

**Time and Date**

2.00 pm on Tuesday, 4th December, 2012

**Place**

Council Chamber - Council House

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**21. Question Time (Pages 3 - 6)**

- (a) Written Question – Booklet 1(attached)
- (b) Oral Questions to Chairs of Scrutiny Boards/Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
- (c) Oral Questions to Chairs of other meetings
- (d) Oral Questions to Representatives on Outside Bodies
- (e) Oral Questions to Cabinet Members on any matter

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Bev Messinger, Director of Customer and Workforce Services, Council House Coventry

Monday, 26 November 2012

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Carolyn Sinclair/Suzanne Bennett 024 7683 3166/3072

Membership: Councillors F Abbott, N Akhtar, M Ali, A Andrews, M Auluck, S Bains, L Bigham, J Blundell, K Caan, D Chater, J Clifford, G Crookes (Deputy Chair), G Duggins, C Fletcher, K Foster, D Galliers, D Gannon, A Gingell, M Hammon, L Harvard, P Hetherington, D Howells, J Innes, L Kelly, D Kershaw, T Khan, A Khan, R Lakha, R Lancaster, J Lepoidevin, A Lucas, K Maton, J McNicholas, C Miks, K Mulhall, J Mutton, M Mutton, H Noonan, J O'Boyle, E Ruane, R Sandy, T Sawdon (Chair), H S Sehmi, B Singh, D Skinner, T Skipper, H Sweet, K Taylor, R Thay, S Thomas, P Townshend, S Walsh, D Welsh and A Williams

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language please contact us.

**Carolyn Sinclair/Suzanne Bennett**  
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## **Council Meeting**

4<sup>th</sup> December 2012

### **Booklet 1**

Answer to Written Question

1.

**QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Skinner**

**TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Mutton**

**TEXT OF QUESTION:**

Following the recent meeting with the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and the Secretary of State for Transport, could the Leader of the Council please explain what benefit, if any, HS2 is now supposed to bring to the City, specifically to the residents of Westwood and Wainbody Wards, many of whom remain, as I am, deeply concerned?"

**Answer**

At the recent meeting with the Secretary of State for Transport the Council's formal position of objection to HS2 Ltd's proposals as published were reiterated. The Secretary of State responded by affirming that the Government remained committed to bringing forward the proposals, but were keen to work with Coventry to address specific concerns.

The rail industry, experts and many users of the West Coast Mainline agree that additional rail capacity is needed to serve the West Midlands and the Coventry sub-region. Studies have suggested that this capacity is needed by approximately 2019.

There are ways in which an increase in rail capacity can be provided. Some of these will need to be explored and delivered in advance of any HS2 proposals. However, the Government's intent to progress the HS2 proposals is clear. In order to respond constructively to this it is becoming necessary to consider how Coventry can get the best from the proposals and to identify what other measures are required to ensure our city is not disadvantaged.

The Government argues that HS2 will increase rail capacity, rail connectivity and provide faster journey times to London and other major national and international cities, benefiting the Coventry & Warwickshire economy directly for business which might use HS2 and in-directly through the economic supply chain. This sort of economic relationship to new transport linkages and capacity is a well-established principle which under-pins most major transport infrastructure proposals, including Coventry's own proposals for NUCKLE (the Coventry-Nuneaton Rail Enhancement scheme).

Provided the level and quality of Coventry's direct inter-city connectivity via Coventry Station can be maintained to at least as good a standard as is currently provided, or even better, then it appears plausible that the City and its residents will receive some economic benefit as a result of new rail capacity serving the West Midlands. Nevertheless, this case is not yet adequately proven and it is for the Government and HS2 Ltd to make the case, not Coventry City Council. In doing this, long standing concerns regarding environmental issues and a strategy to protect and enhance Coventry's inward investment programme will need to be developed and presented.

Without prejudice to the Council's formal resolution on HS2, I have instructed Officers to work with DfT representatives, Network Rail and others to establish the facts and possible scenarios for rail, with an emphasis on identifying what can benefit Coventry the most. As the HS2 proposals are long term I anticipate this will be an ongoing exercise commensurate with these timescales. Clearly we will also continue to lobby for and secure the delivery of rail improvements for Coventry independently of HS2 and on an earlier timescale

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