

Cabinet

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2025 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa, at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillors Davison (Leader), Billiald, Chilvers, Davidson, King, Melrose, Sinnott, and Williams.

Also Present: Councillors: Boad (Liberal Democrat Group Observer), Phillips (Conservative Group Observer), Falp (Whitnash Resident's Group Observer), and Milton (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

68. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roberts and P Wightman (the Independent Group Observer).

Councillor Phillips substituted for Councillor Day as the Conservative Group Observer.

69. **Declarations of Interest**

Minute Number 75 – Abbey Fields Proposed Shared Footway and Cycleway

Councillor Chilvers declared an interest because he was a Warwickshire County Councillor. However, he had been granted dispensation to vote on this item.

70. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 3 September 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Part 1

(Items upon which a decision by the Council was required)

71. **Annual Treasury Management Report 2024/25**

The Cabinet considered a report from Finance which explained that the Council was required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2024/25. The report met the requirements of both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

The report covered the Council's performance for the whole of 2024/25 and was attached as Appendix A to the report.

The Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 and the Council's Treasury Management Practices, in accordance with the Code of Practice for Treasury Management, required that the Treasury Management

function reported on its activities during the year by no later than 30 September in the year after that was being reported on.

Due to the impact of workload on the Statement of Accounts and associated external audits, the Council had been unable to produce this report since 2021/22.

During 2024/25 the minimum reporting requirements were that Full Council should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Cabinet 6 March 2024, approved by Council 20 March 2024);
- a mid-year (minimum) treasury update report (Audit & Standards Committee 7 January 2025); and
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report).

In addition, the Council received a half-yearly treasury management update report for the second half of 2024/25, which was reported to the Audit and Standards Committee on 25 September 2025.

The regulatory environment placed responsibility on Members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. The report was, therefore, important in that respect, as it provided details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlighted compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by Members.

The report commented, where appropriate, on the Council's actual performance against what was forecast in the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy as well as, in certain instances, latest forecasts. The Council was also required to comment on its performance against its Annual Investment Strategy for the year.

The Council confirmed that it had complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to all treasury management reports by the relevant committee before they were reported to the Full Council. Member training on treasury management issues was last undertaken on 28 February 2024 to support members' scrutiny role.

During 2024/25, WDC complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements. The key actual prudential and treasury indicators detailing the impact of capital expenditure activities during the year, with comparators, were detailed in Table 1 in the report.

Other prudential and treasury indicators were to be found in the main body of the report. The Head of Finance also confirmed that borrowing was only undertaken for a capital purpose and the statutory borrowing limit, (the authorised limit), was not breached.

In terms of alternative options, as explained in paragraph 1.1 in the report, the Code of Practice mandated that Annual Treasury Management Performance had to be reported by 30 September, after that financial year had closed, demonstrating compliance with the Prudential Code, or explaining any divergence for the approved Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators.

Due to the compounding impact of the last three years' Statement of Accounts, it was not possible to commence writing the report in time to meet the 30 of September deadline, so it was being brought to the next available Audit & Standards Committee date.

The report retrospectively reviewed the Treasury Management activity for 2024/25 and was, therefore, a statement of fact.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked officers for the report.

The Committee reminded Cabinet that the report was an opportunity to explain how lending was secured as well as borrowed.

The Committee congratulated officers for their work which had led to exceeding peer group performance on treasury management.

In response to questions from Group Leaders, the Portfolio Holder for Resources agreed to make Table 2 in the report regularly available to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He would look at timelines and keep Members informed.

Councillor Chilvers then proposed the recommendations in the report.

Recommended to Council that

- (1) the actual 2024/25 prudential and treasury indicators in this report, be approved; and
- (2) the annual treasury management report for 2024/25, be noted.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Chilvers.)
Forward Plan Reference 1,619

72. Fees and Charges 2026-2027

The Cabinet considered a report from Finance which detailed the proposals for discretionary Fees and Charges in respect of the 2026 calendar year. It also showed the latest Fees and Charges 2025/26 income budgets, initial 2026/27 budgets and the actual out-turn for 2024/25.

The Council was required to update its Fees and Charges in order that the impact of any changes could be fed into the setting of the budget for 2026/27. Discretionary Fees and Charges for the forthcoming calendar year needed to be approved by Council.

