

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 15 January 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor J Blundell (Chair)

Councillor F Abbott	Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor N Akhtar	Councillor A Lucas
Councillor P Akhtar	Councillor P Male
Councillor R Ali	Councillor K Maton
Councillor A Andrews	Councillor T Mayer
Councillor R Auluck	Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor R Bailey	Councillor C Miks
Councillor S Bains	Councillor J Mutton
Councillor L Bigham	Councillor M Mutton
Councillor J Birdi	Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor R Brown	Councillor G Ridley
Councillor K Caan	Councillor E Ruane
Councillor J Clifford	Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor G Crookes	Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor G Duggins	Councillor P Seaman
Councillor L Harvard	Councillor B Singh
Councillor P Hetherton	Councillor R Singh
Councillor J Innes	Councillor D Skinner
Councillor B Kaur	Councillor T Skipper
Councillor L Kelly	Councillor H Sweet
Councillor D Kershaw	Councillor K Taylor
Councillor T Khan	Councillor R Thay
Councillor AS Khan	Councillor C Thomas
Councillor R Lakha	Councillor D Welsh
Councillor R Lancaster	Councillor G Williams
Councillor M Lapsa	

Honorary Alderman: Mrs H Fitzpatrick, Mrs J Wright

Apologies: Councillor D Gannon and S Walsh
Honorary Aldermen J Gazey and M Hammon

PUBLIC BUSINESS

84. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 December 2018

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 December 2018 were signed as a true record.

85. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to Minute 98 below headed "Land and buildings between Corporation St, Upper Well St, Lamb Street, Chapel Street and Bishop Street, Coventry, CV1 4AD - Lease re-gear", on the

grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of information defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and that in all of the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

86. **Coventry Good Citizen Award**

There was no Coventry Good Citizen Award.

87. **Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor**

New Year Honours

The Lord Mayor referred to awards made to the following Coventry citizens in the recent New Year's Honours List:

- **DAME** to Professor Madeleine Atkins CBE, former Vice Chancellor of Coventry University and Award of Merit recipient in 2013, for services to higher education.
- **OBE** to James Cooper for his voluntary political service in the West Midlands
- **MBE** to Roger Medwell for his services to the community
- **George Medal** to Richard Stanton for his gallantry in rescuing the young boys trapped in a cave in Thailand.

The Lord Mayor reported that, on behalf of the City Council, he had sent a letter of congratulations to all recipients.

88. **Petitions**

RESOLVED that the following petitions be referred to the appropriate City Council Bodies:

- (a) Requesting the Council to ban all lorries and vans from loading and unloading outside Coventry Turf & Landscaping, located on Avon Street. – 59 signatures, presented by Councillor K Caan on behalf of Councillor N Akhtar.
- (b) Requesting that St Christians Croft to be added to the residents parking scheme (C3) for St Christians Road etc. – 8 signatures, presented by Councillor R Bailey.
- (c) Requesting the Council to investigate the state of the uneven paving slabs on the footways and pavements running along either side of Derwent Road – 51 signatures, presented by Councillor J Birdi.
- (d) Requesting the Council to return the grit bin on Aspen Close as soon as possible to its original location – 13 signatures, presented by Councillor M Lapsa.

- (e) Following the tragic hit and run of Adeel Gul, residents of Allesley Old Road want urgent safety measures introduced to help reduce the speed of vehicles travelling along this road – 2081 signature, presented by Councillor L Kelly.**

89. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

90. The 2019/20 Council Tax Base Report

Further to Minute 92 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Place, which established the 2019/2020 Council Tax base for tax setting purposes.

The Council Tax base was the measure of the taxable capacity of an area for the purpose of calculating an authority's Council Tax. It represented the estimated number of Band D equivalent chargeable dwellings for the year. It also took into account the authority's estimated Council Tax collection rate.

The report also included details of recent legislative changes that allowed additional council tax premiums to be charged on long term empty properties. It included a recommendation that Council made full use of this flexibility and charged the maximum premium, on the basis that this would incentivise owners to bring empty properties back into use.

This report did not set the actual level of Council Tax in Coventry, this would be set by the Council at the meeting on the 19th February 2019.

