

Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 8 March 2016

Present:

Cabinet Members: Councillor Mrs Lucas (Chair)
Councillor A. Khan (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Abbott
Councillor Caan
Councillor Gannon
Councillor Kershaw
Councillor Lancaster
Councillor Maton
Councillor Ruane

Deputy Cabinet Members: Councillor Dr R Auluck
Councillor Brown
Councillor Clifford
Councillor McNicholas
Councillor Thomas

Non-voting Opposition Members: Councillor Andrews
Councillor Blundell

Other Members: Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor Bains
Councillor Crookes
Councillor Duggins
Councillor Lakha
Councillor J Mutton

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executive's: M Reeves (Chief Executive), F Collingham

Place: M Yardley (Executive Director), J Applegarth,
N Clews, C Knight

People: G Quinton (Executive Director), K Nelson

Resources: C West (Executive Director), L Commane,
L Knight, J Newman, J Sansom

Public Business

126. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

127. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 9th and 23rd February 2016 were agreed and signed as true records.

There were no matters arising.

128. **Minor Civil Engineering Works Framework for Highways**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Place, which set out proposals to undertake a restricted tender process for a new Civil Engineering Support Framework.

The Cabinet noted that the Council's Highways Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) delivered in the region of £4.5m of work per year to the City's roads and pavements, funded from a number of sources including the Transport Block, the Highways Maintenance Capital Investment Programme and external grant funding. In order to deliver these works, a multi supplier Minor Civil Engineering Works Framework was established in 2013 for the engagement of the services of suitably experienced contractors to undertake minor civil engineering works, typically minor highway maintenance / enhancement schemes. The Framework was set up to support the DLO in the delivery of highways services, to supplement the DLO's own in-house resources and act as a top up, flexible resource where required through the peaks and troughs of the Highways maintenance season. This allowed the DLO to deliver a flexible service without having to recruit additional direct staff.

The current Framework was set up in November 2013 and expected to run for a 4 year period. However, due to the additional monies received by the Council from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the framework had been much more heavily used than anticipated. As a result, spend through the framework had reached the value it was procured for before the end of the life of the framework. Continuing use of the current framework until its natural expiry in 2017 could put the Council at risk of procurement challenge.

The report proposed to undertake a restricted tender process to set up a replacement multi-supplier framework for a period of 4 years for a new Civil Engineering Support Framework for the value of £6m. It was further proposed that the tender process commence to ensure that a new contract was in place for the 1st August 2016.

In considering the proposals, the Cabinet expressed some concerns regarding the proposed value of the Framework given the level of works undertaken since the last Framework was established and requested that this be amended and the new Framework be established to a value of £12m to ensure that adequate flexibility to cover any unexpected additional works was available.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet:

- 1. Authorise a procurement process to set up a multi-supplier framework for 4 years for a Civil Engineering Support Framework to support the Council's Direct Labour Organisation delivery.**

- 2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place to agree the award of contract(s) following a restricted tender process.**
- 3. Authorise the City Council to enter into contract(s) with the successful suppliers for the 4 year period.**

129. **2016/17 Transportation and Highway Maintenance Capital Programme**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director for Place, which set out the proposed 2016/17 transportation and highway maintenance capital programme.

The report submitted brought together an integrated capital programme for the maintenance and enhancement of the City's highways and transport infrastructure. All sources of funding were considered, including the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan, Corporate Capital Resources, Section 106 and other specific grants. This approach would ensure that opportunities for 'joined up' schemes to get the best value for money could be identified. The Cabinet noted that, as a consequence, it had been possible to present a larger maintenance programme than the previous year.

The basic principles for the maintenance and integrated transport programme were to:-

- Continue the programme of rectifying damage to the City's roads through a prioritised programme based on road condition surveys.
- Continue to invest in preventative/proactive maintenance.
- Carry out packages of complementary schemes to support the continued growth of the city, such as road safety, traffic management schemes and Public Realm works, which where possible would be linked to maintenance projects to maximise savings and the efficiency of implementation.
- Provide a programme of footway improvements funded from the Whitefriars Housing Group as part of a £1.4m investment which would be delivered over the next financial year.

The Cabinet were advised that, in 2014, the Department for Transport (DfT) consulted on revising its approach to the Highway Maintenance Block allocation formula. Following this, the DfT announced its revised needs based formula and also announced that the Highway Maintenance budget would be top sliced to provide funds for which authorities would have to bid. There would be an incentive fund, dependent on the Authority's efficiency and approach to highways asset management and was allocated based on an assessment of data provided by local authorities. A Challenge Fund for major maintenance projects (tranche 1) was awarded in 2015 and Coventry had submitted two successful bids, which included a joint West Midlands bid based on road condition and a second bid for substantial works to Swanswell Viaduct on the ring road.

