

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COVENTRY

17th March 2009

PRESENT

Lord Mayor (Councillor Matchet)

Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Harrison)

Councillor Adalat	Councillor Lee
Councillor Andrews	Councillor Mrs. Lucas
Councillor Arrowsmith	Councillor Maton
Councillor Asif	Councillor Mulhall
Councillor Auluck	Councillor J Mutton
Councillor Bailey	Councillor Mrs Mutton
Councillor Mrs Bigham	Councillor Nellist
Councillor Blundell	Councillor Noonan
Councillor Charley	Councillor O'Boyle
Councillor Chater	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 Foster	Councillor Skinner
Councillor Gazey	Councillor Skipper
Councillor Harvard	Councillor Smith
Councillor Mrs Johnson	Councillor Mrs Sweet
Councillor Kelly	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Kelsey	Councillor Townshend
Councillor Khan	Councillor Mrs. Waters
Councillor Lakha	Councillor Williams
Councillor Lancaster	Councillor Windsor
Councillor Lapsa	

Apologies: Councillor Bains
Councillor Field
Councillor McNicholas

114. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2009 were signed as a true record.

115. Coventry Good Citizen Award

On behalf of the Council, the Lord Mayor and His Honour Judge Hodson, Honorary Recorder, presented John Moore with the Citizen of the Month Award for March 2009. His Citation read: -

“John Moore has given long, consistent and significant voluntary service in the development of Coventry's image in overseas relations.

He has been a member of the Coventry Association of International Friends (CAIF) for nearly 25 years, being secretary for many years, organising two-way links and visits with some of Coventry's twinned cities including Dresden (*of particular note in this year the 50th anniversary of the twinning of these two cities*) Volgograd and Kiel, and friendship cities Meschede and Vannes.

He works constantly to uphold the city's reputation as a centre for peace and reconciliation throughout the world, through his untiring, patient and calm encouragement of everyone he meets. He is also a dedicated campaigner in community relations involving Coventry's ethnic groups.

John's service to the city has been outstanding over a long and sustained period and he fully deserves to be called a Good Citizen of Coventry.”

116. Gordon Wright

The Lord Mayor referred to the death of former Councillor Gordon Wright.

Gordon served on the Council from 1997-2000 representing Foleshill Ward. He was also consort in 1999/2000 to his wife and Lord Mayor, Joan Wright.

Members noted that a letter had been sent to Joan expressing the Council's sincere condolences.

117. Frederick Ross Black

The Lord Mayor referred to the death of former Councillor Frederick Ross Black (known as Eric).

Eric served on the Council as a member of the Labour Group between 1965 and 1968, representing Henley Ward.

Members noted that a letter had been sent to Eric's family expressing the Council's sincere condolences.

118. Petitions

RESOLVED that the following petition be referred to the appropriate City Council body:

Petition against the closure of Wyken Youth Centre – 115 signatures, presented by Councillor Mrs. Sweet

119. Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared interests in the matters referred to in the minutes indicated. The relevant minutes, and recorded decisions, also record where appropriate, the actions that the Members decided to take at the meeting indicated, having regard to the National Code of Local Government Conduct and the City Council's Constitution:

Interest in Recommendations

Personal

Member	Minute Number
Councillor Crookes	123/08

Prejudicial

Member	Minute Number
Councillor Gazey	123/08

120. Code of Corporate Governance

Further to Minute 37/08 of the Standards Committee, the Council considered a report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services which sought approval to the adoption of the proposed Coventry City Council Code of Governance, as set out in the Appendix to the report.

The Council noted that the report had previously been considered by the Audit Sub-Group and that a briefing note detailing the outcome of their consideration was also circulated and considered by the Standards Committee in reaching their decision. The Audit Sub-Group had requested that the inclusion of elected Members in the delegation arrangements proposed in recommendation 2.2 would provide a stronger level of oversight and governance and therefore recommended that that recommendation be amended by the insertion of the words shown in italics, so that it reads as follows:

"The City Council is recommended to adopt the proposed Coventry City Council Code of Governance and to delegate authority to the Head of Democratic Services, *in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Audit Sub-Group (or its successor body)*, to make any technical changes to the Code to ensure that it is kept up to date".

The Local Code had been prepared to meet the requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework. The report detailed the framework and the proposed Coventry City Council Code of Governance which would become a key element of the Council's governance arrangements and the Annual Governance.

RESOLVED that the City Council adopts the proposed Coventry City Council Code of Governance and delegates authority to the Head of Democratic Services, *in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Audit Sub-*

Group (or its successor body), to make any technical changes to the Code to ensure that it is kept up to date".

121. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution – Protocol for Dealing with “If Necessary” Council Meetings

Further to Minute 38/08 of the Standards Committee, the Council considered a joint report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services and the Director of Finance and Legal Services which outlined the proposed changes to the Constitution in relation to the procedural matters detailed in Part 8.

Prior to the start of each Municipal Year, Group Leaders were consulted on the proposed dates for Council Meetings. The dates follow a regular pattern each year and were arranged to ensure that the Council meets any statutory deadlines, for example the setting of the Council Tax and approval of the Statement of Accounts.

For a number of years, it had been the practice to identify two Council Meetings as "if necessary" in the Municipal Calendar. One of these meetings was at the end of March, the other being the first or second week of July. In the case of the March meeting, this was to ensure that there was an opportunity to consider any items that may require Council approval prior to the pre-election period. In the case of the July meeting, it is to ensure that there is an opportunity to consider any items that require Council approval prior to the start of the Summer holidays.

Whilst there was a provision in the Constitution to call Extraordinary Council Meetings at short notice should there be a need, it had been considered better practice and less inconvenient to Councillors to have these two Council meetings pencilled in the diary, rather than risking the need to call an Extraordinary Meeting at short notice.

In practice, neither the late March or early July dates had been used in recent years as there had been a regular meeting of the Council either one or two weeks prior to these dates. Where there had been no formal business which required approval to consider, it had been the practice, following consultation with the Lord Mayor and the Leader of the Council, to cancel the "if necessary" meetings.

Following consideration of this issue by the Constitution Working Group, which had a cross-party representation, it was proposed to insert the following protocol in Part 8.9 of the City Council's Constitution:-

"Where there is no formal Council Business to consider and approve (i.e. Recommendations or items for Consideration), in the annual Municipal Calendar may be cancelled, but only following consultation with the Lord Mayor and the Leader of the Council".

Concerns had been expressed that where these "if necessary" meetings were cancelled, there was a long period of time between the end of June and September Council meetings for the consideration of petitions. However, once a petition was received, a copy was immediately forwarded to the relevant Directorate who start to investigate the issue and prepare a report for the appropriate meeting. In reality, it can often take two months for the matter to be investigated and a report prepared. In addition, petitions do not have to be presented to a Council meeting, and could be submitted directly to the appropriate Cabinet Member or Committee.

RESOLVED that the City Council approves the insertion of the following protocol in Part 8.9 of the City Council's Constitution:-

"Where there is no formal Council Business to consider and approve (i.e. Recommendations or items for Consideration), the Council Meetings identified as "if necessary" in the annual Municipal Calendar may be cancelled, but only following consultation with the Lord Mayor and the Leader of the Council."

122. Proposed Amendment to the Constitution – Independent Audit Committee

Further to Minute 39/08 of the Standards Committee, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services which outlined a proposed change in respect of the Council's Audit Committee. The proposals were made in light of:

- An evaluation of recommended practice including:
 - CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) guidance entitled "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government".
 - CIPFA guidance entitled "Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Government".
 - The Use of Resources Assessment produced by the Audit Commission.
- The results of a benchmarking exercise with 15 other local authorities around the operation of their Audit Committees.

As a result of guidance issued by CIPFA entitled "Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Government" in 2005, local authorities were encouraged to review their arrangements in respect of Audit Committees to ensure that this function was given an appropriate priority, reflecting good governance arrangements. At that time, the role of the Audit Committee formed part of the remit of Scrutiny Board (1) and a decision was made to create a separate sub group to allow member time to be focused on audit related issues.

Since this decision was taken, there was clear evidence that the Audit Sub Group had provided effective challenge on areas around financial reporting, internal control and audit issues. Despite this progress, however, Coventry City Council still does not follow recommended practice in this area and therefore existing arrangements need to be reconsidered.

The recommended practice highlighted three critical aspects:-

- The Audit Committee should be a "stand alone" Committee of the Council
- The Chair of the Audit Committee should be free of executive or scrutiny functions
- Members should be sufficiently independent of any of the other key Committees of the Council

The Constitution Working Group considered this issue at its meeting on the 27th January, 2009. Based on consideration of this issue, including the recommended practice, the Constitution Working Group's view was that the Council should create and Independent Audit Committee.

It was therefore proposed to amend the Constitution by removing responsibility for audit arrangements from Scrutiny Board (1) (in the form of Scrutiny Board (1) – Audit Sub-Group) and setting up an Audit Committee from the start of the Municipal Year 2009/10, which would report directly to Full Council.

The Appendix to the report detailed the proposed Constitution and Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee with effect from May 2009.

The Council noted that, at the meeting of the Standards Committee, the appointment of independent members to the Audit Committee was discussed and felt that this should be worked towards and reviewed in the future.

