

## COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COVENTRY

19<sup>th</sup> September 2006

### PRESENT

Lord Mayor (Councillor Ahmed)

Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Batten)

Councillor Adalat	Councillor Lakha
Councillor Arrowsmith	Councillor Mrs. Lancaster
Councillor Asif	Councillor Lee
Councillor Bains	Councillor Mrs. Lucas
Councillor Benefield	Councillor Ms. McKay
Councillor Mrs. Bigham	Councillor McNicholas
Councillor Blundell	Councillor Matchet
Councillor Charley	Councillor Mulhall
Councillor Chater	Councillor Mutton
Councillor Cliffe	Councillor H. Noonan
Councillor Clifford	Councillor M. Noonan
Councillor Crookes	Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Mrs. Dixon	Councillor Patton
Councillor Duggins	Councillor Miss. Reece
Councillor Field	Councillor Ridge
Councillor Foster	Councillor Ridley
Councillor Gazey	Councillor Sawdon
Councillor Mrs. Griffin	Councillor Skinner
Councillor Harrison	Councillor Skipper
Councillor Harvard	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Ms. Hunter	Councillor Townshend
Councillor Mrs. Johnson	Councillor Mrs. Waters
Councillor Kelly	Councillor Williams
Councillor Kelsey	Councillor Windsor

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Harper  
Councillor Maton  
Councillor Nellist  
Councillor Mrs. Rutter

### 30. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2006 were signed as a true record.

### 31. Death of Former Alderman Maurice Goodwin

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of Maurice Goodwin, a former Alderman who had served on the City Council for 18 years.

Members noted that a letter of condolence had been sent on behalf of the City Council to Mrs Goodwin and her family.

32. Petitions

RESOLVED that the following petitions be referred to the appropriate City Council body or external organisation:

- (a) **Objection to Road Humps for Blackberry Lane** - 196 signatures, presented by Councillor Mrs Waters.
- (b) **State of Cul-de-sac in Butts Lane** - 8 signatures, presented by Councillor Gazey.
- (c) **Anti-Social Behaviour in the Copthorne/Brownhill Green Area** - 32 signatures, presented by Councillor Gazey.
- (d) **Parking Issues at Poole Road** - 21 signatures, presented by Councillor Williams.
- (e) **Removal of the Goal Posts at the Back of Kingsley Terrace** - 41 signatures, presented by Councillor Kelly.
- (f) **Traffic Calming Measures at Ringwood Highway** - 57 signatures, presented by Councillor Patton.
- (g) **Illegal Plying for Hire in Coventry** - 248 signatures presented by Councillor Mrs Dixon.
- (h) **Parking Issues in Longford Road** - 40 signatures, presented by Councillor Mrs Bigham.
- (i) **Keep Clear Sign for Maplebeck Close** - 7 signatures, submitted by Councillor Mrs Rutter.
- (j) **Gate for Alleyway at Holmsdale Road** - 12 signatures, presented by Councillor Adalat.
- (k) **Objection to the Planning Application concerning Juniper, Harvest Hill Lane** - 78 signatures, presented by Councillor Gazey.
- (l) **Benches at the Corner of Blackwell Road and Foleshill Road** - 58 signatures, presented by Councillor Adalat.
- (m) **Play Area for Children at the Grassed Area at the Bottom of Dogberry Close, Flecknose Street and Mary Slessor Street** - 500 signatures, presented by Councillor Chater.
- (n) **Adoption of and Lack of Services at Daimler Green** - 364 signatures, presented by Councillor Skipper.
- (o) **Alleyways and Paths at Jonathan Road** - 41 signatures, presented by Councillor Kelly.

33. Declaration of Interest

Councillor Townshend declared a prejudicial interest in Minute 34(12) below. Having regard to the National Code of Government Conduct and to the City Council's Constitution, he left the meeting during the consideration of this item.

