minutes 115 to 118 that were considered by Council on 12 April 2017). These were proposed duly seconded and*

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Executive meetings held on 8 March 2017 (excluding minutes 98 to 103 that were considered by Council on 12 April 2017) and 5 April 2017 (excluding minutes 115 to 118 that were considered by Council on 12 April 2017) be approved.

15. **Scrutiny Committee End of Term report**

Council considered the End of Term Reports from the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, these were proposed duly seconded and

**Resolved** that the end of term reports from the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for 2016/17 are approved.

16. **Appointments to Outside bodies**

The report brought forward for approval the appointments made annually by Council.

The Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Quinney, informed Council that the appointment to Outside Bodies from his Group would be Councillor Naimo to the National Association of Councillors and Councillor Barrott to both the Rural Services Network and National Parking Adjudication Service (PATROL).

**Resolved** that

(1) the Executive appointments, as set out at Appendix 4 to the minutes, to outside bodies be noted;

(2) following the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the following appointments by this Council should cease and those organisations be formally notified of this:
- Warwick District Mobility

- South Warwickshire Plato Trust
- Friends of Leamington Art Gallery
- Hill Close Gardens Trust
- Rural Services Network – Issue two years notice of intention to cease in 2019;

(3) it notes that;

- its appointment to the Warwick District Citizens' Advice Bureau has ceased following a redesign of their Board;
- the Armed Forces Community Covenant Champion work undertaken by Councillor Illingworth has been removed from this list as it is not an Outside Appointment;

(4) the Warwick District Council Appointments to outside bodies, as set out at Appendix 4, be approved;

(5) the Overview & Scrutiny Committee be asked to review all outside appointments made by Council and Executive in October 2017, along with the criteria for appointing to outside organisations; and

(6) the guidance notes to Councillors on outside bodies is updated by officers and circulated to all Councillors.

17. **Urgent item – Appointment to Licensing & Regulatory Committee**

It was proposed that Councillor Murphy be appointed to the Licensing & Regulatory Committee, duly seconded and

**Resolved** that Councillor Murphy be appointed to the Licensing & Regulatory Committee.

(The Chairman had agreed to take this matter as an urgent item to ensure that the Committee had its full allocation of members which was key for delivering the Licensing & Regulatory Panels.)

18. **Common Seal**

It was

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

(The meeting ended at 6.38 pm)

**Appendix 1**

**Statement to full Council regarding fire safety in high rise blocks**
**Councillor Peter Phillips Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property Services**

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London on Tuesday 14 June 2017, I would first like to express my personal deepest sympathy, and I am sure that of all the Council, to all families affected by this terrible event.

This statement is to update and inform all councillors on the situation with the blocks that we own and manage and to reassure residents and fellow councillors about the arrangements that we have in place; and to set out our plans going forward.

We have seven high rise blocks providing residential accommodation as Council tenancies. High rise blocks are those over 18m high i.e. 6 or more storeys.
The blocks in question are:

| Address | No. of floors | Units of accommodation |
|---|---|---|
| Eden Court, Mason Avenue, Lillington, Leamington Spa | 14 floors | 90 |
| Southorn Court, Mason Avenue, Lillington Leamington Spa | 8 floors | 46 |
| Ashton Court, Newland Road, Lillington, Leamington Spa Mason Av | 8 floors | 46 |
| Christine Ledger Square, Brunswick, Leamington Spa | 11 floors | 57 |
| Radcliffe Gardens, Brunswick Street, Leamington Spa | 11 floors | 54 |
| Stamford Gardens, Rugby Road, Leamington Spa | 9 floors | 45 |
| Westbrook House, New Brook Street, Leamington Spa. | 11 floors | 33 |

The regulation of safety standards are incorporated into Building Regulations, which ensure that fire safety provisions are incorporated into blocks of flats when they are constructed or significantly modified. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 brought the common parts of blocks of flats within the scope of mainstream fire safety legislation. With regards to guidance, this can be found in the Local Government Association publication "Fire safety in purpose built blocks of flats" 2012.
https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/fire-safety-purpose-built-04b.pdf
WDC have the following arrangements in place:

- We have fire alarm systems fitted in each of the blocks in the communal areas.
- The communal area fire alarms are tested weekly, with records kept of the tests. The alarms are serviced every quarter and again records kept.

