



Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership)

Time and Date

2.00 pm on Thursday, 4th December, 2014

Place

Committee Room 3 - Council House

Public Business**1. Apologies****2. Declarations of Interest****3. Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)

- a) To agree the minutes from the meeting held on 5th September, 2014(attached).
- b) Matters Arising

4. Response to petition calling for the Palestinian Flag to be flown at the Council House (Pages 7 - 14)

Report of the Chief Executive

5. Appointment of Special Advisor on Child Protection Issues to the Leader of the Council (Pages 15 - 20)

Report of the Executive Director, People

6. Outstanding Issues

There are no Outstanding Issues to Report.

7. Any Other Items of Public Business

Any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Private Business

Nil

Chris West, Executive Director, Resources, Council House Coventry

Wednesday, 26 November 2014

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is

Michelle Rose.

Membership: Councillors J Blundell (Shadow Cabinet Member) and A Lucas (Cabinet Member)

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting
OR if you would like this information in another format or
language please contact us.

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Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) held at 10.00
am on Friday, 5 September 2014

Members Present:

Councillor A Lucas (Cabinet Member)
Councillor J Blundell (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

C Dear, Chief Executive's Directorate
H Lynch, Resources Directorate
M Rose, Resources Directorate

Public Business

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests reported.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership), held on 28th November, 2013 were signed as a true record.

3. **Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman 2013/14**

The Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) considered a report of the Chief Executive, regarding complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman during 2013/14.

The report noted that the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) provided an independent means of redress to individuals for injustice caused by unfair treatment or service failure by a local authority. As part of the Council's complaints process complainants were informed of their rights to contact the LGO if they were not happy with the Council's decision.

The Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) at the meeting of 27th March 2014, decided that the number and outcome of complaints received by the LGO about the Council would be formally reported to elected members through the Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) (minute 99/13 refers). The first report following the recommendation was considered and covered complaints over the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

In July 2014, the Ombudsman had issued the Annual Letter to the Chief Executive which summarised complaints dealt with during the year. A report "Review of Local authority complaints" had also been published on the LGO web pages; this was used to compare Coventry's performance with national trends.

The Councillors and officers present discussed; learning from complaints, communicating with complainants and amending the process so that Audit and Procurement Committee consider the report prior to Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership).

RESOLVED that, after due consideration of the report and the matters raised at the meeting, the report detailing the Council's performance in relation to complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman be noted and the Audit and Procurement Committee be requested to:

- 1. Review and be assured that the Council takes appropriate action in response to complaints investigated and where the Council is found to be at fault.**
- 2. Advise on the timing and focus for future reports to help to ensure that the Council learns from complaints.**

4. 2013/14 Annual Freedom of Information/Data Protection Act Report

The Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which detailed the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)/Data Protection Act (DPA) requests during 2013/14.

The Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) at the meeting of 1st May, 2014, decided that an annual report regarding FOIA and DPA requests would be formally reported to elected members through the Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) (minute 107/13 refers). The first report following the recommendation was considered initially by the Audit and Procurement Committee on 14th July, 2014 (minute 10/14 refers). There were no additional comments or recommendations from the Committee.

The report noted that under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) the Council were required to provide the public with a means for requesting information held by the Authority, subject to any exemptions that may apply. Also Section 39 of FOIA required the Council to process requests for environmental information under the Environmental Information Regulations (2004) (EIR). The EIR process, whilst similar to FOIA, promoted 'proactive dissemination' of information and provided fewer grounds for the Council to withhold information. Both FOIA and EIR permit personal data, as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA), to be withheld where the applicant was not the subject of the data.

The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) required the authority to process personal data in accordance with the principles of the Act, which included providing a means for an individual to request access to information that the Council processes about them, subject to any exemptions that may apply.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) oversees compliance with FOIA, EIR and DPA, promoted good practice, rules on complaints and takes appropriate action when the law had been broken.

This report provided an overview of the number of requests for information received under the FOIA, EIR and DPA; the volume completed within the legislative timescales; the number and outcome of internal reviews; and the

number and outcome of complaints made to the ICO about Coventry City Council during 2013/14.

The Councillors and officers present discussed; the subjective element of redaction and differences between Freedom of Information and Environmental Information requests.

RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and the matters raised at the meeting, the Council's performance for responding to access to information requests report be noted by the Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) including the number and outcome of internal reviews and the number and outcome of complaints made to the ICO.

5. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues to report.

6. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 10.20 am)

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4 December 2014

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) – Councillor Mrs Lucas OBE

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Chief Executive's

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Response to petition calling for Palestinian flag to be flown at the Council House

Is this a key decision?

no

Executive Summary:

Recommended response to a petition with 17 signatures which says: "We demand that as a city of peace and reconciliation, given the high number of Palestinian civilian casualties in Gaza including a large number of children, the Palestinian flag is flown from the Council House to demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinian population."

Recommendations:

For the Leader of the Council to:

- Reaffirm the Council's concern about the suffering of Palestinian people, as expressed in the open letter signed by leading councillors, the Lord Bishop of Coventry, the Right Rev Dr Christopher Cocksworth and the Chair of the Coventry Muslim Forum, Dr Abdullah Shehu and issued on 8 August 2014
- Continue to support the internationally respected work of Coventry Cathedral in seeking to end conflicts across the world, including Palestine and Israel
- Confirms that the Council should continue to follow national protocol and local guidance for the flying of flags outside the Council House, which means that the Palestinian flag will not be flown outside the Council House specifically as a mark of solidarity

List of Appendices included:

Open letter to editors of the Times, The Guardian, Sunday Times and Observer, 8 August 2014

Other useful background Papers

Guide to Flying Flags in the United Kingdom – joint advice from Flags Institute and
Flags and Heraldry Committee, UK Parliament

http://flaginstitute.org/pdfs/Flying_Flags_in_the_United_Kingdom.pdf

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or
other body?**

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Response to petition calling for Palestinian flag to be flown at the Council House

Context (or Background)

- 1.1 The Council has long held strong views about the need for peace and reconciliation in the Middle East; an end to the suffering of the people of Gaza; and the resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. This summer, in response to conflict in Gaza, a letter to the national press on 8 August 2014 was sent by the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader of the Council; the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor and other senior councillors; the Lord Bishop of Coventry and the Chair of the Coventry Muslim Forum urging the United Nations and the British Government to play an urgent part in bringing about a ceasefire and seeking a permanent solution to the conflict.
- 1.2 Over the summer many councillors made the individual choice to join the regular protests about the conflict held outside the Council House.
- 1.3 Coventry is rightly proud of its worldwide reputation as a city of peace and reconciliation, born from the devastation of our Cathedral in the Second World War. Since then the highly skilled and expert staff at Coventry Cathedral have led the city's work in the field of peace and reconciliation and this leadership continues today under the guidance of Bishop Christopher, with the Council ensuring it supports the Cathedral's work on behalf of the city.
- 1.4 As a result of heightened tensions and an escalation of conflict in Gaza earlier this summer, a petition of 17 signatures has been submitted to the Council which states:

Fly the Palestinian Flag from the Council House

"We demand that as a city of peace and reconciliation, given the high number of Palestinian civilian casualties in Gaza including a large number of children, the Palestinian flag is flown from the Council House to demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinian population."

- 1.5 The Council follows the protocols for flying flags outside the Council House laid down by the Flags Institute and the Flags and Heraldry Committee in their publication "Flying Flags in the United Kingdom". Specific guidance around the flying of flags outside the Council House is as follows:

During the winter months no flags are flown on the front of Council House building, other than the Union Flag on the main Council House flag pole which is flown 24/7 – subject to the variations below.

From 29th April 2009 a full complement of flags were flown on the front of the Council House (see below) and this remains the case until after Remembrance Sunday in November.

The flags are:

*UK national flags – England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales
Country flags China, France, Soviet Union, USA, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Greece, Holland, Luxemburg, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa and Serbia which represent countries that were allies to Great Britain during WWII.*

These flags are then rotated to reflect certain occasions eg funerals, international visitors, independence days as appropriate – please see below of occasions during 2009/2010:

April – International Workers' Memorial Day: civic flag at half mast on main flag pole for a couple of hours of the ceremony only

March- St Patrick's Day

March - St David's Day

April - St George's Day

May - Annual Meeting of City Council – civic flag flown on main flagpole

June 2009 – Visit of delegation from Volgograd

June 2009 - Visit of the Serbian Ambassador

June - Armed Forces Day

August - Indian Independence Day

November - St Andrew's Day

1.6 It is recommended that this guidance continues to be followed, which ensures a consistent and clear approach to the flying of flags.

1.7 It is therefore recommended that the Leader of the Council:

- Reaffirms the Council's concern about the suffering of Palestinian people, as expressed in the open letter signed by leading councillors, the Lord Bishop of Coventry, the Right Rev Dr Christopher Cocksworth and the Chair of the Coventry Muslim Forum, Dr Abdullah Shehu and issued on 8 August 2014
- Continues to support the internationally respected work of Coventry Cathedral in seeking to end conflicts across the world, including Palestine and Israel
- Confirms that the Council should continue to follow national protocol and local guidance for the flying of flags outside the Council House, which means that the Palestinian flag will not be flown outside the Council House specifically as a mark of solidarity

2 Results of consultation undertaken

n/a

3 Timetable for implementing this decision

With immediate effect

4. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

4.1 Financial implications

None

4.2 Legal implications

none

Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

n/a

6.2 How is risk being managed?

n/a

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

None.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None.

