

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership held at**  
**1.00 pm on Thursday, 8 October 2015**

Members Present:

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

Other Members Present: Councillor R Bailey

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executives C Dear, B McLean, J Venn

Resources C Bradford, G Paddan

### **Public Business**

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2015 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

3. **Petition "Not to Join Up With Birmingham to Form a Super Power"**

The Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership considered a report of the Chief Executive which set out a proposed response to a petition bearing 60 signatures, which opposed Coventry joining up with Birmingham to form a super power.

The petition organiser attended the meeting and spoke on behalf of the petitioners and reiterated that petitioners did not want Coventry to be joined with Birmingham. Councillor Blundell sponsored the petition and ascertained how the petition would be brought to the attention of members. The Cabinet Member advised that there would be a debate at full Council.

The report noted that there were no proposals for Coventry City Council to join up with Birmingham to become one organisation or super power. The Council had made a decision in principle to join a Combined Authority with a preferred option of a combined authority to cover the area covered by three Local Enterprise Partnerships which includes the seven Metropolitan Councils currently working together through the West Midlands Joint Committee, Warwickshire and councils that cover parts of Staffordshire and Worcestershire.

The report indicated that the Combined Authority could only be set up if it met key test that showed it is of economic and administrative benefit to each local area that it covered and national legislation requires that specified process must be undertaken before such a body is established, which included a formal consultation period by the Government before the decision was taken by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government which then had to be approved by both Houses of Parliament.

The Council had recently undertaken an engagement and consultation process on whether Coventry City Council should join a West Midlands Combined Authority and this would be considered along with other relevant information when a decision is made by full Council at its meeting on 13 October 2015.

Concern was expressed on a number of issues regarding a combined authority including; structure to lead collaboration between local authorities on transport and economic growth; councils to remain the organisation to deliver the majority of services for the community and the role of a mayor.

The Councillors and officers present confirmed that the petitioner's comments and the concerns raised at the meeting would be taken into account when this item is deliberated at full Council next week.

**RESOLVED, that the Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership instruct officers to include the views set out in this petition in the information to be considered by councillors when a decision is taken on whether or not to join a West Midlands Combined Authority.**

#### 4. **Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman 2014/15**

The Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership considered a report of the Chief Executive, regarding complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman during 2014/15.

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 contented with the Council's decision.

In June 2015 the Ombudsman issued the Annual Letter to the Chief Executive to summarise complaints dealt with during the year. A report 'Review of Local authority complaints' was also published on the LGO web pages, this has helped to compare Coventry's performance with national trends.

The Councillors and officers present discussed the cases investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman as set out in the table within the report. It was noted that there had been 107 decisions made by Coventry in 2014/15 and the LGO investigated 27 complaints, this was more than 19 of the previous year. The number of upheld cases in 2014/15 9 (33% of the total investigated) compares favourably with 10 (53%) for the previous year.

**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.**

**5. Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

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

There were no other items of public business.

Meeting closed at 1.45pm