- We fit smoke alarms in each of the individual flats. These are hard wired. These are tested during five yearly checks to the electrics that we undertake for all properties.
- All of the blocks have emergency lighting which is tested monthly and serviced 6 monthly.
- We undertake weekly health and safety checks of the blocks. These check that fire doors are operating correctly, firefighting equipment is in good order and escape routes are free from hazards.
- Full fire risk assessments are carried out every two years. These were last completed in February 2016.
- Fire safety signs are displayed in all blocks to advise of evacuation procedures. We operate a stay put policy in case of fire. This follows advice from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service. A copy is attached.
- We have reinforced messages to residents to also take responsibility for safety, encouraging tenants to report issues and not leave rubbish or other items in communal areas. We have been proactive in enforcing safety measures and removing obstructions in communal areas.
- There has been speculation regarding the installation of new cladding materials at the Grenfell Tower and that this aided the spread of fire. We do not have cladding of the type installed at Grenfell Tower i.e. Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM). We have not installed any new insulation materials to our blocks in recent years. The cladding materials on blocks have been in place for many years.

Following the fire at Grenfell Tower we have looked to reassure residents. We have therefore undertaken the following actions:

- In order to give reassurance we and the Fire Service visited the blocks on the Wednesday and Thursday following the fire.
- We sent letters to all high rise tenants to give reassurance and highlight the need for all tenants to take fire prevention seriously. This letter was sent out on the Wednesday, the day of the fire. This was hand delivered to all residents. We have had very few calls from our residents in high rise flats following the fire in London.
- We sent out a briefing note to all councillors and our local MPs on Wednesday 15 June. We have responded to many further enquiries from local councillors.
- Myself, Simon Brooke, Russell Marsden and Phil Sheen met with Matt Western, MP, on Thursday and visited two of our high rise blocks.
- We have agreed to meet and discuss any learning implications from the Grenfell Tower fire with the Fire Service. This meeting is planned for Thursday this week.
- We have reviewed the recommendations from the Fire Risk Assessments. These inspections identified priorities for undertaking recommended works. All immediate actions have been completed. There are some actions not for immediate attention that have not yet been completed, but had been planned to be completed in the timescale for the next inspection in February 2018. These are on track to be completed in that period.
- The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have been in touch looking for information on our high rise stock and our use of cladding materials. We have responded to their requests quickly as and when required.
- We issued a press release on Friday 17 June, to reassure the public and express our sympathies with families affected.

In the light of the Grenfell fire there are further actions that we have decided to take to provide additional assurance.

- Although we have none of the type of cladding used at Grenfell Tower, we will however check the materials used and efficacy of these materials in fire retardation. We expect to have the results of this within 4 weeks.
- We are suggesting a move from once every two years to annual Fire Risk Assessments in our seven high rise blocks. Existing Fire Risk Assessments will be reviewed this week, with new Fire Risk Assessments completed over the next four weeks. These will also cover the external aspects of the buildings as per new guidance from DCLG, including any cladding issues.
- We will review our fire evacuation plans and publicity to tenants with the Fire Service. This should be completed within two weeks. We will write to tenants again after this has been completed.
- We will undertake a full review of all front doors to flats within communal areas in our blocks to ensure they are certified to 30 minute fire protection. We are aware of some original front doors in place that were compliant when the properties were built, but may not comply now. Although there is no regulatory requirement to change these doors, we think that this would be a worthwhile improvement in fire safety and reassurance to residents. This will also include working with leaseholders in instances where a new non-compliant front door has been installed.

There are other measures which some other Local Authorities / Housing Associations have in place that we will now consider:

- Sprinkler systems or other fire suppressant methods. These may assist in preventing the spread of fire. These are not part of the current building regulations but were one of the recommended changes following the Lakanal fire in 2009. A survey in 2015 showed that just 18 of 2,925 council owned high rise blocks in England have sprinklers inside flats, with only 187 having sprinklers in other communal areas. We will review our position on sprinkler systems and report back to the Executive and Council.
- Improved fire and smoke control in communal areas. Following our last Fire Risk Assessments many carpentry repairs were identified and carried out to ensure the effective operation of existing doors, closers and ventilation systems. These is however a limit to how effective repairs can be to old doors and systems. We had been planning as part of the work arising from the stock condition survey and the associated forward investment plans, to lay out refurbishment plans for high rise blocks and this will now be prioritised.

We will continue to follow events as they unfold. We will implement any further guidance or instructions from the DCLG. The Housing Services and the Property Services teams will keep all councillors informed in further briefings. Reports to Executive and / or Scrutiny Committees will be produced as necessary and/or when required.

We will also continue with our efforts to ensure resident safety is of paramount importance and to reassure our residents living in high rise accommodation that arrangements are in place to ensure their safety.

Please in the meantime if you have further question let me know or speak to Simon Brooke Sustaining Tenancies Manager in Housing Services or Russell Marsden our Asset Manager in Property Services.

**Councillor Peter Phillips**
**Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property Services**

**Appendix 2**

Councillors,

I was asked at Full Council last night about the bin chutes in our tower blocks. Russell Marsden has advised as follows:

"Bin chutes are prone to vandalism e.g. removal of chute doors to provide a wider aperture for posting overfilled bin bags and consequential blockages. The door to bin chutes should be a minimum of 30 minutes fire resistance. The opening of the bin chute into the bin store room should have a fire proof self-closing baffle.