#### 34. Question Time

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

<b>Question Asked By</b>	<b>Question Put To</b>	<b>Subject Matter</b>
1. Councillor Skipper	Councillor O'Neill	Money Held as Bonds Taken from Developers Awaiting the Adoption of Estates within the City
2. Councillor Duggins	Councillor Mrs Johnson	Coventry Direct - Financial Situation
3. Councillor Windsor	Councillor Taylor	Meeting Involving Councillor Taylor, the St. Michael's Ward Councillors and Residents of Cygnet Court and Orwell Court
4. Councillor Windsor	Councillor H Noonan	Awareness of the Needs of People with Learning and Physical Disabilities
5. Councillor McNicholas	Councillor Foster	Parking Enforcement Policy
6. Councillor Sawdon	Councillor Blundell	Review of the Children and Young People's Service and Enhanced Youth Inspection
7. Councillor Field	Councillor Foster	Flooding in the City Following Recent Storms
8. Councillor Patton	Councillor Foster	Flooding at Manor Farm Estate
9. Councillor Kelly	Councillor Blundell	Recent GCSE Results for the City
10. Councillor Kelly	Councillor Blundell	Review of Respite Care Provision for Disabled Children and Young People in Coventry – Financial Position
11. Councillor Kelly	Councillor Blundell	Implications of New Legislation Relating to Child Car Restraints for the City Council
12. Councillor Mutton	Councillor Taylor	Statement on a Medical Research Centre at the Ansty Site

**RESOLVED** that in relation to questions 1, 2, and 11 above, a written response be submitted to all members of the Council in accordance with paragraph 4.1.24 of the Constitution.

#### 35. Community Cohesion Strategy

Further to Minute 37/06 of Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Chief Executive which sought approval for a Community Cohesion Strategy for the Council.

The report set out the background, which indicated that a cohesive community could be described as a community that was in a state of well-being, harmony and stability. The concept included race equality and good race relations, social inclusion or respect, and had strong links to the equality and diversity agenda. It went beyond this,

however, and also addressed integration, belonging and acceptance, including issues related to race, faith, gender, disability, age and sexual orientation.

The following national definition had been developed by the Government, the Local Government Association and the Commission for Racial Equality:

“A cohesive community is one where there is:

- A common vision and sense of belonging for all communities
- The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds.”

The City Council had a long history of working to promote good community relations and race equality, and was working with the Coventry Partnership and local organisations, people and communities across the City to ensure that Coventry continued to be a cohesive city.

The concept of community cohesion and the national definition of community cohesion was already embedded in the Coventry Community Plan and the City Council's Corporate Plan. The strategic approach of both the Coventry Partnership and the City Council was to ensure that community cohesion was "mainstreamed" as the issues it addressed encompassed everything the Council did.

The City Council's Vision, agreed in June 2005, was for "...Coventry to be a growing accessible city where people choose to live, work and be educated and businesses choose to invest". This Vision was supported by seven corporate objectives, one of which was "to actively promote equality so that people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities". It was underpinned by five key values, one of which was to "value diversity, social justice and community cohesion".

The Coventry Partnership was developing a community cohesion protocol and a framework for partnership activity, along with guidance on community cohesion for organisations in the City, including those in the private, voluntary and community sectors, so that they could develop a strategic approach to community cohesion for their own organisations. The City Council's community cohesion strategy had been developed within the Partnership's draft protocol and framework.

The City Council's community cohesion strategy set out four strategic objectives based on the national definition of community cohesion. Each strategic objective had a set of performance measures and targets that would aim to assist the Council to measure progress in developing a cohesive city at a strategic level. Many of the Council's activities already contributed to the development of a cohesive city. The strategy brought these into one place so that the Council could:

- Identify and consider together Council strategies and activities that were key to each strategic objective;

- Set out how these were being reported and managed;
- Identify planned activity and any further activity that was required;
- Monitor and manage the collective impact of this activity through a set of key community cohesion indicators.

The strategy had been produced following consultation with local communities and organisations and using national guidance and advice. It included activities that were covered by all the Cabinet portfolios and these would be reported on and managed as set out in Appendix A of the Strategy.

The community cohesion strategy committed the City Council to promote community cohesion and to consider this in the delivery of its services and all its activities. As such, it had implications for everything the Council did. Specific activities were set out in detail in Appendix A of the strategy.

As regards legal implications, the concept of community cohesion included race equality, as well as issues of faith, gender, disability, age and sexual orientation. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 placed a general duty on all public authorities to promote race equality. In addition, the local authority had statutory duties to promote and uphold diversity and equal opportunities under the Disability Discrimination Act, the Sex Discrimination Act and the forthcoming age discrimination legislation.

Consideration of community cohesion would be included in the Council's Equality Impact Assessment process and applied to all the Council's functions and policies through a three-year rolling programme of activity which was set out in the Council's Race Equality Scheme.