RESOLVED that the City Council amends paragraphs 2.6.7.7 and 4.5.2.3 and Part 6 of the Constitution relating to the functions of Scrutiny Board (1) – Audit Sub-Group as follows:-

- (1) That responsibility for audit arrangements be removed from Scrutiny Board (1) (in the form of Scrutiny Board (1) – Audit Sub-Group) and that an Audit Committee be established from the start of the Municipal Year 2009/10, which would report directly to Full Council, based on the Constitution and terms of reference as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.**
- (2) That the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Audit Committee should be free of executive functions and/ or not be a Chair/Deputy Chair of any of the Scrutiny Boards.**
- (3) That with the exception of members of the Cabinet and the roles described in (2) above, the Council does not apply the recommendation that members of the Audit Committee should be sufficiently independent of the other key Committees of the Council.**
- (4) That the Council defers the decision as to whether it should appoint independent members to the Audit Committee until after the new arrangements have been reviewed in 12 months time.**

123. Core Strategy: Proposed Submission Document

Further to Minute 186/08 of the Cabinet, the Council considered a report of the Director of City Development which sought approval to publish the Core Strategy Submission Document. The Council noted that a copy of the full document had been provided to all Members on a CD Rom.

The report indicated that the Core Strategy sets out the vision, objectives and strategic policies for the future development of the City over the next twenty years. It would be a major part of Coventry's Local Development Framework (LDF) and be the spatial expression of a combination of the Sustainable Community Strategy, regional planning policy and national planning policy. The Core Strategy and other parts of the LDF would form the statutory development plan for the City, along with the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands.

The Core Strategy had been prepared under the reformed planning system, introduced through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ("the 2004 Act"). The main differences from previous systems were that councils had to present, more explicitly than before, the vision for an area; the issues affecting an area; the different ways of addressing these issues and be able to evidence these matters. The reformed system also emphasised the importance of consultation, particularly through "frontloading" engagement with the community, including stakeholders and partners.

The Submission Document recommended for approval continued a process that started in 2006. A series of consultation reports, identifying issues and options, and extensive technical studies, led to the publication of the "Emerging Strategy" in November 2008 and provided a further opportunity for the community, partners and stakeholders to contribute to the final proposals.

The Local Development Framework also included a City Centre Area Action Plan, and an "Emerging Strategy" was expected to be presented to Cabinet in September 2009. This would build on the work so far in various different quarters of the City Centre and in particular the Jerde masterplan and the Draft Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document, which the Planning Committee had approved for public consultation in February 2009.

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) was also now a part of the Local Development Framework. In giving approval to the West Midlands RSS in 2004, the Minister had asked for a partial review of the RSS to take place. Phase 1 of this review (relating to the Black Country) had been completed and incorporated into the RSS. The Cabinet noted that phase 2, dealing with housing, employment, centres, waste and transport had reached the Examination in Public stage, which would begin in April 2009. Part 3 would deal with Rural Renaissance; Site for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople; Culture, Sport and Tourism; Environment and Minerals.

The RSS Phase Two Preferred Option incorporated the Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Forum Strategy that focused growth in the Major Urban Areas and on Coventry and a North South Corridor. It set targets for growth between 2006 and 2026 for the Strategic City Centre for both retailing (150,000 sq m) and office development (minimum of 250,000 sq m). It stated that Coventry should maintain a 5-year rolling supply of at least 82 hectares of land for employment. The table at 3.7 of the report submitted demonstrated how it was proposed to distribute growth in the sub region. In this context, it was acknowledged that it might be necessary to meet the requirements for Coventry in part through allocations by the adjoining authorities in their Core Strategies.

It was noted at the meeting of the Council and considered by the Cabinet that over the period of the preparation of the Core Strategy, many studies had been undertaken to understand the issues and the implications of the Core Strategy. Appendix 1 to the report provided a summary of this evidence base, which identified infrastructure constraints and requirements. This included consideration of the transport infrastructure that might be required, particularly to reinforce connections along the north south corridor. The focus recommended was to improve rail and bus connections, but also acknowledged that works may be required around junction 3 of the M6 to make the A444 a through route. It was also recognised that a red route would provide relief to the ring road.

The most recent stage of consultation on the Core Strategy – the Emerging Strategy – took place in November and December 2008. The report considered a range of options for the future development of the City and set out the preferred approach to

strategy and policy without detailing specific policies. Representations were listed in Appendix 3 of the report submitted, together with responses. Just over 80 representations related directly to the Emerging Strategy

The report indicated that it was difficult to reach broad conclusions about the outcome of the consultation, as representations tended to cover specific matters and did not lend themselves to an assessment of trends or to a consensus of views, which could easily be summarised. The detailed responses to the representations were set out in Appendix 2. It was noted that, where possible, changes that were consistent with the principles of the proposed strategy had been made.