RESOLVED that the City Council approve that, as permitted by The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018, the Council charges the following council tax premiums on long term empty properties:

- **From 1 April 2019 a council tax premium of 100 per cent will be applied to properties that have been empty and unfurnished for two years;**
- **From 1 April 2020 a council tax premium of 200 per cent will be applied to properties that have been empty and unfurnished for more than 5 years;**
- **From 1 April 2021 a council tax premium of 300 per cent will be applied to properties that have been empty and unfurnished for more than 10 years.**

91. LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Outcome of Peer Challenge

Further to Minute 97 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive, People, which provided details of the outcome of the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge. The full Feedback Report and the Council Response to Peer Team Recommendations were attached as Appendices to the report.

The LGA was the national voice of local government, working with Councils to support, promote and improve local government. A major part of the LGA support was the offer to each Council to have a Corporate Peer Challenge every four or five years.

In 2018 it was agreed that Coventry City Council would host an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge. The Peer Challenge took place from 9 to 12 October 2018. The visit focused on how we understand our place and set our priorities, our leadership and governance, financial planning, and our capacity to deliver on what we set out to achieve. These areas are considered by the LGA in all Local Authorities that they visit to conduct a Peer Challenge.

We also asked the Peer Team to look at our approach to housing and homelessness, our readiness for UK City of Culture 2021, how we make the most of social value in our capital projects and our One Coventry approach. These areas were specifically chosen on the basis that they would benefit from some external challenge and feedback on both current and future delivery plans.

Following the Peer Challenge visit, the Council had reflected on the Team's findings and suggestions in order to determine its response to the recommendations that had been made. It was the responsibility of the Extended and Corporate Leadership Teams to have oversight of, and accountability for, delivery of this work.

The Cabinet had agreed the recommendation of the Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee in relation to the outcome of the Peer Challenge that as well as being monitored through the One Coventry Change Board and Strategic Management Board, the improvement plan associated with the Peer Challenge was also monitored by Scrutiny on a regular basis next Municipal Year.

RESOLVED that the City Council note the contents of the Peer Challenge Team's Feedback Report and the associated Council Response document and support the work of the Extended and Corporate Leadership Teams response to recommendations made by the Peer Challenge Team.

92. **Land and buildings between Corporation St, Upper Well St, Lamb Street, Chapel Street and Bishop Street, Coventry, CV1 4AD - Lease re-gear**

Further to Minute 99 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Place, on proposals for the development of the land and buildings between Corporation Street, Upper Well Street, Lamb Street, Chapel Street and Bishop Street.

A corresponding private report was also submitted to the meeting setting out the commercially confidential matters of the proposals. (Minute 98 below refers.)

As part of the City's plans to host an outstanding UK City of Culture 2021 programme, promote Coventry's visitor economy and deliver its wider economic development agenda, Coventry City Council was committed to seeing new high quality hotel developments delivered within the city centre.

There was an opportunity to facilitate the delivery of a new 'boutique' hotel for the city, to be open and operational before 2021, through a proposal to be delivered by Far Gosford Developments Limited who were prepared to invest a significant amount of funding to refurbish and redevelop the vacant former Coventry Evening Telegraph buildings on Corporation Street. The proposed hotel site was situated within a wider 2.6 acre regeneration opportunity of which the Council was the freeholder of the land.

To safeguard the Council's position and the delivery of the overall development, Heads of Terms for a contract for sale and agreement for lease had been agreed which required Far Gosford Developments Limited to deliver a quality hotel and to pay Performance Security Deposits into an escrow account where monies were only then released and returned to the developer once certain hotel delivery milestones were met. The requirement for Performance Security Deposits had been secured to ensure that should the boutique hotel not be delivered, the Council was put in a position as if it had sold the other sites in isolation.

RESOLVED that the City Council accepts from Far Gosford Developments Limited the amount which represents the Open Market Value of Site 2 and 3 as Performance Security Deposits for the delivery of the hotel, such Performance Security Deposits to be released on satisfaction of the triggers as set out in the Heads of Terms.

93. **Appointments**

The Council considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Place, seeking approval to changes and appointments to the Council's Licensing and Regulatory Committee and Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5), the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Warwickshire County Council and to four outside bodies: the Bus Lane Adjudication Service Joint Committee; The Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company Limited - Shareholders' Panel; the Parking and Traffic Regulation Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee; and the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (Severn and Wye).

