

**ANNUAL MEETING OF  
THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COVENTRY**

**27<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

**PRESENT**

Lord Mayor (Councillor Matchet)

Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Harrison)

Councillor Adalat	Councillor Lancaster
Councillor Andrews	Councillor Lapsa
Councillor Arrowsmith	Councillor Lee
Councillor Asif	Councillor McNicholas
Councillor Auluck	Councillor Mulhall
Councillor Bailey	Councillor J. Mutton
Councillor Bains	Councillor Mrs. M. Mutton
Councillor Mrs. Bigham	Councillor Noonan
Councillor Blundell	Councillor O'Boyle
Councillor Charley	Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Cliffe	Councillor Miss Reece
Councillor Clifford	Councillor Ridge
Councillor Crookes	Councillor Ridley
Councillor Mrs. Dixon	Councillor Ruane
Councillor Duggins	Councillor Sawdon
Councillor Field	Councillor Skinner
Councillor Foster	Councillor Skipper
Councillor Gazey	Councillor Smith
Councillor Harvard	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Mrs. Johnson	Councillor Townshend
Councillor Dr. Mrs. Kelly	Councillor Mrs. Waters
Councillor Khan	Councillor Williams
Councillor Lakha	

Apologies:- Councillor Chater  
Councillor Lucas  
Councillor Sweet

**13. Non-Election of Councillors**

The Lord Mayor referred to the following Councillors who either did not stand or were not re-elected at the local elections on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2008:

**Shabbir Ahmed** was a member of the City Council for 11 years representing Foleshill and St. Michael's Wards. He was Lord Mayor during 2006/2007.

**Dave Batten** was a member of the City Council for 18 years representing Westwood Ward. He was Lord Mayor during 2007/2008.

**Derek Benefield** was a member of the City Council for 8 years representing Upper Stoke Ward.

**Joan Griffin** was a member of the City Council for 5 years representing Whoberley Ward Ward.

**Kate Hunter** was a member of the City Council for 8 years representing Radford Ward.

**Brian Patton** was a member of the City Council for 11 years representing Henley Ward.

Members expressed their thanks to the former Councillors for their contribution to the work of the City Council and to wish them well for the future.

#### 14. **Death of Stephen Timbrell**

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of Mr. Stephen Timbrell, Headteacher of Blue Coat Church of England School.

Members noted that a letter of condolence had been sent on behalf of the City Council to the Acting Head and Mr. Timbrell's family passing on the Council's sincerest condolences.

#### 15. **Earthquake in China**

The Lord Mayor reported that following the devastation of the earthquake in China earlier this month, he had, on behalf of the City of Coventry, written to Her Excellency the Chinese Ambassador to the United Kingdom, expressing condolences for those who lost their lives and thoughts to the thousands whose homes and livelihoods had been destroyed.

#### 16. **Departure of Stella Manzie CBE**

The Lord Mayor informed Members that Stella Manzie was attending her last Council Meeting before leaving the City Council to take up the role as Director General – Finance and Corporate Services for the Scottish Government, based in Edinburgh.

Members paid tribute to Stella's achievements during her six years with the City Council and wished her well in her new role.

#### 17. **Coventry Local Area Agreement 2008/9 – 2010/2011**

Further to Minutes 215/07 and 3/08 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Chief Executive which recommended the agreement of the draft Coventry Local Area Agreement indicators and targets for submission to central government.

The report pointed out that, at the time of its despatch on the 12th May, 2008, negotiations were still in progress and, accordingly, the final version of Appendix A to the report (the Coventry Local Area Agreement Priorities Indicators and Targets), being the final negotiated position with Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM), was circulated to the Cabinet and all Council members on the 16th May, 2008.

In terms of background, the report indicated that the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 required every local authority area to develop a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) setting out the vision and priorities for the local area and required a new Local Area Agreement (LAA) to be developed in all strategic local authority areas.

*"Coventry – the next twenty years"*, Coventry's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), builds upon the previous Coventry Community Plan, sets out the city's long-term outcomes and short-term priorities and was agreed and formally adopted in March 2008 (Minute 215/07 refers). Coventry's first three-year local area agreement, one of the very first to be negotiated, came to an end in March 2008.

A Local Area Agreement was an agreement between central government and the local authority and its partners about the priorities for the local area, as expressed in the LAA targets. A range of public agencies have a "duty to co-operate" with each other when developing the LAA targets and a "duty to have regard" to help deliver these targets. The Local Area Agreement would be key to the future performance management of the Council and the Coventry Partnership.

The legislation and guidance sets out the requirement for all new Local Area Agreements to include up to 35 local priorities to be measured by choosing from the 198 indicators in the new National Indicator Set (NIS) for local authorities and local authority partnerships. Final technical guidance on the National Indicator Set was published on the 1st April, 2008, and a number of the new indicators would not now be introduced until 2009/10.

The selection of indicators and the targets for each indicator must be undertaken through negotiations between central government, represented by the Government Office, and the local authority and partners, balancing the delivery of the local sustainable community strategy on the one hand with the delivery of national priorities, as expressed by the new National Indicator Set on the other.

A further sixteen mandatory indicators from the National Indicator Set relating primarily to educational achievement were also to be included in each LAA and the targets for these were negotiated separately through the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

The indicators in the Local Area Agreement were the only indicators from the new National Indicator Set that required the Council and its partners to agree specific targets with central government. However, the new Comprehensive Area Assessment of the Council and local partners would include the consideration of local performance on all of the 198 indicators in the Set.