In June 2008, the Government published a revised Planning Policy Statement 12 (Local Spatial Planning), and the Regulations, which made further changes to the procedures for plan preparation. The version of the plan dealt with by an independent Inspector at an Examination is called the "Submission Document". However, before a Council submits a document, it must "publish" what it intends to submit. The basic premise was that the "Proposed Submission Document" would be what the Council sees as its final plan.

The document would be published in order for representations (relating to issues of soundness) to be made and these would then be taken into account at the Examination. Various kinds of consultation intended to engage with organisations, residents and businesses must have already taken place and the publication/submission stage basically moves from engagement to the opportunity to make formal representations.

The Regulations require a local authority to allow a six-week period in which to receive representations on the plan. These representations should be on matters of "soundness"; whether the plan was based on robust evidence and was the most appropriate strategy; whether the plan would be deliverable; and whether it was consistent with national policy.

It was proposed that, when representations on the Proposed Submission Document had been collated, a further report would be prepared for Cabinet, requesting approval to submit the Core Strategy, with any necessary amendments to the Secretary of State, who would then appoint an inspector to conduct an independent examination.

The report indicated that, when the Core Strategy was eventually submitted, the Regulations stated that it should be accompanied by the sustainability report; the submission proposals map; a statement covering the processes and outcomes of the "front-loading" consultation stages; and a statement summarising the main issues raised at the publication stage. The independent examination process formally begins when a plan is submitted.

Council noted that the Cabinet also considered a number of petitions in relation to the Core Strategy, which had been submitted by Councillors Mrs Dixon, Field and Mrs Johnson, who spoke in support of the petitions. Mr Cruise, Mr Spencer and Mr Patton, petition spokespersons in relation to a number of the petitions, also spoke at the meeting on behalf of the petitioners. Ms Baker and Mr O'Neill, spokespersons in respect of two of the petitions were also invited to the meeting but were unable to attend.

At the meeting of the Cabinet, The Director of City Development pointed out in each case, how the Submission Document responded to the petitions.

In respect of the petition referred to in paragraph 3.22 of the report submitted, the Cabinet noted that, prior to the meeting, Councillor Gazey indicated that he wished to withdraw this petition from consideration on the basis that, since its submission, considerable work had been undertaken which dealt with the objection raised at the time.

At the meeting of the Cabinet it was also noted that the report had been considered the previous day by Scrutiny Board 3 and that a briefing note outlining their decision had been circulated to the Cabinet prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED that, after due consideration of the options and proposals contained in the report and matters referred to at the meeting, the City Council:-

- (1) Approve the Proposed Submission Document for Coventry's Core Strategy.**
- (2) Approve its publication for a period of statutory consultation.**
- (3) Authorise the Director of City Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member (City Development), to make minor amendments to the Core Strategy, where this is necessary to correct any errors and aid clarity.**

124. City Centre Precinct Masterplan

Further to Minute 187/08 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of City Development, which sought the adoption of the overarching principles and the final masterplan created by Jerde, as a "statement of the City's intent" regarding the future regeneration of the Precinct. The Council noted that key images from the appendices to the report had been displayed before the meeting for the consideration of members.

It was acknowledged that Coventry had always been seen as a city of innovation, invention and cultural diversity, which in the context of city centres was highlighted by being the first City in Europe to have a pedestrianised retail precinct in 1958.

However, for some time, Coventry City Centre's existing central shopping area had not been performing to its full potential. The environment of the Precinct, its design and the size and shape of retail units were now no longer suitable for modern 21st century retailing. The situation was highlighted by Coventry's continuing decline in its position within the Javelin Venturscore retail ranking indices for the UK, which listed the most successful retail centres in the country. Since 2006, the City's retail ranking has fallen from 43rd to 52nd, substantially under-representing Coventry's position as the 11th largest City in the UK. The downward trend in the City's retail ranking reflects the increasing attractiveness of other competing retail centres and the loss of retail spend (the Coventry pound) to these shopping centres, weakening the City's economy in real and proportional terms.

The under performance of Coventry's City Centre had also been recognised in the West Midlands region by the Regional Assembly which, through the Regional Spatial Strategy phase 2 revision 2007 (part of the national planning policy), had identified Coventry as a location in the region that should grow significantly, with the City Centre developing an additional 140,000 sq m of new comparison retail space and some 250,000 sq m of office space between now and 2026.

The economic importance of the City Centre to Coventry and Warwickshire and the West Midlands region as a whole was also recognised through the Regional Funding Allocation mechanism to central Government, where the City Centre was identified as one of only twenty Impact Investment Locations within the region, a recognition of the importance of the City Centre to the reduction of the £10bn Gross Value Added gap for the West Midlands region.