In accordance with the Financial Strategy and Code of Financial Practice it was appropriate to consider certain other factors when deciding what the Council's Fees and Charges should be:

- the impact of the Fees and Charges levels on delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy;
- the level of prices the market could bear including comparisons with neighbouring and other local authorities;

- the level of prices to be sufficient to recover the cost of the service and the impact on Council Finances, where this was not the case;
- the impact of prices on level of usage;
- the impact on the Council's future financial projections within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy;
- ensure that fees, in particular those relating to licensing, reflected the current legislation. The regulatory manager had to ensure that the fees charged should only reflect the amount of officer time and associated costs needed to administer them;
- whether a service was subject to competition from the private sector, such as Building Control. This service had to ensure that charges set remained competitive within the market;
- income generated from services including building control, land charges and licensing was excluded from the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and was managed through ring-fenced accounts, due to the legislation and criteria under which they operated;
- management of the Council's Leisure Centres was by Everyone Active. The contract definition stated that 'The Contractor shall review the core products and prices in June of each year and submit any proposed changes to the Authority for approval (the "Fees and Charges Report")'. Appendix C to the report outlined the core fees. Retail Price Index (RPI) in June 2025 was at 4.4%.

Services were not asked to bring forward a % price rise, but a % rise in total income. This could be achieved in a number of different ways, not necessarily a price rise. For instance, a reduction in price on bulky item collections had led to a higher total income. Finance asked all areas to think about new ways they could deliver their service and invest to save funding was available through the change programme to bring forward new ideas.

Car Parking Fees had been removed from the submission because it would be brought forward for Cabinet approval in late-November 2025 following a Parking Strategy review (please refer to Appendix B, paragraph 4.4 to the report for further details).

An assumption underpinning the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was that fee income would be increased by 3% per annum across all areas except for Green Waste and Car Parking at 10%, and this was included within the MTFS approved as part of the Budget setting report February 2025. Managers had been challenged on ensuring income maximisation and cost recovery where appropriate and had provided commentary on the rationale behind some of the charges highlighted in Appendix B to the report.

A review was carried out by Commercial Gov in 2024/25 and focused on 10 key areas of Fees and Charges. The findings of the review had been shared with service managers. The review by Commercial Gov had been assessed by service managers, with either the recommendations implemented in full, or reasoning provided as to why adopting these as outlined was either not viable or recommended.

Commercial Gov's recommended approach for current and future years would see the Council adopt a fees and charges policy which tracked more closely to CPI.

In addition to the work carried out by Commercial Gov, historical fees and charges data had been analysed to see:

- whether prior year targets had been achieved in setting budgets;
- how actual income generated compared with the original budget set;
- how the budget target compared with CPI; and
- how significant new fees introduced (such as green waste charging) impacted upon the delivery of budget target and actual income received.

A summary of this analysis, covering the period 2020-21 to 2025-26, was provided at paragraph 1.2.8 in the report. From the summary, in years where a fee target was set at a level above CPI, unless there was a significant new charge introduced, the budget approved fell short of the target. However, the budget set was always above that year's CPI.

In previous financial years, the actual income generated from fees and charges on general fund services fell short of the budget until 2024/25 where budget target was achieved.

It should be noted that the period covered by this review included years where there was a direct impact from COVID-19. The Council's response to the pandemic, driven by the loss of significant income sources (at times due to national policy such as lockdowns), could be seen in the fee targets set (15%) and the fall in actual income received (in 2020/21 and 2021/22).

With inflation (CPI) in July 2025 at 3.8%, with a national target of 2%, this reinforced the Commercial Gov benchmarking data that previous MTFS of a year on year 10% increase would not be achievable.

Importance should therefore be placed on how service demand and delivery was maximised to achieve the MTFS assumptions rather than on a reliance of above inflation fee increases, which might not even be possible for fees regulated by cost recovery or those set within a competitive commercial environment. Cabinet expected proposals to continue to come forward to the Change Programme to deliver services in a way that delivered better outcomes and value for money for the public.

In terms of alternative options, the options would be to either:

- leave all fees and charges at 2025 levels or increase at a reduced level. This would increase the level of savings to be found through the Change Programme over the next five years unless additional activity could be generated to offset this; or
- increase at a level higher than proposed in the report. Excessive increases could deter usage where the take up was discretionary. Customers might choose to use the service less frequently or use an alternative supplier where one was available.

The judgement and expertise of managers was taken into consideration when assessing the two options. In some instances, it was deemed that the options were unrealistic and might ultimately result in income

reducing due to competition or reduced customer retention. Where possible, managers had used the insights and information proposed by Commercial Gov to propose different approaches to achieving the same or similar levels of income, and these had been included within the proposals.

All of the above were considered not to be realistic options given the increased cost of delivering some services, the current position of the Financial Strategy, and the level of savings required.

The Budget Review Group asked that Cabinet prioritise the Commercial Strategy and ensure resources are put behind it. The Group expressed disappointment that it was yet to be circulated.

There was concern amongst several Members regarding the absence of the Parking Strategy from the Fees and Charges and the Group's ability to scrutinise the budget as a whole in its absence.

The Budget Review Group had a good level of discussion regarding Green Bin Fees and Members were concerned about the impact on finances. The Group emphasised the importance of understanding the reasons for customer behaviour and the data behind it to allow the correct decisions to be made.