RESOLVED that the City Council:

(1) Appoints Councillor J Innes to the following council committees in place of Councillor P Hetherton with immediate effect:

- (a) Licensing and Regulatory Committee**
- (b) Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5).**

(2) Appoints Councillor J Innes to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Warwickshire County Council in place of Councillor Hetherton with immediate effect.

(3) Appoints Councillor P Hetherton as its representative on the following outside bodies in place of Councillor J Innes with immediate effect:

- (a) Bus Lane Adjudication Service Joint Committee**
- (b) Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company Limited - Shareholders' Panel**

**(c) Parking and Traffic Regulation Outside London Adjudication
Joint Committee
(d) Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (Severn and Wye)**

94. Question Time

Councillors K Caan, G Duggins, AS Khan, K Maton and C Thomas provided written answers to the questions set out in the Questions Booklet together with oral responses to supplementary questions put to them at the meeting.

The following Members answered oral questions put to them by other Members as set out below, together with supplementary questions on the same matters:

	Questions asked by	Question put to	Subject matter
1	Cllr G Williams	Cllr G Duggins	Staff sickness levels
2	Cllr P Male	Cllr K Maton	Seeking assurances in respect of asbestos in school buildings
3	Cllr G Crookes	Cllr P Hetherington and Cllr AS Khan	Legislation in respect of food labelling in takeaways
4	Cllr G Crookes	Cllr AS Khan	Carjacking crimes in Finham

95. Statements

- (a) The Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership, Councillor G Duggins made a Statement in respect of “Progress on the Combined Authority”.

Councillor G Ridley responded to the Statement.

- (b) The Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership, Councillor G Duggins made a Statement in respect of “JLR”.

Councillor G Ridley responded to the Statement.

96. Debate - Interim Statement on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights

The following Motion was moved by Councillor K Sandhu and seconded by Councillor R Lakha:

“This Council notes the recent interim statement, published on 16 November 2018, by the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Professor Philip Alston.

Professor Alston lays bare the misery of the impact of austerity on our communities and the political motivation. He writes “Austerity could easily have spared the poor, if the political will had existed to do so. Resources were available to the Treasury at the last budget that could have transformed the situation of millions of people living in poverty, but the political choice was made to fund tax cuts for the wealthy instead.”

“Government ministers were almost entirely dismissive, blaming political opponents for wanting to sabotage their work, or suggesting that the media didn’t

really understand the system and that Universal Credit was unfairly blamed for problems rooted in the old legacy system of benefits.”

The level of Government funding per household figure for Coventry has fallen by more than £850 between 2010/11 and 2018/19 which is a loss of funding per person of £390 thereby reducing our ability to protect our services and our citizens from the savagery of austerity.

Therefore this council calls upon the UK Government to adhere to UN Special Rapporteur’s conclusions within his interim statement:

1. The legislative recognition of social rights should be a central part of Brexit negotiations with social inclusion as a guiding principle of social policy
2. The UK should introduce a single measure of poverty and measure food security.
3. The government should initiate an expert assessment of the cumulative impact of tax and spending decisions since 2010 and prioritize the reversal of particularly regressive measures, including the benefit freeze, the two-child limit, the benefit cap, and the reduction of the housing benefit for under-occupied social rented housing.
4. The Government should ensure local governments have the funds needed to tackle poverty at the community level, and take varying needs and tax bases into account in the ongoing Fair Funding Review.
5. The Department of Work and Pensions should conduct an independent review of the effectiveness of reforms to welfare conditionality and sanctions introduced since 2012, and should immediately instruct its staff to explore more constructive and less punitive approaches to encouraging compliance.
6. The five week delay in receiving benefits under universal credit should be eliminated, separate payments should be made to different household members and weekly or fortnightly payments should be facilitated.
7. Transport, especially in rural areas, should be considered an essential service, equivalent to water and electricity, and the government should regulate the sector to the extent necessary to ensure that people living in rural areas are adequately served. Abandoning people to the private market in relation to a service that affects every dimension of their basic well-being is incompatible with human rights requirements.

As the country moves toward Brexit, the Government should adopt policies designed to ensure that the brunt of the resulting economic burden is not borne by its most vulnerable citizens.”