Clearly, a thriving and successful City Centre is of paramount importance to the future of Coventry. Successful regeneration and inward investment in the City had seen a number of national organisations deciding to relocate in Coventry and this must continue over the coming years. The weakness of Coventry's current retail offer needs to be tackled in order to ensure Coventry can retain the investment it has already attracted and continue to attract new investment, particularly in the current uncertain economic climate.

As a result of these drivers, the Council has been developing a number of new approaches over the past year to ensure a coherent, sustainable and collaborative framework that would help the City continue to move forward.

Recognising that a successful City Centre was more than a thriving retail sector, the structure and governance for the whole of the City Centre had been revisited, with the City Centre now being grouped into ten separate geographic "quarters", of which the precinct was the essential one. In order to assist Coventry's response to its failing retail offer, coupled with the new physical and economic challenges the City faces, a retail masterplan for the precinct quarter was vital to assist with planning the required change and attract new investment. A robust masterplan would help to unlock the tremendous potential of creativity, innovation and diversity the City has to offer, revitalising the retail heart of the centre as well as ensuring that the Precinct would become the pivotal element around which the other quarters of the redefined City Centre, Friargate, Coventry University and Swanswell would revolve and connect into.

The need for a retail-based precinct masterplan had also been recognised by the other major landowners in the City Centre. This recognition led to the creation of a public/private initiative between the four major land and property owning organisations in the City. These four organisations and the City Council joined together and agreed to equally fund a joint masterplan. It was noted that government growth monies provided the City Council's contribution, along with the reallocation of existing resources already allocated to City Centre development.

The report indicated that, in January 2008, the first phase of the consultation process took place. From the outset, the Council and its partners had been clear that the people of Coventry should play a key role in developing plans for the City Centre and ensuring the masterplan was sensitive to the needs and wishes of local people. Unusually, therefore the Council sought the views of people without any preconceived plans or drawings - asking people to tell the Council what they liked and disliked about the current City Centre and what they wanted to see retained and changed. Thanks to the support of the local media, who played an important part in raising awareness about the campaign and encouraged a lively local debate about the future of the City Centre, the nationally recognised and award winning campaign saw the generation of substantial positive coverage within the media during the consultation period between January and March 2008. More importantly, more than 1,200 took part in the consultation. In addition, Council employees spoke to more than 1,000 local people, organisations and interest groups. All the comments were then refined and distilled into 10 key principles to guide

development, which formed the design brief challenge for Jerde's masterplan to respond to.

Apart from the valuable feedback, it also showed Coventry residents' passion and enthusiasm for their City and its future. Overwhelmingly, people wanted to see change, but wanted change to happen sensitively and with an understanding of the City's heritage. Residents were realistic about what needed to be done, but encouraged the Council to take a bold approach in developing the masterplan.

Local residents were also forthright about the most disliked feature of the City Centre being the Broadgate canopy. Council employees undertook detailed negotiations with the owners of the Cathedral Lanes shopping centre as a result of this feedback and the canopy was taken down in early December 2008.

In developing the principles of the masterplan, Jerde not only worked to understand the historic background of the City, its individual needs and challenges but also looked to the future aspirations of the social and economic basis upon which the City should evolve. After six months of work, they presented their draft masterplan in September 2008. Again, the public interest and engagement in the draft masterplan was significant, and resulted in lively debate across the City during the six week consultation period.

The numerous, wide and varied range of groups and individuals which the consultation reached was listed at Appendix B of the report submitted. The Cabinet noted that the quality and inclusive nature of this second phase of the consultation had also been recognised nationally with the Council being requested by Department of Communities and Local Government to provide details of the campaign for use as a good practice study.

The report submitted summarised the responses to the draft masterplan, in terms of what consultees liked and disliked about the proposals. All the responses to the consultation process were collated and forwarded to Jerde who, having considered the comments and views, amended the plans accordingly. This produced the plan/principles being presented in the final masterplan.

The plans and images which form the masterplan proposal were only indicative and illustrated how the original principles created from public comment could be implemented in a physical form and formed a benchmark against which future detailed proposals for the future of the Precinct could be judged by the people of Coventry. Due to the timeframe over which the masterplan would exist, it would require flexibility to respond to the ever-changing physical requirements of the occupiers. For this reason, it would be essential that the 10 principles are a key element. The robust principles, along with the most favoured parts of the Jerde's interpretation of them, would form the parameters on which the suitability of potential development partners could be judged and against which future planning applications could be considered.

The report indicated that the key components of the Jerde masterplan to be adopted were the new Coventry Market to have a circular trading floor; the interpretation of the River Sherbourne as a surface level water feature; the 'Central Arena' as a focal point of the city centre; a larger, better connected, retail circulation route around the centre, improving pedestrian flows; retention of key architectural buildings in the Upper Precinct; increased green space; statement buildings, strategically located, providing Coventry with nationally recognisable structures of quality; and a more varied mix of uses in the centre.