The Group discussed Bereavement Services and noted the work of Commercial Gov in this area.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources welcomed comments surrounding the Commercial Strategy and recognised the Budget Review Group's disappointment that it was not circulated. He agreed to discuss with the Head of Finance to ensure that adequate staffing resources were in place to ensure that it would be delivered in March 2026 and would update Members accordingly.

Councillor Chilvers then proposed the recommendations in the report.

Recommended to Council that

- (1) the Fees and Charges proposals set out in Appendices A1 and A2 to the report, to operate from 2 January 2026 unless stated otherwise, for the reasons set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved; and
- (2) the changes proposed by Everyone Active to the core products and prices from January 2026 which are within the 2025 June RPI as per contract, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be approved.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Chilvers.)
Forward Plan Reference 1,573

73. **Review of Warwick District Council Members' Allowances Scheme**

The Cabinet considered a report from Governance which brought forward the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) following a review of Warwick District Members' Allowances Scheme undertaken in 2025.

The Panel was convened because under the regulations for allowances, the indexation of allowances was required to be reviewed every four years, which was now due.

The Panel was convened under The Local Authorities' (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021) ("the 2003 Regulations"). These regulations, which arose out of the relevant provisions contained in the Local Government Act 2000, required all local authorities to establish and maintain an advisory IRP to review and provide advice on Members' allowances on a periodic basis.

All Councils were required to convene their Panel and seek its advice before it made any changes or amendments to its Members' Allowances Scheme. Councils needed to 'pay regard' to its Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme. On this particular occasion, the Panel had been reconvened under the 2003 Regulations as it had not reviewed the allowances scheme since 2021.

The review was undertaken in August 2025 by the Council's IRP. The IRP comprised of:

Dr Declan Hall	An independent consultant specialising in Members' allowances and support and a former academic at the Institute of Local Government, The University of Birmingham.
Christopher Purser	Former Chairman of Warwick District Council Standards Committee and former Governor of Warwickshire College. Previously the Group Treasurer of a multinational corporation. A Chartered Accountant and Chartered Secretary.
Alan Wilkinson	Former Warwick District Councillor (for Leamington Brunswick Ward) and Leamington Town Councillor; and Town Mayor. Previously a Sales Manager in a local electronic business.

The IRP met on 4, 5 and 11 August 2025. The IRP meetings were in closed session to enable the IRP to meet with Members and officers and conduct its deliberations in confidence.

All Members were provided with a questionnaire addressing the issues that the IRP were required to consider. The questionnaire also had the methodological advantage of ensuring all Members were being asked a common set of questions, the main point being that all Members had at least one opportunity to exercise their voice during the review. 27 Councillors responded to the questionnaire and six Councillors partially responded. A number of Members from across the Council were also invited to meet with the Panel.

The IRP met with the Chief Executive and the Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer for factual briefings on political structures and constitutional changes since the last review, to obtain an overview of the challenges the Council faced.

The IRP took account of the range and levels of allowances paid by comparable local authorities, namely the four other District/Borough Councils in Warwickshire and Warwick District Council's eight nearest neighbours as defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy or CIPFA, which were used by Councils for benchmarking purposes.

After considering this information, the IRP produced the report and recommendations, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report. For ease, Appendix 2 to the report set out the changes in a table form.

It should be noted that the allowances paid to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council were paid outside of the Members Allowances Scheme under separate legislation. For this reason, although these two allowances were referred to within the report by the Panel, there was a separate specific recommendation to recommend them to Council.

It should also be noted that as part of the review, informal advice was provided by the Panel to the Council that it felt Members would benefit from a briefing on the Members Allowances scheme available to them. Officers were working on this and would confirm a date in due course.

In terms of alternative options, the Cabinet could choose what recommendations to make to Council about the Independent report, including departing from it. This was because within law, Members were only required to 'pay regard' to their Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme. For this reason, Cabinet could recommend to Council, as an example, increasing the allowances to the value as proposed, but phasing these in over the next four years (the life of the scheme), or recommending that no changes were made and the current scheme be readopted.

The Group Leaders thanked the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel for their work.

The Leader stated that the review of Town Council Member Allowances would be followed up with the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Councillor Davison then proposed the recommendations in the report.

Recommended to Council that

- (3) the recommendations from the IRP be accepted but do not come into effect until Annual Council in May 2026; and
- (4) the Allowances for the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman of the Council as proposed by the Independent Remuneration Panel be

approved, noting the revised approach of these being the Gross amount subject to Tax not the amount paid after Tax.

Resolved that

- (1) the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) following a review of Warwick District Members' Allowances Scheme undertaken in 2025, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted; and
- (2) subject to Cabinet agreeing (2), Cabinet asks officers to produce a draft Members Allowances Scheme for Council to consider at its meeting on 22 October 2025.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Davison.)
Forward Plan Reference 1,614

74. Parental Leave Policy for Councillors

The Cabinet considered a report from Governance which brought forward a parental leave policy for Councillors and sought Cabinet support ahead of decision by Council to implement such a policy at Warwick District Council. The proposed parental leave policy for Councillors was intended to encourage greater diversity of Councillors and representation of residents' needs.