All draft local area agreements were required to be submitted to central government by the beginning of June and were expected to be signed off by Ministers by the end of that month.

As regards the development of the Coventry Local Area Agreement, the report indicated that the above-mentioned SCS was developed by the Coventry Partnership and the Council and benefited from a comprehensive and thorough consultation process led by the Coventry Partnership. It was extensively amended as a result of the comments

received – many from the voluntary and community sectors – and the short-term priorities, in particular, were changed to reflect the consultation process.

As indicated above, Coventry's new LAA was based upon the short-term priorities that were set out in the SCS. Indicators were selected from the NIS that reflected and best measured Coventry's local priorities, and their inclusion was negotiated by the Coventry Partnership with GOWM. GOWM had been tasked with ensuring that Coventry's LAA includes indicators that also reflect national priorities and areas that the Government wish to see improved.

At its meeting on the 11th March, 2008 (Minute 215/07 refers), the Cabinet had endorsed an initial set of indicators for the LAA as the basis for target-setting negotiations with central government. Since then, further detailed information and analysis had been produced for each indicator to inform the target-setting process, including baseline and comparative data, expected performance projections and an assessment of current activity.

Care had been taken to ensure that the indicators selected were robust and measurable and make sense together as a local set. Equality and cohesion issues would be addressed through all the indicators where it was appropriate and priorities that require partnership working have received particular attention. The Government had decided that a number of NIS indicators would not be measured until 2009/10 – this affects seven of the thirty-five indicators that have been selected for the Coventry LAA. As with the previous LAA, perception measures have been largely avoided as they do not lend themselves to robust management of performance over three years or target-setting. The two exceptions to this were indicators on anti-social behaviour and decision-making.

Detailed negotiations have been taking place between the Council, local partners and GOWM to agree indicators and targets for the draft LAA based on local evidence and national performance priorities. The table at appendix A to the report submitted sets out the indicators and targets that have been negotiated through this process and these were subject to formal approval by the Council and then by central government Ministers.

The indicators and targets were set out under the most relevant theme and appropriate priority of the Coventry SCS. However, it should be noted that the development of the SCS had highlighted the cross-cutting nature of many of the priorities in the strategy and the activities that were undertaken to address them and this was also true of the LAA priorities and indicators. The effective treatment of drug-users, for example, was both a health and community safety priority, graduate retention would be dependent upon a range of activity under several of the priorities and a reduction of the number of children travelling to school by car would have a positive impact on congestion, carbon emissions, obesity and, according to research, attainment at school.

The Coventry Partnership Board endorsed the proposed indicators and targets for the draft LAA at their meeting on the 8th May, 2008.

Following formal approval by full council, the draft LAA was statutorily required to be submitted to central government by the 30th May, 2008 and was expected to be signed off by Ministers by the end of June 2008. Once agreed, the LAA would run for three years - from April 2008 to March 2011, with an annual refresh for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

A robust action plan would be developed for each of the LAA indicators involving all relevant partners who would work together to deliver these plans over the next three

years, including those agencies who have a "duty to co-operate". These would be included with the relevant Coventry Partnership theme-group's plans and partner organisations' delivery plans – including the Council's Corporate Plan. Progress on the LAA as a whole would be performance managed within the Council by the Cabinet and Scrutiny, with partners through the Local Public Service Board and the Coventry Partnership Board.

The report summarised the various implications of the LAA. As regards finance, it indicated that the Government had allocated funding for a national reward grant fund for the delivery of new LAAs although this was relatively small and it was not yet clear how this would be allocated. A new Area Based Grant, directly allocated to local authorities annually from April 2008, was made up from a number of specific ring-fenced grants previously received by the Council and other partners, with the expectation that this would be used locally to improve performance and achieve priority outcomes. The LAA would directly influence how this funding was allocated.

The Cabinet noted that the LAA was a key decision and that, due to the need to publish the Forward Plan of Key Decisions prior to the calendar of meetings being approved, it was not possible to publish this item as required by legislation.

As a result, in accordance with paragraph 4.2.16 of the Council's Constitution, Councillor Crookes, Deputy Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, attended the meeting of the Cabinet and agreed that this matter could be considered as an urgent item, as to delay its consideration in order for the key decision to be published would mean that the Local Area Agreement could not be approved before the deadline of the 30th May, 2008.

The Cabinet decided to agree the draft Coventry Local Area Agreement indicators and targets (set out in appendix A to the report submitted) and to recommend this to full council for formal adoption.

In addition, at Councillor Nellist's suggestion, the Cabinet asked for a briefing note to be provided prior to the Council's extraordinary meeting on the 27th May, 2008, with further information about the housing target in the indicators against the background of the level of social housing currently available in the city.

With regard to recommendation 2.2 of the report, Councillor Nellist proposed the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Windsor and lost:

At the end of 2.2 add "but also to ask for a review of the Government's methodology, and a revision of the Council's affordable housing policy, to increase those targets set out in NI 155."

**RESOLVED that the City Council formally adopt the draft Coventry Local Area Agreement indicators and targets (set out in Appendix A to the report submitted to the meeting of the Council) for submission to central government.**

(Meeting Closed: 6.00 p.m.)