The adoption of these favoured elements of the masterplan and the ten underpinning principles would create a "statement of the city's intent" providing a clear indication and guide to developers and investors alike of the way in which the Council wants the City to develop. It would also provide clear guidance for the planning process, which could formally adopt the plan as it progresses through its adoption process.

It was recognised that, although the Council's adoption of the masterplan would formally end the Coventry Collaboration Plan, it would be essential that the momentum of the masterplan process be maintained. Employees intend to proceed to develop an Implementation Plan for submission to Cabinet mid 2009, including a phasing programme, which would identify options on how the delivery of the new precinct could be implemented. This would indicate where the redevelopment of the City Centre could start and which of the property interests the Council would anticipate requiring first. This would provide a framework for the developers and investors to bring forward their individual plans for the development of their existing assets in a structured and logical way.

The Council noted that, in addition to the Implementation Plan, the Cabinet noted that Council employees in conjunction with City Centre Managers, CV One and the Regional Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands, would create a short to medium term 'meantime' strategy to help manage and maintain the City Centre's maximum trading potential during the development phases. A key element of this work would enable employees to calculate the impact of the proposal upon the short and medium term financial plan for the Council's property income.

The Council also noted that prior to the meeting of the Cabinet, the report had been considered by Scrutiny Board 3 and that a briefing note outlining their decision had been circulated.

RESOLVED that, after due consideration of the options and proposals contained in the report and matters referred to at the meeting, the City Council:-

- (1) Adopt, as a "statement of the City's intent", the ten guiding principles detailed in Schedule A, and the eight key components of the final Jerde masterplan outlined in paragraph 4.2.2 of the report submitted, upon which the 15 year revitalisation of the precinct element of the City Centre should be based.**
- (2) Support, in principle, the need for the Council's Compulsory Purchase Order powers to be used to assist with the delivery of the precinct developments, subject to receiving a future detailed report presenting an acceptable scheme and with costs underwritten by the developer.**

125. Refresh of the Coventry Local Area Agreement

Further to Minute 189/08 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which sought agreement for amendments to the Coventry Local Area Agreement for submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Submitted to the meeting of the Council was a revised Appendix 1 to the report,

being the final draft of the refreshed Local Area Agreement priorities, indicators and targets.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 required every local authority area to develop a Sustainable Community Strategy setting out the vision and priorities for the local area and to agree a new Local Area Agreement with central Government. The Government expects Local Area Agreements to balance the delivery of the local priorities on the one hand with the delivery of national priorities, as expressed by the Government's new national indicator set for local government and its partners, on the other.

The Coventry Local Area Agreement was endorsed by the Coventry Partnership Board at their meeting on 8th May 2008, approved by the City Council at its meeting on 27th May 2008, and signed on behalf of the Government by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 30th June 2008.

The Coventry Local Area Agreement (LAA) was based on local priorities that local people and communities think important such as priorities around employment, skills, health, housing, community safety and the environment. The agreement was produced through negotiations between the Coventry Partnership, including the City Council, and central Government and sets out the priorities, indicators and targets that have been agreed.

The Local Area Agreement would run for three years from April 2008 to March 2011 and included 35 indicators from the national indicator set. Targets for 28 of these were agreed for the three years, with the exception of NI 112, under 18 conception rates, for which targets have been agreed for the first two years only.

In addition, the Local Area Agreement included 16 mandatory indicators for children and young people related to early years and children's educational attainment. These were negotiated through a separate process with the Department for Children Families and Schools, with targets for these indicators set annually.

Every Local Area Agreement had to be the subject of an annual "review and refresh" by central Government to assess progress and change targets where it is considered necessary. There had also been an adjustment of some of the baseline data that was used in the original target negotiations.

The 2009 "refresh" has taken place within the context of the developing economic recession and the process had been led by the Government Offices on behalf of the range of departments responsible for LAA indicators, with appropriate local partners from the Coventry Partnership, and the refreshed Local Area Agreement was considered by the Local Public Service Board at its meeting on 25th February 2009.

At this relatively early stage, much of the information required to assess progress on the three year LAA was not available and only 16 of the 35 indicators had performance data available at the half-year point. It had also been difficult to predict future trends in the current uncertain economic climate and the Government was proposing to "freeze" nine economic indicators. This means that targets would not be renegotiated for these indicators in 2009 but they would not be included within the overall assessment of progress for the awarding of LAA reward grant.

The Coventry LAA has seven indicators, which were due to be introduced in April

2009. One of these, NI 24, satisfaction with the way the police and local Council deal with anti-social behaviour, has now been removed from the national indicator set. Targets for the remaining six indicators had been negotiated with central Government. It was not proposed to change any of the other priorities and indicators in the LAA although changes to a number of the targets for some of these indicators were proposed and had been negotiated by the relevant partner organisations with central Government and these were set out in appendix A.