RESOLVED that the Motion, as set out above, be adopted.

Notes:

- (a) In accordance with the Constitution, a recorded vote was taken.
- (b) Councillors R Brown, T Sawdon and G Williams did not take part in the vote as they had left the meeting before the vote was taken.

The Councillors voting for and against the Motion were as follows:

<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Councillor F Abbott	Councillor A Andrews	
Councillor N Akhtar	Councillor R Bailey	
Councillor P Akhtar	Councillor J Birdi	
Councillor R Ali	Councillor G Crookes	
Councillor R Auluck	Councillor M Lapsa	
Councillor S Bains	Councillor J Lepoidevin	
Councillor L Bigham	Councillor P Male	
Councillor K Caan	Councillor T Mayer	
Councillor J Clifford	Councillor G Ridley	
Councillor G Duggins	Councillor D Skinner	
Councillor L Harvard	Councillor K Taylor	
Councillor P Hetherton		
Councillor J Innes		
Councillor B Kaur		
Councillor L Kelly		
Councillor D Kershaw		
Councillor A Khan		
Councillor T Khan		
Councillor R Lakha		
Councillor R Lancaster		
Councillor A Lucas		
Councillor J McNicholas		
Councillor K Maton		
Councillor C Miks		
Councillor J Mutton		
Councillor M Mutton		
Councillor J O'Boyle		
Councillor E Ruane		
Councillor K Sandhu		
Councillor P Seaman		
Councillor B Singh		
Councillor R Singh		
Councillor T Skipper		
Councillor H Sweet		
Councillor R Thay		
Councillor C Thomas		
Councillor D Welsh		

Result: Carried

For: 37

Against: 11

Abstentions: 0

97. **Debate - Review of Maintenance Contracts Levied Against Homeowners on New Developments**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor P Male and seconded by Councillor M Lapsa:

“This Council calls for a review of maintenance contracts levied against homeowners on new developments”.

The following amendment (additional wording in bold) was moved by Councillor E Ruane, seconded by Councillor B Kaur and, in accordance with the Constitution, accepted by Councillor P Male:

“This Council calls for a review of maintenance contracts levied against homeowners on new developments **and for greater transparency about how estate maintenance fees are spent. The Government should fully support Helen Goodman, Labour MP Private Members Bill, titled The Freehold Properties (Management Charges and Shared Facilities) Bill, which calls for a cap on estate maintenance fees, to give people the security of knowing prices cannot increase indefinitely. The Bill will introduce measures to ensure shared facilities are maintained to an adequate standard, heading off money for nothing culture of property companies and the Bill will make provision for the self-management of communal areas by resident groups if this is a route they wish to take**”.

RESOLVED that the Motion as set out below be unanimously adopted:

“**This Council calls for a review of maintenance contracts levied against homeowners on new developments and for greater transparency about how estate maintenance fees are spent. The Government should fully support Helen Goodman, Labour MP Private Members Bill, titled The Freehold Properties (Management Charges and Shared Facilities) Bill, which calls for a cap on estate maintenance fees, to give people the security of knowing prices cannot increase indefinitely. The Bill will introduce measures to ensure shared facilities are maintained to an adequate standard, heading off money for nothing culture of property companies and the Bill will make provision for the self-management of communal areas by resident groups if this is a route they wish to take**”.

PRIVATE BUSINESS

98. **Land and buildings between Corporation St, Upper Well St, Lamb Street, Chapel Street and Bishop Street, Coventry, CV1 4AD - Lease re-gear**

Further to Minute 92 above, the City Council considered a private report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Place, setting out the commercially confidential matters relating to the delivery of a new ‘boutique’ hotel for the City through the redevelopment of the vacant former Coventry Evening Telegraph buildings on Corporation Street, and the disposal of adjacent sites at Chapel Street, Lamb Street and Bishop Street, to deliver student accommodation.

RESOLVED that the City Council accept from Far Gosford Developments Limited the amount which represents the Open Market Value of Site 2 and 3 as Performance Security Deposits for the delivery of the hotel, such Performance Security Deposits to be released on satisfaction of the triggers as set out in the Heads of Terms.

(Meeting closed at 5.15 pm)