The Committee Services Team facilitated a four-yearly review of Warwick District Council's (WDC) Members' Allowances Scheme and in the process of doing so, identified a gap in the allowances concerning parental leave for Councillors. Following this, research was undertaken regarding the legality of parental leave for Councillors and the provisions offered by other Councils.

The findings of the research identified that although Councillors were not legally entitled to parental leave since they were not classified as employees, some Councils did offer such provisions. The scope and reasoning behind this offering was consistent with increasing diversity through encouraging more females and younger people to become Councillors.

Research from the Fawcett Society carried out in 2021 demonstrated that a lack of a parental leave policy for Councillors was a contributing factor in less women pursuing local government careers.

Furthermore, Nottingham City Council passed a motion in July 2021 which noted that they had introduced a parental leave policy for Councillors with the intention of supporting younger elected Members.

Improving the provisions for new parents should ensure that there was greater diversification of Councillors by lessening the existing barriers faced by women and younger Councillors. This supported WDC's aim of delivering a valued service by encouraging a high calibre of Councillors as a by-product of reducing barriers.

Moreover, guidance from Milton Keynes City Council identified that the introduction of a parental leave policy for Councillors supported the retention of Councillors. This aligned with WDC's aim to offer sustainable services by enabling greater continuity of Councillors despite their personal circumstances.

Therefore, introducing parental leave provisions for Councillors would likely encourage diversification, enabling a rich array of Councillors to be continually available which would ultimately allow WDC to effectively represent its residents and support their needs.

Notably, only 26% of the 303 Councils who responded to the BBC's FOI request in 2021 had a formal parental leave policy in place for Councillors. In the West Midlands, a quarter of local authorities had a formal policy in place. Therefore, introducing a parental leave policy for Councillors would ensure that WDC were part of the limited collection of West Midlands Councils offering such provisions. This would allow Warwick District to maintain its ability to be a great place to live, work, and visit.

The Councils that offered parental leave for Councillors mostly did so by following the Local Government Association (LGA) model parental leave policy. This model acted as guidance and could be adapted to cover area specific preferences.

It was therefore recommended that WDC adopt the LGA model parental leave policy as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Reasonable and adequate arrangements should be made to cover the work of the Councillor making use of the parental leave policy. This would be at the discretion of the Group Leader and in the instance of an independent Councillor at the discretion of the Chairman of the Council.

As such, guidance was provided to Group Leaders and the Chairman of the Council at Appendix 2 to the report. Offering such arrangements ensured that the needs of residents continued to be met irrespective of introduction of this policy.

In terms of alternative options, Members could choose to not adopt the proposed parental leave policy for Councillors. This was not deemed to be a viable option as the current lack of a parental leave policy created gendered barriers for Councillors and therefore discouraged heterogeneity.

Following questions raised prior to the meeting, the Leader proposed the following amendments to the policy:

In respect of the wording in paragraph 1.1 in the report, wording should be amended to state that the leave will start on the day the Councillor commences maternity leave.

In respect of paragraph 1.2 in the report, Cabinet were of the view that the policy was acceptable and broadly in line with WDC policy. However, they agreed that Appendix 2 to the report should be amended so that the following section:

"As the Councillor looks to return to their role of Councillor following a break the Group Leader should again manage this return providing clear expectations and keeping the Civic & Committee Services Manager informed"

Be replaced with the following wording:

"The Group Leader should keep the Civic & Committee Services Manager informed of: (a) any specific individual circumstances that may lead to a deviation from this procedure; and (b) how/when the Councillor will be returning to their role and the expectations around this"

The questions raised prior to the meeting by Councillor K Dickson and their answers would be made available online as part of the pre-meeting questions and answers.

Councillor Davison then proposed the recommendations in the report, subject to the proposed amendments.

Recommended to Council that, subject to the amendments to the Policy proposed at the meeting, the parental leave policy for Councillors as laid out at Appendix 1 to the report be supported and adopted as an Annex to the Constitution.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Davison.)
Forward Plan Reference 1,615

Part 2

(Items upon which a decision by the Council was not required)

75. Abbey Fields Proposed Shared Footway and Cycleway

The Cabinet considered a report from the Strategic Director. Cycling was recognised as a key health benefit and Warwick District Council (WDC) was committed to working alongside key stakeholders to improve the local cycle network. The proposal in the report aligned with local policy objectives which supported sustainable transport goals in the District. The report outlined the findings from the public consultation on the proposed walking, wheeling and cycling path ("shared path") across Abbey Fields and was the culmination of an ongoing process over several years to look at the potential of providing a shared path and to open up

access to the green space to a wider population and provide cycle access to its facilities including the swimming pool

The report set out:

- a) the details of the six-week public consultation held between May and June 2025; and
- b) in consideration of the results of the above, the report recommended a way forward for a continuous shared path in Abbey Fields but also had in mind the concern highlighted within the results of the consultation for potential conflict between the different users of Abbey Fields.