Report author(s): Fran Collingham

Name and job title: Assistant Director

Directorate: Chief Executive's Directorate

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76 83 1088**

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Jenni Venn	Assistant Director, policy	Chief Executive	14/11/14	14 November
Adrian West	Members and Elections Team Leader	Resources	18/11/14	20/11/14
Michelle Rose	Governance Services Officer	Resources	20/11/14	
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				

Finance:				
Legal: Helen Lynch		Resources	20/11/14	20/11/14
Director: Martin Reeves	CEX		26/11/14	26/11/14
Cllr Ann Lucas	Cabinet Member	leader		26/11/14

This report is published on the council's website:
www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings



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of Coventry City Council**

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Letters to the Editor:

The Times
The Guardian
The Sunday Times
The Observer

8th August 2014

Dear Sirs

GAZA AND ISRAEL

We are writing to you as proud Coventrians, by birth or adoption, who are inspired by our city's legacy of peace and reconciliation and who find ourselves unable to ignore the sufferings of our fellow human beings.

Coventry suffered grievously during the Second World War, primarily but not exclusively as a result of the Blitz which caused the death of so many of the civilian population. For nearly 70 years, the ability of the people of Coventry to reach out, forgive and befriend those who caused such suffering has been an example to the rest of the world of the virtues that lead to peace and reconciliation.

We are deeply concerned about both the suffering of Palestinian people and the danger to life endured by the people of Israel. Personally and collectively we appeal for a peaceful conclusion to this tragic conflict and to renewed commitment to confront and overcome its causes.

We recognise Israel's right to self-determination and the unacceptable threats to life that its people are bearing. However, it cannot be right that so many civilians in Gaza, many of them women and children, who have had no direct involvement with the military offensives, have been killed as a result of recent actions.

In Coventry, as said, a city that has suffered the devastating effect of war during the blitz, we are proud of our reputation as being the city of 'Peace and Reconciliation' and say that another way other than retaliation is needed and that the use of violent reprisal is, ultimately, self-defeating.

We urge the British Government and the United Nations to continue to play an urgent part in bringing about a lasting cease fire. We urge the parties concerned to end their violence and work together to seek a permanent solution to problems which, though they appear intractable, must be resolved for the peace of Jerusalem and the peace of the world.

Together, with the support of the international reconciliation work of Coventry Cathedral and the prayers of those of all Faiths, we pledge ourselves to continue to raise these concerns publicly and to do everything that we can to try to encourage a resolution that will bring an end to self-defeating violence and establish a peaceful existence for everyone concerned, Palestinian and Israeli.

Yours faithfully

The Leader of Coventry City Council, Councillor Ann Lucas OBE
The Deputy Leader of Coventry City Council, Councillor Phil Townshend

The Leader of the Opposition on Coventry City Council, Councillor John Blundell
The Deputy Leader of the Opposition on Coventry City Council, Councillor Allan Andrews

The Lord Mayor of Coventry, Councillor Hazel Noonan
The Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry, Councillor Michael Hammon

Councillor Joe Clifford, Former Lord Mayor of Coventry (1995)
Councillor John Mutton, Former Lord Mayor of Coventry (1997)
Councillor Ken Taylor OBE, Former Lord Mayor of Coventry (2002)
Councillor Sucha Bains, Former Lord Mayor of Coventry (2003)
Councillor Ram Lakha OBE, Former Lord Mayor of Coventry (2005)
Councillor Tim Sawdon, Former Lord Mayor of Coventry (2012)
Councillor Gary Crookes, Former Lord Mayor of Coventry (2013)

The Lord Bishop of Coventry, the Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth
The Chair of the Coventry Muslim Forum, Dr Abdullah Shehu



4 December 2014

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) - Councillor Mrs Lucas OBE

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director - People

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Appointment of Special Advisor on Child Protection Issues to the Leader of the Council

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

This report deals with an extension of the appointment of Mr Donald Hamilton (retired Designated Family Judge) as the Special Advisor on Child Protection to the Leader of Council.