The appendices to the report submitted provided a description of all Maintenance and Integrated Transport and Challenge Fund Schemes; a breakdown of the Structural Maintenance Programme, including the Swanswell Challenge Fund; the breakdown of the Road Maintenance Programme including verges; the proposed Safety Schemes, Traffic Management and Intelligent Mobility programmes.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the 2016/17 capital programme of schemes for maintenance and integrated transport as detailed in table 3 of the report submitted.**
- 2. Approve the schemes designated 'A' for construction in 2016/17 as indicated in table 3 of the report submitted, and delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Public Services, to approve the schemes not designated 'A' in table 3.**

130. Plas Dol-y-Moch: Investing in Outdoor Education for Coventry's Children and Young People

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of People, which set out proposals to support the expansion of the Council's outdoor education facility, Plas Dol-y-Moch.

For the last 50 years, Plas Dol-y-Moch provided Coventry children with memorable experiences and effective learning in a natural outdoor setting. It was proposed that Plas Dol-y-Moch capitalise on the growing demand for services and invest in the expansion of the facilities to accommodate 60 children.

The report set out the strategic case for investing £750,000 into improving the facilities at Plas Dol-y-Moch to meet the needs of the City's growing and changing pupil population. It was proposed that the Council lend two thirds of this sum (£500,000) to Plas Dol-y-Moch, with a community-led fundraising drive co-ordinated by the Friends of Dol-y-Moch, in partnership with the Cabinet Member for Education and the Head of the Centre to raise the remainder of the sum required (£250,000) within the next year. The £500,000 loan would be repaid by the service with interest over a ten year period.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet:-

- 1. Approve the expansion of Plas Dol-y-Moch, at a cost of £750,000, providing conditions are met as indicated within the report submitted.**
- 2. Approve a capital investment of £500,000 to be funded via the Council's capital programme and repaid by the service to the Council over 10 years with interest.**
- 3. Note that the Friends of Dol-y-Moch, in collaboration with the Cabinet Member for Education and the Head of Centre, launch and support a community-led fundraising exercise and support bids for external grants to raise £250,000 towards the project by September 2017 in line with the Connecting Communities approach.**

4. **Subject to regular monitoring of the funds being raised by the Outdoor Education Committee, authorise officers to undertake works at Plas Dol-y-Moch and to include this as part of the Council's capital programme on the assumption that the £250,000 gap can be raised by September 2017.**
5. **Approve in principle that the Council will be guarantor for any external grant funding up to a combined total of £250,000 and delegate responsibility to the Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member in relation to details of any such guarantor agreement.**

131. **Academies Act 2010 - Grant of Long Leases to Proposed Academy Conversion of Finham Primary School**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Place which set out proposals for the grant of long leases and transfer of assets for the proposed conversion of Finham Primary School to academy status.

The Governing body of Finham Primary School had agreed to convert to academy status and made a successful application to the Secretary of State for an Academy Order under the Academies Act 2010 (the 2010 Act). They propose to join the Finham Park Multi Academy Trust (MAT) with effect from 1st April 2016.

In response, the Council were required under Schedule 1 of the 2010 Act (as amended by Schedule 14 of the Education Act 2011) to either transfer the freehold or grant a 125-year long lease at a peppercorn rental of the land and / or buildings within its ownership that had been wholly or mainly used for the purposes of the school in the period of 8 years ending on the day on which an order is made. Following the Department for Education (DfE) guidelines, the Council's preferred approach was the grant of the long lease.

The Council were also required to agree an Asset Transfer Agreement which covered the transfer of furniture, equipment and other assets and also provide warranties covering transferring information and pre and post conversion issues.

At the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee meeting on 27th April 2011 the Cabinet Member for Education agreed to receive formal reports for all schools seeking academy status covering the lease and other legal agreements between the Council and the proposed academy. However, since 2008 Cabinet had received reports covering the conversion of 32 schools to academies and the conversion process had largely become standardised with the development of template conversion documents including model leases and commercial transfer agreements. It was therefore proposed that for future conversions, reports be submitted to Cabinet on an exception basis only i.e. where after consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education, it were considered that there were significant issues that required wider consideration by Cabinet. For example this could be in the event that issues are raised as part of the local consultation over the lease or that there were significant financial risks to the proposed conversion.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet:-

- 1. Approve the grant and completion of a 125-year lease of the land and premises at Finham Primary School at peppercorn rental from the Council to the Finham Park Multi Academy Trust.**
- 2. Approve the Council entering into the Asset Transfer Agreement for Finham Primary School with Finham Park Multi Academy Trust.**
- 3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place and Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education to agree any amendments to the Lease and Asset Transfer Agreement arising from further consideration by the academy sponsor.**
- 4. Agree to receive future academy conversion reports on an exception basis, in cases where the Executive Director of Place and Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education consider that there are significant issues that require wider consideration by Cabinet.**

132. Annual Pay Policy Statement 2016/2017

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Resources, which set out the Annual Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17.