The proposed new shared route would pass through Abbey Fields, which was owned, managed, and maintained by Warwick District Council.

Whilst the route had been designed by consultants (Sustrans) appointed by Warwickshire County Council (WCC), the cost of installing the new route would be funded by WDC. The costs of improving the road crossings at Bridge Street and Borrowell Lane would be designed, built and paid for by WCC and these would provide greater connectivity to the local area to allow a wider population to have easier access to Abbey Fields.

The proposal was to implement a walking, wheeling and cycling path, "shared path" across Abbey Fields to link up Castle Farm Leisure Centre with the new swimming pool in Abbey Fields and connect two ends of National Cycle Network No. 52 to allow greater connectivity for cyclists across Kenilworth.

The consultation indicated that there was concern about the potential conflict between users if the proposal went ahead, especially around the swimming pool and children's play area.

In anticipation of that concern and the restricted nature of the shared path around the swimming pool, Q11 of the public consultation (see paragraph 1.5.5 in the report), provided the alternative of the shared path finishing at the swimming pool and the latter acting as a destination. Although this showed support for the shared path continuing around the swimming pool, there were still concerns over potential conflict between the different users.

The recommendation within the report to allow the shared path to be continuous through Abbey Fields, had the wider benefit of providing greater connectivity for cycling between North and South Kenilworth. This would make cycling a more viable option for commuting and offered an alternative to cycling on busy roads.

However, cyclists would need to slow down to accommodate pedestrians which would make for a less efficient journey.

There had been ongoing discussions with colleagues involved in the swimming pool construction, looking at the safety control measures required on the path around the swimming pool. There had been draft designs created for a relocated duck feeding area on Abbey Fields Lake

for example. However, further work was required to ensure that all appropriate measures fit into the design requirements from the swimming pool. A thorough assessment of the appropriate measures would be submitted to a future Cabinet meeting for final sign-off.

However, there needed to be scrutiny on the safety/control measures on the path around the swimming pool if the shared path was to be a through route as other users would feel less safe and any potential conflict between users' needed to be minimised, hence Recommendation 2.

If Warwick District Council approved the principle of the proposed route, the consultants would be instructed to refine and complete the design considering feedback from the public consultation and set a timetable for delivery of the project.

Following discussions with Planning, the granting of Planning Permission would take approximately five months. Time was needed to allow for the tendering of a company to undertake the detailed designs of the proposed path prior to the submission of a Planning Application. If the recommendations within the report were agreed, then it was hoped that construction of the path could start in Summer 2026 but was dependent on the completion of the proposed swimming pool.

If approval for the shared path was given, whether that was for a through route or using the swimming pool as a destination point, WCC would begin the process of installing Toucan Crossings on Bridge Street and Borrowell Lane, Kenilworth. This would involve its own consultation and approval. The consultation would not occur until the outcome of the shared path initiative was known. If the proposal of a shared path was rejected, WCC would not pursue the installation of the new crossings.

There were benefits of a shared path across Abbey Fields in isolation to the improved crossings, i.e. better accessibility for a greater number of people. However, it was considered essential that the construction of the crossings was integral to the potential approval of the shared path. The shared crossings would provide a safer alternative for navigating traffic and facilitate more readily the desired connectivity with other parts of Kenilworth.

It should be noted that the idea of a shared route running through Abbey Fields had been discussed since at least 2016, when WCC commissioned Sustrans (a national walking and cycling charity and custodian of the National Cycle Network) to undertake a feasibility study of a cycle route across Abbey Fields.

There was engagement with key stakeholders and although there was support for the proposal, it was not universal, and a decision was made not to move forward with the proposal.

Kenilworth Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2029 – Kenilworth Town Council
In relation to the proposal, this document stated: -

“Proposals to create new priority cycle routes to connect the town to the University of Warwick and to link in with other proposed routes such as

K2L particularly within the corridors indicated on the Policies Map, would be supported” (Policy KP9: Cycle Routes)

“New cycle routes should preferably be created off the highway on either dedicated routes or routes shared with pedestrians when it was safe to do so....” (Policy KP9: Cycle Routes)

“Linking through Abbey Fields was a contentious issue as it was difficult to find a suitable safe route without mixing pedestrians and cyclists though the route ranked four out of 10 projects in the Questionnaire. A route would only be supported subject to it being shown to be safe for pedestrians and cyclists and having a minimal impact upon heritage assets” (Paragraph 5.41)

Fields for the Future – Warwick District Council 2019

This was a public consultation organised by WDC for residents and community groups in Kenilworth used to inform the Management Plan for Abbey Fields. Question 11 of the survey asked, “Please give your thoughts on cycling in Abbey Fields?” Of 790 people that responded, 633 were in favour of cycling in Abbey Fields.

