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**Report to**  
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

11<sup>th</sup> January, 2006

**Report of**  
Councillor Tony O'Neill

**Title**  
Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – Coventry Venture Capital Ltd

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### **1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 At their meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2005, the Cabinet approved a process of reporting back to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on the work of those outside bodies appointed to by the City Council. This reports sets out details of the work of Coventry Venture Capital Ltd over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the City Council continue to appoint to Coventry Venture Capital Ltd.

### **3 Information on Work of Outside Body**

- 3.1 Coventry Venture Capital Ltd is a property investment organisation and receives rental income, via Warwick University Science Park, for a building on the Science Park, pays interest to West Midlands Enterprise Ltd at a fixed rate in relation to a loan from that company and pays a fixed dividend to Coventry City Council. All transactions are contractual in nature.

### **4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment**

- 4.1 Coventry City Council have a 100% holding in Coventry Venture Capital Ltd. Directors are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and for ensuring that proper accounting records are maintained.

### **5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment**

- 5.1 There have been no meetings of the Board of Directors held over the previous twelve months.
- 5.2 There is no remuneration associated with the appointment.

List of background papers

Proper officer:

Author:

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Other contributors:

None

Papers open to Public Inspection

**Description of paper**

None

**Location**

**SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE**

**11th January, 2006**

Members Present:- Councillor Charley (Substitute for Councillor Williams)  
Councillor Mrs. Dixon  
Councillor Duggins  
Councillor Field  
Councillor Mrs. Johnson (Substitute for Councillor Sawdon)  
Councillor Mutton  
Councillor Patton  
Councillor Ridge (Chair)

Co-opted  
Member Present:- Councillor Clifford

Cabinet Members  
Present:- Councillor Foster (Cabinet Member (City Services))  
Councillor Kelsey (Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer  
Services))  
Councillor H. Noonan (Cabinet Member (Community Services))

Employees Present:- P. Barnett (Chief Executive's Directorate)  
R. Hughes (Head of Corporate Policy)  
C. Steele (Chief Executive's Directorate)  
A. Townsend (Legal and Democratic Services Directorate)

Apologies:- Councillor Sawdon  
Councillor Williams

**153. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th December, 2006, were signed as a true record.

**154. Call-Ins Stage 1**

The Committee noted that no Cabinet/Cabinet Member meetings had been held during the previous week and that there were, therefore, no decisions open to call-in.

**155. No Smoking Policy /Revision**

With reference to Minute 141/05, the Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources which set out a revised no smoking policy for employees of the City Council. The report was scheduled to be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 7th February, 2006, and had been referred to this Committee in order that Scrutiny may consider the proposals and feed any comments into that Cabinet meeting.

The Officer reported that the revised policy built on the existing policy, which had been implemented in 1995, and which was silent on the issue of smoke breaks during paid employment. The new policy made it explicit that smoke breaks were not permitted during

paid working time and that employees were not permitted to smoke on Council property or in doorways. All recognised Trades Unions had been consulted on the revised policy with a view to seeking a collective agreement, although unfortunately it had not been possible to achieve this.

The Committee questioned the Officer on aspects of the report, in particular the EU Working Time Directive and VDU Usage Regulations, the potential for offering support to employees with other addictions, the enforcement of the Policy and the potential need to define areas outside City Council buildings where smoking was not permitted. The Committee were disappointed that it had not been possible to reach a collective agreement with the Trades Unions although it was noted that a meeting would be held with Cabinet Members on 17th January, 2006. The Committee felt that the current wording of the Policy did not make clear the difference between paid and unpaid breaks and requested that Officers look into rewording this element of the Policy. The Committee briefly considered how the Policy may apply to Elected members, Stella Manzie suggested that it would be useful if Members could set an example to staff and suggested that it may be appropriate to write to Members to assist with this. With regard to the proposal to not allow employees working in the open air to smoke, it was noted that this was included in order to ensure that all employees were treated consistently and fitted within the Smoke Free Coventry proposals and contributed to enhancing the image of the City Council.