At the meeting of the Cabinet it was noted that mandatory targets for children and young people in the LAA were being reduced from the original 16 to 10 indicators to reflect the fact that testing at Key stage 3 was no longer taking place. The next year's targets for these indicators would be negotiated directly with the Department for Children, Families and Schools.

Two of the targets in the Coventry Local Area Agreement that relate to worklessness and skills (NI 152 working age people on out of work benefits and NI 164 proportion of the working age population with Level 3 skills) may be included with the proposed Multi-Area Agreement for Employment and Skills for the City Region of Birmingham, Coventry and the Black Country.

It was also noted that four of the Coventry LAA indicators had been "frozen" and would not be renegotiated as part of this refresh this year. These indicators are: NI 152 working age people on out of work benefits; NI 154 net additional homes; NI 155 affordable housing; and NI 171 new business registration rate.

Council also noted that the Cabinet also considered a briefing note outlining the decision of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at its meeting on 4th March 2009, which had been circulated prior to the Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED that, after due consideration of the options and proposals contained in the report and matters referred to at the meeting, the City Council adopt the revised Coventry Local Area Agreement indicators and targets set out in appendix A of the report submitted.

126. Multi-Area Agreement on Employment and Skills

Further to Minute 190/08 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which sought endorsement of the draft Multi Area Agreement on Employment and Skills document for submission by the City Region of Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country and its partners to central Government.

The Council noted that the report submitted to them differed from the previous reports to Scrutiny and the Cabinet as it had been amended to reflect the latest Multi-Area Agreement (MAA) document at Appendix 1.

The Council has a statutory duty to develop a Local Area Agreement (LAA) with local partners and to agree this with central Government. The Coventry Local Area Agreement was endorsed by the Coventry Partnership Board at their meeting on 8th May 2008, approved by the Council at its meeting on 27th May 2008, and signed on behalf of the Government by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 30th June 2008.

The Coventry Local Area Agreement was based on local priorities that local people and communities think important, such as priorities around employment, skills, health, housing, community safety and the environment. At the meeting of the Cabinet it was noted that the LAA was currently being revised or "refreshed" through negotiations with central Government.

The Government had identified that some economic issues would be addressed most effectively at a sub-regional basis to reflect local economic geography and labour markets that were not necessarily reflected by local authority boundaries and was encouraging local authorities to tackle issues together through Multi-Area Agreements (MAAs).

Multi Area Agreements would reflect shared local priorities at a sub-regional level and were intended to complement Local Area Agreements and not add an additional layer of targets for local authorities entering into them. The first "wave" of Multi-Area Agreements were agreed early this year.

For the last two years, Coventry has been one of the partners in a City Strategy Pathfinder Programme with the other six Metropolitan District Councils in the City Region of Birmingham, Coventry and the Black Country, Telford and Wrekin Unitary Authority and other partners including JobCentre Plus; the Learning and Skills Council and local businesses.

The City Strategy aimed to reduce unemployment and improve skills in the most deprived wards across the City Region and had been described as a "de-facto" Multi Area Agreement, as the partners worked successfully together to co-ordinate activity across the sub-region to achieve shared targets to increase employment and skills. A number of mainstream funding streams were brought together, along with some additional Government funding for the pathfinders, to support this approach.

Key features of the City Strategy approach were the development of a single offer for clients and employers within the target area with aims of both getting local people into jobs at the same time as providing skills training and employer support. This included the production of Neighbourhood Employment and Skills Plans for each of the wards in the City Region covered by the pathfinder and the development of an Employers' Board – which in Coventry's case encompassed Warwickshire to reflect its labour market.

It was proposed that the current successful City Strategy pathfinder programme be developed into a formal four-year sub-regional Multi-Area Agreement with central Government. The MAA would cover the eight City Strategy local authorities: Coventry; Birmingham; Solihull; Sandwell; Dudley; Walsall; Wolverhampton and Telford. The Cabinet noted that, importantly, Warwickshire County Council would be collaborating with the development of the MAA.

The aim of the MAA would be to deliver increasing numbers of people in sustainable employment within the City Region and this would be achieved by removing a number of barriers; inflexibilities and inconsistencies in the way that services were currently being delivered and to delegate decision-making currently made at a national level to the local partners.