WCC Pre-Consultation to Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) – 2021

This provided the opportunity for residents to comment on where they thought new or improved cycling or walking facilities were needed. The survey showed strong support for an Abbey Fields cycle route.

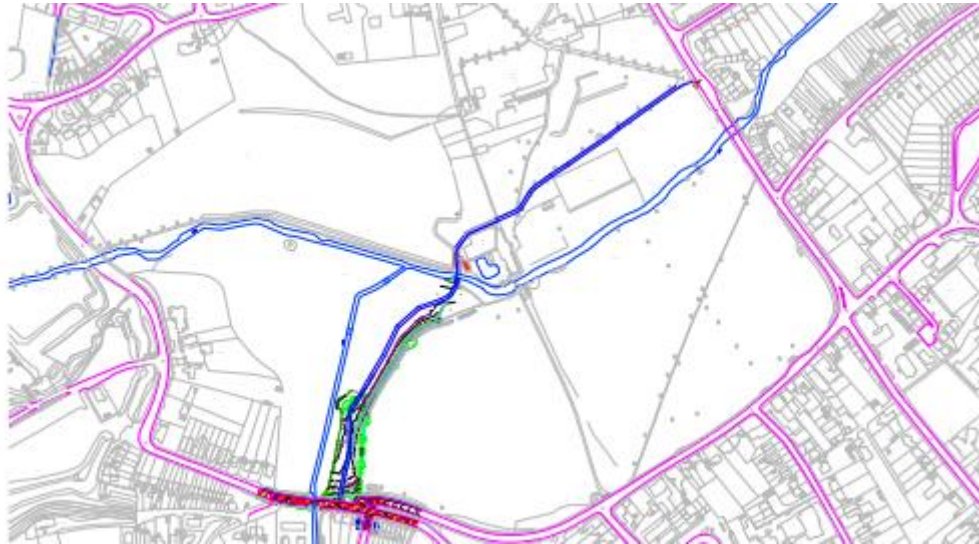
Consultation on draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – 2022.

This showed support for the Abbey Fields cycle route. Using criteria based on Department of Transport recommendations, the Abbey Fields cycle route was scored as “very high” priority.

The proposed route through Abbey Fields

The Council agreed the preferred route for a shared path across Abbey Fields at the WDC Cabinet meeting on 8 March 2023, with authorisation given to create some draft plans of the route and undertake a public consultation on the proposals.

The agreed preferred route (solid dark blue font) could be seen in the plan below, and the draft design drawings were contained in Appendix 1 to the report.



Although Abbey Fields was owned and maintained by Warwick District Council, the entirety of the Abbey Fields site was designated as Scheduled Monument by Historic England.

The proposed route could be separated into three main sections, namely:

- Borrowwell Lane to Finham Brook;
- Path around Swimming Pool; and
- Access road to Bridge Street

Photographs from the area of the proposed route of the path were attached in Appendix 2 to the report.

It was worth noting that out of the three sections, the only proposed new stretch of path would be between Borrowwell Lane and Finham Brook. The section around the swimming pool and the access road to Bridge Street were being constructed by the swimming pool contractors and would be built irrespective of whether the shared path initiative was approved.

If the initiative was approved, conversations would continue with colleagues involved in the swimming pool construction to understand the exact details and the proposals for any safety measures on the path to minimise any potential conflict.

As agreed in the WDC Cabinet Report presented on 8 March 2023, a six-week public consultation on the proposed route was undertaken between May and June 2025.

A company called PO'Sh Creative was procured to assist in the publicity of the consultation.

The Council invited electronic completion of the consultation questionnaire through its website or in person at six events held across the area. Paper copies could also be sent to individual addresses. Completed paper copies could either be posted back to WDC or handed in at Kenilworth Library or at one of the six face-to-face events.

A summary of the consultation was provided at paragraph 1.5 in the report, with results provided in Appendices 3 and 5 to the report.

The consultation prompted strong feelings for and against the details of the proposed route. The main concerns from opponents of the route focused on the potential conflict between the different users of the park, signage and enforcement, as well as the potential loss of the current ambience of the park and the opposition of cycling in the park in principle.

Equally, the advocates of the route said it was difficult to cycle across Kenilworth presently and the benefit of being able to cycle to the swimming pool.

The area of particular concern was where the path goes around the swimming pool and the conflict between the different user groups, children's play areas, reception to the swimming pool and the duck feeding area.

There had been ongoing liaison with the Chair(s) of the Friends of Abbey Fields Group in this process.