**RESOLVED that the Committee supports the revisions to the Policy and recommend to Cabinet:-**

- (1) That clause 4.4 of the No Smoking Policy be made more explicit, i.e. that it is made clear that employees may smoke during unpaid breaks, but not during paid breaks.**
- (2) That clause 4.5 of the No Smoking Policy be made more explicit, i.e. that it is made clear that employees must not smoke during working hours.**
- (3) That consideration be given to ways to support employees with other forms of addiction.**
- (4) That the Chief Executive writes to elected members asking them to observe the policy.**

**156. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Coventry Law Centre**

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (City Services) which set out details of the work of the Coventry Law Centre over previous twelve months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Centre.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to appoint to the Coventry Law Centre.**



**157. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Coventry Venture Capital Limited**

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (Finance and Equalities) which set out details of Coventry Venture Capital Limited over the previous twelve months. The Committee were concerned that no meetings of the Board of Directors had been held over the previous twelve months and requested that research take be undertaken into the function of the Board of Directors and how this function was being carried out if no meeting were taking place. They also requested that clarification be given as to whether the City Council's appointment must be an Elected member or if it could, alternatively, be an Officer.

**RESOLVED that the Officers be requested to research the issues identified above.**

**158. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Bonds Hospital Estate Charity Trustees**

The Committee considered a report of Councillor Mrs. Johnson which set out details of the work of the Bonds Hospital Estates Charity Trustees over the previous twelve months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the charity trustees.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to appoint to the Bonds Hospital Estate Charity Trustees**

**159. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – West Midlands Local Government Association Provincial Council**

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services) which set out details of the work of the West Midlands Provincial Council over the previous twelve months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Council. The Committee were concerned that, given the nature of the meetings, the City Council's representatives had not been attending meetings.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to appoint to the West Midlands Local Government Association Provincial Council.**
- (2) That the Officers be requested to establish why attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Provincial Council were poor.**

**160. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – West Midlands Superannuation Committee**

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (Adult Education and Libraries, Sport and Leisure) which set out details of the work of the West Midlands Superannuation Committee over the previous twelve months and included attendance

records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Committee. The Committee were concerned that the whilst attendance record for the City Council's representative at sub-group meetings was good, records for the Superannuation Committee itself were poor.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to appoint to the West Midlands Superannuation Committee.**

**161. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies – Older Peoples' Partnership Board**

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member (Community Services) which set out details of the work of the Older Peoples' Partnership Board over the previous twelve months and included attendance records for the City Council's representatives at meetings of the Board.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to make appointments to the Older Peoples' Partnership Board**
- (2) That in the future reports on the Older Peoples' Partnership Board need not be submitted to this Committee.**

**162. Outstanding Issues**

The Committee noted that there were currently no outstanding issues.

**163. Work Programme 2005/2006**

The Committee considered and noted the changes to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme for 2005/2006.



Coventry City Council

## Report 5.2

### **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Coventry Venture Capital Limited Briefing Note**

#### **Background**

At their meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2006 the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered the Annual Report from the City Council's representative on the Coventry Venture Capital Fund (minute 157/05 refers) and requested that Officers investigate:-

- the function of the Board of Directors and how this function was being carried out if no meetings were taking place.
- whether the City Council's appointment must be an Elected member or if it could, alternatively, be an Officer.

#### **Functions of the Board of Directors/Meetings**

The Company is an investment and property holding and dealing organisation, the specific functions are set out in their Memorandum of Association.

An AGM has been held in the past twelve months, Councillor O'Neill was not required to attend this meeting, Stella Manzie was invited. The Board of Directors has taken the decision only to meet when necessary, the majority of the work is undertaken by e-mail, any Board Member is entitled to request a meeting if they wish.

#### **City Council Appointments**

The City Council's representative does not have to be an elected member/may be an Officer.