The MAA partners would aim to ensure that all residents were provided with the support to allow them to fully participate in the labour market; sustainable employment opportunities were available for all; and a supply of appropriately skilled labour would be in

place to meet current and future employer demand and to increase productivity. It was acknowledged that the current economic climate and constraints in the way that employment and skills services were delivered would mean that this would be a difficult challenge. The report detailed the ways in which the partners would work to achieve their aims. The report submitted also outlined the specific additional powers that were required for the MAA, which included joint commissioning with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It was noted that the proposed Multi-Area Agreement was dependant on these specific powers being devolved by Government to the City Region level and, if these were not granted, then the MAA would not be agreed by the sub-regional partners. Negotiations were still underway between the sub-regional partners and Government departments about the MAA.

The MAA had been built on the partners' LAA targets and would be included within the MAA so that performance was not being managed and inspected twice. Partners would sign up to five employment and skills targets at a City Region level and, in view of the current uncertain economic position, targets would be reviewed on an annual basis.

Overall governance of the Multi-Area Agreement would sit with the City Region Growth and Prosperity Board, of which Coventry was a member. Local governance mechanisms would include an Employment and Skills Board for Coventry (including Warwickshire), which was made up of a range of employers and representatives from local authorities, JobCentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council. It would be linked to the Coventry Partnership.

An Employment and Skills Strategic Management Board would be responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the MAA and would be made up of chairs from the four Employment and Skills Boards in the City Region and two local authority leaders, along with the Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus regional directors and one local authority Chief Executive (up to 2010). After 2010, the latter three ex-officio places on the Board would be allocated to the Jobcentre Plus, Skills Funding Agency and Young People's Learning Agency Regional Directors to reflect the new organisational landscape.

It was proposed that Coventry City Council should become a partner in a Multi-Area Agreement for employment and skills being proposed by the City Region of Birmingham, Coventry and the Black Country and endorse the draft document attached at appendix 1 of the report for submission to central Government. It was noted that the MAA would only be agreed with central Government if the additional specific powers requested were given to the City Region.

It was expected that the Multi-Area Agreements would be likely to be agreed and signed by Ministers in June 2009, following further negotiations between the partners and central Government. The Cabinet noted that, if the Council did not take part in the Multi-Area Agreement, priorities on employment and skills would continue to be included in the Coventry Local Area Agreement. Coventry would not take part in programmes agreed through the MAA but would continue to work locally with JobCentre Plus and the Local Learning and Skills Council under the organisational arrangements that were agreed nationally.

The Council noted that the Cabinet also considered a briefing note outlining the decision of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at its meeting on 4th March 2009, which had been circulated prior to the Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED that, after due consideration of the options and proposals

contained in the report and matters referred to at the meeting, the City Council endorse the Multi Area Agreement on Employment and Skills document, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report submitted.

127. Question Time

The appropriate Members provided a written response to all 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:

Number	Question Asked By	Question Put To	Subject Matter
1	Councillor Windsor	Councillor Taylor	Support for Early Day Motion Before Parliament against closure of Post Offices
2	Councillor Townshend	Councillor Foster	Employment Tribunal/Employment Appeal Tribunal and associated costs
3	Councillor Windsor	Councillor Foster	Whitefriars tenants and housing benefits
4	Councillor Windsor	Councillor Cliffe	Re-ordering of Planning Committee Agenda
5	Councillor Windsor	Councillor Lee	Coventry Homefinder Scheme
6	Councillor Windsor	Councillor Noonan	Parking Permits
7	Councillor Nellist	Councillor Ridge	Whitefriars rent increases and report to Scrutiny Co-Ordination Committee
8	Councillor Nellist	Councillor Skinner	Opportunity to question Whitefriars nominees by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

9	Councillor Nellist	Councillor Skinner	Whitefriars Rent Increases
10	Councillor Mutton	Councillor Noonan	Pedestrian Crossing at Willenhall Lane
11	Councillor O'Boyle	Councillor Ridley	Car Park charges
12	Councillor Lapsa	Councillor Noonan	Congratulation to Gritting Teams
13	Councillor Windsor	Councillor Foster	Support for AXA workers
14	Councillor Andrews	Councillor Foster	Small Firm Business Rates and support in Parliament
15	Councillor Townshend	Councillor Ridley	Radisson Hotel in Belgrade Plaza
16	Councillor Sawdon	Councillor Noonan	De-trunking of A45
17	Councillor Nellist	Councillor Foster	Public takeover of Stalled PFI projects
18	Councillor Windsor	Councillor Taylor	Tamil Protests

RESOLVED that, pursuant to the appropriate paragraphs of the City Council's Constitution, written responses or further information be supplied to all

Members of the Council with regard to those questions in request of which such an undertaking was given.

126. Statement by the Leader of the Council

There was no statement.

127. Debates – “Opposition to Directly Elected Mayors”

Councillor J. Mutton moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Duggins: -

"This Council confirms its opposition to directly elected mayors"

RESOLVED that the motion be not adopted.

(NOTE: The meeting closed at 6.50 pm)