The responses to the questions involving the shared path section around the swimming pool were more nuanced and as not as statistically clear as the sections of the proposed path either side of the pool.

In addressing the key concerns from the consultation, Recommendation 2 required that WDC focused on the safety and signage needed for the section of the path immediately around the swimming pool. This could include signs, bollards, finger posts, and surface markings to ensure appropriate measures were implemented in the final design. This would involve working with WCC and Sustrans.

In terms of alternative options, the Cabinet could consider that none of the referenced routes were appropriate and that no further work should be undertaken on a shared route across Abbey Fields. The consequence of this decision would be the loss of the opportunity to encourage cycling and therefore reduce car journeys and pressures on car parking at Abbey Fields. Equality of opportunity would not be opened to people that used cycles as a mobility aid.

Another option could be that the shared cycle path terminated at the swimming pool. The swimming pool could act as the designation point for the two sections of shared path, so cyclists would have to dismount when they reach the swimming pool. This would reduce the potential for conflict between users and provide a safer space for vulnerable users, including children, the elderly etc. but it would limit connectivity with the wider Kenilworth area and less useful for commuting.

However, even if this scenario was agreed the "destination paths" could be congested in peak times, increasing the potential for conflict.

The Group Leaders and the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcomed the report and thanked officers for their work.

Councillor Williams then proposed the recommendations in the report.

Resolved that

- (1) the public response to the consultation and subject to recommendations (2) to (4) below be noted, and the construction of a shared footpath across Abbey Fields (set out in Appendix 1 to the report), in principle be agreed;
- (2) officers be authorised to proceed a design on this basis to be brought to the March 2026 WDC Cabinet Committee for approval of either
 - a) a single shared path across Abbey Fields with appropriate safety measures included; and
 - b) two destination shared paths that end at the new swimming pool, if sufficient safety measures cannot be designed to allow for a single shared path;
- (3) authority be delegated to the Strategic Director to: -
 - a) spend the allocated WDC funding from earmarked reserves and Section 106 Air Quality money towards the design and planning of the proposed shared path; and
 - b) include with the design phase: -
 - i. the potential of adding additional benches along the line of the existing pedestrian footpath referenced above;
 - ii. the options for cycle access around the controlled barrier on the swimming pool access road from Bridge Street, Kenilworth
 - iii. collaborate on the final design and location of the duck feeding area and any control measures deemed appropriate from the safety control measure work required for the design;
 - iv. prepare the appropriate planning applications, consent from Historic England and other regulatory consents/permissions to implement the proposal once approval from Cabinet of the design is given; and
 - v. proposals to address any revisions to the bye-laws within Abbey Fields;
- (4) Cabinet be minded to only provide final approval in March 2026 subject to confirmation from Warwickshire County Council (WCC) that the funding for the shared crossings on Bridge Street and Borrowell Lane

has been allocated and secured within the WCC budget; and

- (5) the confidential Appendix 6 to the report regarding the restrictive covenants relevant to Abbey Fields, be noted.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Williams.)
Forward Plan Reference 1,584

76. **Endorsement of the Warwickshire Community Safety Agreement 2025-2029**

The Cabinet considered a report from Community Protection. There was a duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and its associated 2007 regulations, for the county community safety strategy group (the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board (SWPB)) to prepare a Community Safety Agreement.

The 2025-29 Community Safety Agreement was prepared over the first half of 2025. As required by legislation, it was based on the four comprehensive Community Safety Partnership (CSP) strategic assessments undertaken during 2024-25 and set out how partner agencies in Warwickshire would work together to implement shared community safety priorities.

The agreement was presented to the SWPB on 24 June 2025 and was approved subject to formal sign off through partner agency governance processes. Subsequently, the Districts and Boroughs across Warwickshire were currently taking this through their respective decision-making processes.

The Community Safety Agreement was the umbrella strategy for community safety work in Warwickshire, setting out at a high level:

- the countywide priorities and cross-cutting themes;
- the groups responsible for implementing each of the priorities and their reporting structures;
- links to other strategic boards and plans; and
- information on how performance would be managed and assessed.

Regulation 9 of the Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007 set out that:

- i. Before the end of each year the county strategy group should prepare a community safety agreement for that year;
- ii. the community safety agreement should be based on the strategic assessments for that year prepared by the strategy groups for the areas in the county area;
- iii. the community safety agreement should identify—
 - the ways in which the responsible authorities in the county area might more effectively implement the priorities set out in these strategic assessments through coordinated or joint working; and
 - how the responsible authorities in the county area might otherwise reduce re-offending, crime and disorder, prevent and reduce serious violence or combat substance misuse through coordinated or joint working.

In Warwickshire, partners had agreed a process for a four-year cycle of strategic assessments, enabling a more strategic approach to long-term priorities to be taken. A Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MoRiLE) assessment was undertaken every two years to determine the risk posed across a range of crime types and issues and identify any emerging threats, and an annual overview of the Community Safety

Partnership (CSP) priorities was undertaken in line with the requirements set out in legislation.