Progress would be reported to the Cabinet Member (Finance, Procurement and Value for Money) as the Cabinet Member with overall responsibility for community cohesion. The Cabinet Member would also be responsible for identifying additional activity that needed to be undertaken by the Council to promote community cohesion. Progress reports would also be subject to scrutiny and the relevant Scrutiny Board would be asked to consider how the scrutiny role should be developed in relation to community cohesion.

Community cohesion was a complex concept and it was widely recognised that it was difficult to measure and manage. The Government had produced a set of performance indicators, and a number of these had been included in the measures chosen for this strategy, although, where better local indicators existed, these had been used as an alternative. Benchmarks and targets were being developed now that the latest Household Survey information was available. The City Council would look to develop better indicators through its membership of the national Institute of Community Cohesion and by using best practice from elsewhere as it developed.

Once adopted, the community cohesion strategy would be delivered through a wide range of Council and partnership activities that would be reported on and managed as set out in Appendix A of the strategy. The expected outcomes of the strategy were that the Council would be better able to:

- Develop a sense of belonging and involvement for Coventry's communities;

- Appreciate and positively value the diversity of Coventry people's backgrounds and circumstances;
- Ensure that people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities;
- Develop strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Progress against these four strategic objectives of the strategy would be monitored through a number of performance indicators and associated annual targets which were set out in Appendix B of the strategy.

**RESOLVED that the City Council approve the draft Community Cohesion Strategy attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted.**

### 36. **Housing and Planning Delivery Grant – Consultation Paper**

Further to Minute 80/06 of Cabinet, the City Council considered a joint report of the Director of City Development and the Director of Community Services, which sought approval of a response to a consultation paper "Housing and Planning Delivery Grant" which was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in July 2006. It was noted that the report had also been considered by Scrutiny Board (3) at their meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2006 (Minute 18/06 refers)

The Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) was launched by the Government in 2003 to help local authorities deal with the implementation of the new planning system. It was always seen as a time-limited measure with 2007/08 being the final year. The Government intended to replace it by a new Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) and it had invited comments on its proposals. The Government was also consulting on the criteria for allocating the final year of the PDG and consultation for both documents was due to end on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

The proposed HPDG stemmed from a recommendation in the Barker Review of Housing Supply that the Government should consider ways of providing incentives to local authorities to meet housing growth targets. The Government had accepted this recommendation and stated that, as a first step, it wanted to better support areas which were delivering high numbers of new homes. It saw the aims of the HPDG as strengthening the incentive for local authorities to respond to local housing pressures; supporting increased housing delivery to meet local needs; encouraging local authorities to become proactively involved in housing delivery; returning the benefits of growth to the community through new funding streams; and providing incentives for efficient and effective planning procedures.

Although the Government accepted that local authorities could not facilitate housing in isolation from others, especially the development industry, it believed that it was housing delivery that should be targeted for incentives, rather than other aspects such as processing planning applications. It proposed to provide funding as an un-hypothecated grant, providing "direct benefits to those communities that accommodate new housing growth". The housing element would go to "bodies that directly influence the delivery of new housing developments", such as local planning authorities and urban development corporations, and the planning element would go to plan-making bodies, such as local planning authorities and regional planning bodies.

The Government believed that the scheme should be targeted at those areas that

were responding to high levels of housing demand and that local authorities "that fail to adequately meet the demand for new housing" should not be rewarded. Consequently, it intended "to introduce a floor level that needs to be reached before any incentive will be granted." Thus, a minimum target would have to be reached before consideration for financial reward. The report submitted detailed the Government's proposals under the headings of Performance Improvement Reward; Rewarding Challenging Targets; Areas of High or Low Demand; Measurement of Delivery; and Resources for Planning.

It was noted that in the three years of Planning Delivery Grant, the City Council had received just over £1m. The criteria for allocating the Planning Delivery Grant had been based on a combination of housing delivery; plan-making; the handling of planning applications; and e-planning. For 2007/08, these were broadly similar, but with more weight given to planning application performance and housing delivery. It was further noted that it would be difficult to forecast the effect on Coventry's allocation, but some of the comments made in Appendix 2 of the report submitted reflected employees' concerns. For instance, performance would be based on the collection of certain monitoring data and systems would need to be set up for those not currently collected.

Appendix 1 of the report submitted detailed the 11 questions asked within the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant consultation paper, along with the draft responses on behalf of the City Council. Appendix 2 of the report submitted provided a draft response to the Planning Delivery Grant 2007/08 Consultation Paper.