It is proposed that as the improvement plan for Children's Social Care in Coventry continues its implementation the Leader of the Council's oversight of the increased measures being introduced to protect those children in Coventry who are at risk of harm or suffering harm would be enhanced by the continued support of Mr Donald Hamilton as her Special Advisor on Child Protection.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Members (Policy and Leadership) is recommended to:

1. Endorse the extension of the appointment of Mr Donald Hamilton as the Special Advisor on Child Protection to the Leader of the Council until 31st December 2015.
2. Recommend to the Corporate Parenting Board (Cabinet Advisory Panel) the invitation of Mr Donald Hamilton, in his role of Special Advisor on Child Protection to the Leader, to

attend the Corporate Parenting Board, and other meetings of relevant council bodies where permitted.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Appointment of Special Advisor on Child Protection Issues to the Leader of the Council

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 On the 10th October 2013 an Extraordinary Meeting of Council was held to consider the Serious Case Review Report into the death of Daniel Pelka. Daniel Pelka (a Coventry child) was murdered in March 2012 by his mother and her partner); Daniel has sustained a long history of abuse leading up to his death. A Multi- Agency Serious Case Review was commissioned to investigate and analyse the circumstances into Daniels abuse and death.
- 1.2 The Serious Case Review made 15 recommendations to local partners, covering domestic abuse, referral and assessment processes, training of staff, practise in schools and health as well as the requirement to disseminate messages to the Children's workforce.
- 1.3 In addition to the resolutions made by Council at the Extraordinary Council meeting the Leader advised the Council that she had appointed His Honour Judge Hamilton (Retired) to be her Special Advisor on Child Protection Issues, with immediate effect. Mr Donald Hamilton, as a retired Designated Family Judge, has a wealth of experience and knowledge around Child Protection and is ideally placed to offer the Leader an independent and experienced consultative role in this challenging area. Mr Donald Hamilton has the authority and experience to command the respect both internally within the City Council and externally with a range of partner organisations such as the West Midlands Police, Health Services and other agencies.
- 1.4 In March 2014 an Ofsted inspection of Children's Services found the provision of services (including Child Protection) as inadequate. A number of arrangements were put in place in order to provide robust governance and oversight of the delivery of improvements to Children's Social Care and Child Protection in the City.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The Leader of the Council has benefitted from the expert advice of Mr Donald Hamilton over the last year. One option is to discontinue this arrangement and for the Leader to no longer have on going access to this particular specialist advice. This option is not recommended as the improvement plan for children's services remains at an early stage and the work required to improve Child Protection Services in the City continues at pace.
- 2.2 The recommended option is to extend the appointment of Mr Donald Hamilton as special advisor to the Leader for a further 12 months to allow the Leader access to this valuable resource as the implementation plan around Child Protection Services in the City continues. Also to recommend to the Corporate Parenting Board (Cabinet Advisory Panel) the invitation of Mr Donald Hamilton, in his role of Special Advisor on Child Protection to the Leader, to attend the Corporate Parenting Board, and other meetings of relevant council bodies where permitted.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 None

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The appointment of Mr Donald Hamilton as specialised advisor to the Leader would be implemented from today for a further 12 months (until 31st December 2015).

5 **Comments from Executive Director, Resources**

5.1 **Financial implications**

For undertaking the role of Special Advisor to the Leader Mr Donald Hamilton receives an honorarium of £6,000 for the year. This will be funded from within existing budgets.

5.2 **Legal implications**

Appropriate measures are in place concerning protecting the confidentiality of the work undertaken by Mr Hamilton

6 **Other implications. None**

6.1 **How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

6.1.1 Protecting vulnerable children and families is a key priority for the City Council and the role of Mr Donald Hamilton as specialised advisor to the Leader of the Council will support in the Leader's oversight of this priority.

6.2 **How is risk being managed?**

The improvement plan for Children's Services receives independent oversight from other key individuals and boards; including the independently chaired Improvement Board .

6.3 **What is the impact on the organisation?**

None

6.4 **Equalities / EIA**

None

6.5 **Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

None

6.6 **Implications for partner organisations?**

Improvements in Child Protection across the City is a multi – agency agenda.

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Carol Bradford	Solicitor	Resources	09/11/2014	21/11/2014
Michelle Rose	Governance Services Officer	Resources	09/11/2014	20/11/2014
Yolanda Corden	Acting AD, Children's Social Care	People	09/11/2014	20/11/2014
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Rachel Sugars	Finance Manager	Resources	09/11/2014	20/11/2014
Legal: Julie Newman	Place Manager	Resources	09/11/2014	20/11/2014
Legal: Christine Forde	Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer	Resources	09/11/2014	20/11/2014
Brian Walsh	Executive Director	People	09/11/2014	20/11/2014
Members: Councillor Ann Lucas (Cllr Townshend on her behalf)	Leader	Policy and Leadership	20/11/2014	21/11/2014

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