The Community Safety Agreement and countywide priorities formed part of this four-year cycle but would be reviewed annually by the SWPB to ensure compliance with the legislation.

During 2024-25, comprehensive strategic assessments were prepared for each CSP in Warwickshire by the partnership Community Safety Analysts. These were presented to the CSP Boards in February and March 2025 and used to agree priorities for 2025-29. As set out in the legislation, these priorities had been used as the basis for the development of the refreshed CSA.

The priorities and cross-cutting themes shown within the agreement were as follows:



Once endorsed by all Districts and Boroughs, the Community Safety Agreement would be published on the Safe in Warwickshire website.

There were no alternative options because a Community Safety Agreement was a legal requirement.

Councillor Sinnott then proposed the recommendations in the report.

Resolved that in fulfilling its' role as a responsible authority, the Cabinet endorses the Countywide Community Safety Agreement 2025-2029.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Sinnott.)
Forward Plan Reference 1,616

77. Public and 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 items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the

Local Government (Access to Information)
(Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Minutes Numbers	Paragraph Numbers	Reason
78	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

78. Procurement Exercises over Good and Services Threshold

The Cabinet considered a report from Finance which sought approval to begin the procurement exercises identified, in line with the agreed Code of Procurement Practice (CoPP), with details set out in the confidential appendix to the report.

The report brought forward all proposed procurement exercises ready to be sourced, some of which formed key decisions as they were over the UK Goods & Services threshold; as well as information on exemption requests that required Cabinet approval and advisories on live procurement projects.

In March 2024, a gap was identified within procurement governance process at WDC which was clarified by Cabinet and Council to confirm that any proposed procurement activity above £150,000 needed to be considered by Cabinet.

These exercises were set out in the Confidential Appendix 1 to the report (due to the values associated and the Council not wanting to declare the anticipated budget) for consideration. These items and the reason for their procurement were set out within the appendix to the report, so as not to disclose the Council's position in respect of the anticipated cost. It should be noted that these exercises were early stages of the procurement process.

In February this year, the new Code of Procurement came into force which increased the threshold for Cabinet approval of 'Exemption to the CoPP' requests to the UK Goods & Services threshold. To facilitate these approvals, Finance were now including these requests within the report. Exemption forms should have been approved by relevant signatories as per the CoPP, prior to coming to Cabinet.

Exemption forms should be available as per Appendix 1 to the report.

In terms of alternative options, the Cabinet could decide not to approve some or all the identified procurement activities, however, some of these related to the provision of core or statutory services, and to pause or stop at this stage would significantly delay some of these activities where new contracts were required.

A confidential addendum was circulated prior to the meeting which advised on of the need for the recommendations to include reference to additional approvals.

Councillor Chilvers then proposed the recommendations in the report, subject to the amendment contained within the confidential addendum.

Resolved that

- (1) the commencement of the procurement exercises of the following be approved and provides key decision approval where indicated. Please view in conjunction with the Appendix 1 to the report, for the items listed below:
 - Temporary Recruitment via a neutral vendor
 - Microsoft Enterprise Agreement
 - Ventilation systems and Condensation control;
- (2) the commencement of the procurement exercises of the following, as set out in detail at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted:
 - None;
- (3) the award of contracts by exemption from the Code of Procurement Practice, as set out in detail at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted:
 - Postal Services;
- (4) the additional approvals as set out in the confidential addendum, be approved; and
- (5) the confidential appendix (Minute number83), be noted.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Chilvers.)
Forward Plan Reference 1,552

(At 6.58pm, public session was resumed for the vote on this item.)

79. **Public and 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 items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Minutes Numbers	Paragraph Numbers	Reason
80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Part 1

(Items upon which a decision by Council was required)

80. **The Acquisition of Twenty Dwellings at Goggbidge Lane, Tournament Fields, Warwick**

The recommendations in the report were approved.

Part 2

(Items upon which a decision by Council was not required)

81. **Acceptance of the surrender of the lease held between Warwick District Council and Holt Solutions (Just Inspire), Temperate House Restaurant, Jephson Gardens**

The recommendations in the report were approved.

82. **Kenilworth School Sites**

The recommendations in the report were approved.

83. **Confidential Appendix to Minute Number 77 – Procurement Exercises over Good and Services Threshold**

The confidential appendix was noted earlier in the meeting, when the substantial item was being discussed (Minute number 78).

84. **Confidential Appendix to Minute Number 76 – Abbey Fields Proposed Shared Footway and Cycleway**

The confidential appendix was noted.

85. **Confidential Minutes**

The confidential minutes of the meeting held 3 September 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

(The meeting ended at 7.36pm.)

CHAIR
27 November 2025