We manage the risk by including the inspection of bin doors and bin stores as part of the weekly inspection process and undertaking repairs as necessary.

We are meeting the fire service to inspect the blocks today and tomorrow to share our ideas and thoughts on how we manage high rise blocks in the future and bin chutes and bin stores will be a topic for discussion. Items to review include:

1) Should we have bin chutes in our high rise blocks? If removed, how do we manage the risk of waste bags collecting in common areas?
2) Do we introduce fire suppression systems in our bin store areas?
3) Do we introduce fire suppression systems within the bin chutes?
4) Do we upgrade bin chute doors to 60 minute fire resistance?
5) Where possible, should we create a fire rated lobby protection around the bin chutes.

Building Control will also be asked to review these suggestions within the updated Fire Risk Assessments."

Please let myself or Russell have any queries.

Peter Phillips

District Councillor, Budbrooke Ward
Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services Warwick District Council

**Appendix 3**

Dear Councillors

Following on your question at Council I have made further enquiry in relation to the Audio system in the Chamber and the continuing problems.

I understand that this arises from the fact that the system is connected to a narrow wi fi band and as a result the system is adversely affected by other appliances and networks being used in its area at the same time. This no doubt accounts for the deterioration we have experience as the number of those appliances being used by us all has increased.

This can be mitigated if we have a stricter policy of ensuring that all other equipment is turned off.

We have investigated the replacement of the system but as we are likely to move to new premises in the reasonably near future this would have to be transferable to the new premises and this cannot be taken further until the new premises have reached a planning stage that would allow us to be assured that the system would be transferable. We are not at that stage at this time.

The only alternative would be to hire alternative equipment which I understand is likely to be extremely expensive but I have asked officers to reinvestigate this and will advise shortly.

In the meantime the officers will investigate with our contractors if any further improvement can be obtained by for instance renewal of batteries.

Councillor Coker
Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Culture

# Executive appointments

| **Conservative Appointments** | **Number of places** | **Councillor** |
|---|---|---|
| Warwickshire County Council - Supporting People Partnership (H&PS Portfolio Holder) | 1 | Cllr Phillips |
| Warwickshire Police & Crime Panel (Health & Community Protection Portfolio Holder) | 1 | Cllr Thompson |
| West Midlands Employers formerly West Midlands Councils and West Midlands Leaders Board | 1 | Cllr Mobbs * |
| Coventry and Warwickshire LEP (Including City Deals) | 1 | Cllr Mobbs |
| LLP Board | 3 | Cllr Butler<br>Cllr Whiting<br>Cllr Mobbs |
| Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board (Health & Community Protection Portfolio Holder) | 1 | Cllr Thompson |
| South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (Health & Community Protection Portfolio Holder) | 1 | Cllr Thompson |
| Warwickshire County Council Health & Wellbeing Board (Health & Community Protection Portfolio Holder) | 1 | Cllr Thompson* |
| Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) (H&PS Portfolio Holder) | 1 | Councillor Phillips |
| Shakespeares England (Development Portfolio Holder) | 1 | Councillor Butler |
| **Total** | **13** | |

# Warwick District Council appointments

| **Conservative Appointments** | **Number of places** | **Councillor** |
|---|---|---|
| Coventry Airport Consultative Committee | 1 | Cllr Mrs Redford |
| Kenilworth Abbey Advisory Committee | 1 | Cllr Cooke |
| Kenilworth Town Centre Partnership | 1 | Cllr Coker |
| LGA District Councils' Network | 1 | Cllr Mobbs |
| South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust | 1 | Cllr Mrs Bunker |
| Warwick Town Centre Management Group | 1 | Cllr Butler |
| Warwickshire County Council – Adult Social Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee | 1 | Cllr Mrs Redford |
| Warwickshire Waste Management Forum | 1 | Cllr Grainger |
| Birmingham Airport Consultative Committee | 1 | Cllr Illingworth |
| Bid Leamington Board | 1 | Cllr Miss Grainger |
| Chase Meadow Community Centre | 1 | Cllr Butler |
| **Total** | **11** | |

| **Labour Appointments** | **Number of places** | **Councillor** |
|---|---|---|
| National Association of Councillors | 1 (but with two votes) | Cllr Naimo |
| Rural Services Network | 1 | Cllr Barrott |
| National Parking Adjudication Service (PATROL) | 1 | Cllr Barrott |
| **Total** | **3** | |

| **Whitnash Residents Association Appointments** | **Number of places** | **Councillor** |
|---|---|---|
| South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (Non Executive rep) | 1 | Cllr Heath |
| **Total** | **1** | |