**RESOLVED that the City Council approve the responses to the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant consultation paper.**

### **37. Audit Committee Terms of Reference and Appointment of Audit Sub-Group**

Further to Minute 16/06 of Scrutiny Board (1) the City Council considered a report of the Head of Corporate Policy which set out revised terms of reference for Scrutiny Board (1) in relation to its audit responsibilities and proposed the establishment of a sub-group of Scrutiny Board (1) to carry out this work. Approval was now sought for the revised terms of reference.

The report indicated that the Audit Commission and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy had both highlighted the need for Local Authorities to place more emphasis on audit work in order to improve and strengthen procedures and operations in relation to financial management, financial reporting, financial standing, internal control and value for money. Although Scrutiny Board (1) was already designated as the Council's Audit Committee, the terms of reference for this area of work had been agreed some years ago, before the latest CIPFA Guidance had been issued, it had therefore been proposed and agreed that Scrutiny Board (1) adopt a revised set of terms of reference for its audit work as appended to the report submitted which took into account the latest guidance from CIPFA.

In order to allow more time to be devoted to this aspect of work and to allow the Board to concentrate on any other areas of work within its remit, the Scrutiny Board had established a sub-group to consider audit issues comprised of six elected members, three from the Conservative Group, two from the Labour Group and one from the Minority Groups. It had also been agreed that three named substitute elected members be identified, one from each of the groups represented, so that if a sub-group member were unable to attend the named substitute would attend in their place, this would allow a wider group of elected members to gain knowledge of audit issues. The report detailed the arrangements for meetings of the Sub-Group.

**RESOLVED that the City Council approve the revised terms of reference for Scrutiny Board (1) as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.**

**38. Annual Report of Scrutiny Board 1 as the Council's Audit Committee**

The City Council considered a report of Scrutiny Board (1) which detailed the activity of the Board on its work as the Council's Audit Committee during 2005/06. As part of its role, the Board was required to report annually to the City Council. Information was provided on internal audit activity; external audit activity; other audit activity; and proposals for audit issues for the year ahead.

In relation to internal audit, reference was made to the reports submitted to the Board during the year which gave a summary of key findings from a sample of high profile audit work carried out; gave assurances that management had implemented agreed audit recommendations on a timely basis; and provided updates on developments aimed at enhancing the quality of the service provided to the Council. In March 2006 approval had been given to the Internal Operational Plan for 2005/2006. It continued to focus resources away from a traditional finance focus to a more risk based approach with clear links to the Council's objectives contained in the Corporate Plan.

Regarding external audit, reference was made to the reports received from the Council's previous external auditors, Price Waterhouse Coopers and the new external auditors, The Audit Commission.

The establishment of an Audit Sub-Group to examine audit issues was outlined which would provide a greater emphasis on this area of work (Minute 37 above refers).

**RESOLVED that the City Council note the activity of Scrutiny Board 1 during 2005/2006 as the Council's Audit Committee.**

**39. Appointments to Outside Bodies**

The Council considered a report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services which sought to appoint representatives to the University of Warwick Board of the Institute of Education and the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative Partnership Board and to amend the Council's appointment to the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership Limited.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Mutton, seconded by Councillor Duggins and lost that Councillor O'Neill replace Councillor H Noonan as the representative to take up the place formerly allocated to Councillor Taylor on the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership Board.

**RESOLVED that the City Council:**

**1) Nominate Councillor Blundell (Cabinet Member (Children, Learning and Young People)) and Ruth Snow (Head of Services for Schools) to the two places allocated to the City Council on the University of Warwick Board of the Institute of Education with Councillor Blundell being identified as the Lead Member for the purpose of reporting back to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.**

**2) Nominate Councillor Arrowsmith (Cabinet Member (Urban Regeneration and Regional Planning)), Councillor Ridge (Chair of Scrutiny Board (3)) and Councillor Batten (Shadow Member for Regeneration) to the three places allocated**



**to elected members on the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative with Councillor Arrowsmith being identified as the Lead Member for the purpose of reporting back to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.**

**3) Nominate Councillor H Noonan to take up the place formerly allocated to Councillor Taylor on the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership Board with Councillor Arrowsmith being identified as the Lead Member for the purpose of reporting back to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.**

(NOTE: The meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.)