The Localism Act 2011 required all local authorities to produce an Annual Pay Policy Statement, setting out the Council's policies regarding the pay and grading of the workforce, which must be approved by full Council. The Annual Pay Policy Statement is particularly required to highlight the relationship between the pay and remuneration of the most senior staff (chief officers) and the general workforce. The City Council had clearly established policies and processes for the determination of the pay and grading of its employees and these were summarised in the proposed Pay Policy Statement.

The Annual Pay Policy Statement also set out the relationship between the highest and lowest paid employees. Guidance on the development of Pay Policy Statements stated that authorities should explain their policy in respect of chief officers who had been made redundant and later reemployed or engaged under a contract of service, and also their approach to any shared arrangements in place. The City Council had no policy in relation to the re-employment or re-engagement of chief officers. No existing chief officers had been made redundant and subsequently re-employed or re-engaged and it was not anticipated this would occur in the future. Currently the City Council had established an effective working partnership with Solihull Council for procurement.

The proposed Annual Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17 was attached to the report submitted as Appendix 1.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet recommend that the Council approves the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2016/17.

133. **Information Management Strategy**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Resources, which set out proposals for an Information Management Strategy.

Information Management was becoming increasingly critical to the way the public sector did business as services were integrate, and the Council sought to gain better outcomes with fewer resources and digitalised the way services were delivered.

Information was one of the Council's greatest assets and its usage was a major responsibility. The Council was ambitious to be trusted by its citizens and customers to manage and protect their information. The Information Management Strategy would ensure that information would be exploited as a strategic asset, using recognised best practice, legislation and technology to minimise requests for information and to maximise the opportunities for information intelligence to shape future services and evaluate the effectiveness of existing ones. The Council would store only what it needed to and increase its ability to deliver value for money, customer focused services to the benefit of Coventry, its customers and the Council.

This strategy would cover all areas of the Council and all information, documents and data that it created, owned, collected and held in paper and electronic format. It covered all documents that were accessed by the public, staff, Councillors and partners.

The strategy formalised principles and a range of activities that were already underway within the Council, bringing these together in one place so that it could begin to connect these activities at a strategic level and make the most of the data and information that the Council held and how the Council and others used it. These included activities that resulted from previously agreed policy decisions as part of the Council's kickstart programme and move to Friargate and the Council's Customer Journey vision and strategy.

Increased availability and use of information could transform the way the Council worked and could strengthen its ability to deliver better outcomes working in collaboration with others, to make better decisions and to solve complex public problems. Alongside this it also had the potential to improve democratic engagement.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet:-

- 1. Endorse the Information Management Vision, Principles and Strategy.**
- 2. Note the programme of activity as outlined in Section 4.1 of the report submitted.**

134. **MIPIM 2016 - Authority for Attendance 15th - 18th March 2016**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Place, which sought approval for the attendance of Councillor Crookes at the 2016 MIPIM Conference.

Marche International Des Professionals De L'Immobilier (MIPIM) was Europe's largest and most successful property conference / exhibition with representation from over 79 countries. MIPIM continued to be widely acknowledged as the place to meet leading international partners and prospects in the property world. The 2016 conference would witness 27 years of real estate business at MIPIM.

The report sought approval for attendance of Councillor Crookes as part of a Coventry delegation at MIPIM 2016, with the primary objective being to attract and encourage investment into Coventry as part of an overall strategy to create and sustain jobs in the region. Participating and exhibiting at MIPIM would provide a unique opportunity to profile Coventry and Warwickshire projects, achievements and development opportunities to major decision makers and intermediaries in the UK and international property markets. MIPIM also provides the opportunity to enhance the perception and image of Coventry and Warwickshire.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet approve the attendance of Councillor Gary Crookes, Shadow Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, to accompany a delegation from Coventry to attend MIPIM. This delegation was given approval to travel on 5th January 2016 and comprises of Councillor Lucas (Leader of the Council), Councillor Brown (Deputy Cabinet member for Business, Enterprise and Employment), Martin Reeves (Chief Executive), Martin Yardley (Executive Director of Place), David Cockroft (Assistant Director, City Centre and Development Services), Deirdre Fitzhugh (Service Manager, Destination and Business Relationships) and Claire England (Business Development Officer).

135. **Outstanding Issues**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Resources that contained a list of outstanding issues and summarised the current position in respect of each item.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet note the dates for future consideration of matters relating to the outstanding issues items listed in the report.

136. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 2.50 pm)