

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 10.00 am on Tuesday, 12 January 2016

Present:

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

Deputy Cabinet Members: Councillor Brown
Councillor Clifford
Councillor McNicholas
Councillor Thomas

Non-voting Opposition Members: Councillor Andrews
(for minute numbers 102 & 103)
Councillor Blundell
Councillor Crookes
(for minute numbers 104 & 105)

Other Members: Councillor J Mutton
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor Noonan

Employees (by Directorate):

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

Place: M Yardley (Executive Director) M Andrews

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

Apologies: Councillors Abbot, R Auluck, Caan, Ruane

Public Business

101. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

102. Memorandum of Understanding Relating to the Planned Distribution of Housing within the Coventry & Warwickshire Housing Market Area (HMA)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Place, which sought approval of a Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the planned distribution of housing within the Coventry and Warwickshire Housing Market Area (HMA).

The Cabinet were advised that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sought to ensure the housing needs of the Coventry and Warwickshire HMA were planned for in full during the current round of Local Plans. It responded to the fact that Coventry was unable to accommodate its full housing needs as well as the recommendations made by the Planning Inspector currently considering the Warwick District Council Local Plan. In doing so the MoU would supersede a previous agreement made at the Coventry and Warwickshire Shadow Economic Prosperity Board (sEPB) in November 2014 and presented to Council in March 2015.

The MoU, attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted, was presented to the sEPB on 29th September 2015 and was accompanied by a covering report (also part of Appendix 1), which recommended the MoU be endorsed by each of the six authorities – Coventry City, Rugby Borough, Warwick District, North Warwickshire Borough, Stratford on Avon District and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough.

The MoU had been jointly developed over the summer of 2015 by all six authorities with further support from Warwickshire County Council. Its development had been supported by an officer and member reference group of the sEPB and had been informed by updated evidence on population projections, economic growth forecasts and household formation rates. It also contained points of agreement that related to the levels of housing needs and how that housing should be distributed across the Housing Market Area. This distribution supported both demographic and workforce growth as well as considering mitigation and commuting flows between the six authorities.

The report submitted set out the housing needs and a housing requirement to be taken forward into plan making, and the impact on each of the local authority areas. In summary, for Coventry, the objectively assessed housing need indicated that 42,400 homes would be required. This figure was reduced by 3,800 through aligning population and economic growth and 14,000 through redistribution to other local authority areas. This resulted in a housing requirement for the City of 24,600.

The MoU was supported by all Members of the sEPB except representatives of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC), who remained concerned about their own capacity and their ability to plan for an additional 4,020 homes identified as a result of their functional relationship to the City. The lack of support from NBBC at this time was considered further in the proposed response to their Borough Plan, which was also being considered at this meeting.

The approval of the MoU would provide a solid and transparent platform from which to plan for new homes across Coventry and Warwickshire in the coming years. Endorsement of the MoU would also help enable the Council to fulfil its obligations in relation to the Duty to Co-operate and to meet the housing requirements of the housing market area, as required by national planning policy.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet recommend that Council endorses the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the planned distribution of housing within the Coventry & Warwickshire Housing Market Area (HMA) attached at Appendix 1 of the report submitted.

103. **Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Plan - Publication Draft and Supporting Documents**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Place, which sought endorsement of an officer response to Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council's new Borough Plan – Publication Draft and supporting documents.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) formally published their New Borough Plan for a period of representations on the 26th October 2015. The period of representations ran for 6 weeks until the 18th December 2015 in accordance with national Regulations relating to the submission of Local Plans. In addition to the Borough Plan, NBBC had also published an updated Statement of Community Involvement as well as a site options document for Gypsy and Traveller sites and the first stage of the Community Infrastructure Levy for consultation. Given the timescales involved, officers had submitted an officer representation to NBBC to ensure initial comments had been provided. It was this representation that was attached as Appendix 1a to the report submitted and presented to members for their endorsement or amendment. To reflect the relevance of the Borough Plan to the Duty to Co-operate a joint officer response had also been prepared by Coventry City Council, Warwick District Council, Rugby Borough Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council and Stratford on Avon District Council. This joint response was closely aligned to the City Council's own response and was attached as Appendix 1b to the report.

In summary, the City Council was unable to support the Borough's plan at this time for the following reasons:

- The Borough Plan did not (as currently presented) make any positive attempts to plan for the unmet housing need originating from Coventry;
- Instead, the Borough Plan sought to delay any action until further work was completed on the NBBC Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This meant the Plan was not supported by an up to date evidence base and meant all development options may not have been subject to appropriate consideration in terms of infrastructure needs or Sustainability Appraisal;
- A number of development proposals were identified on the city's administrative boundary which would represent extensions to the city's urban area. Although these may be acceptable in principle the City Council had received limited notification of such proposals or invitations to comment on potential infrastructure implications; and
- The Borough Plan also sought to delay any support for the city's unmet need by suggesting further consultation may be required. For the reasons set out above, further consultation was inevitable to secure a sound plan and help respond to the unmet need arising from Coventry.

In relation to the supporting documents, the Council's response highlighted the following key points:

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - Additional reference needed to be added to Appendix A to ensure neighbouring authorities were considered under the duty to cooperate.

The Community Infrastructure Levy and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan - The importance of cross boundary infrastructure, especially in relation to sites adjacent the city boundary.

Gypsy and Traveler site options - The document proposed a number of sites that could potentially be allocated to meet the needs of the Gypsy and Traveler community. This included a site at Burbages Lane, Ash Green, located approximately 75m from the city's boundary. Although there was unlikely to be any concern in principle, the supporting text was unclear about the full extent of the site and the impact it may have on an adjoining Local Wildlife Site, the wider Green Belt and the settled traveller community situated on Burbages Lane within the city's administrative boundary.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet recommend that Council endorse:-

- 1. The officer representations to Nuneaton and Bedworth's new Borough Plan – Publication Draft and supporting documents, as set out at Appendix 1a;**
- 2. The joint sub-regional officer representations to Nuneaton and Bedworth's new Borough Plan – Publication Draft, as set out at Appendix 1b.**

104. New Coventry Local Plan - Publication Draft (2011-2031) and the Updated Local Development Scheme (2016)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Place, which sought approval of the New Coventry Local Plan for a period of public consultation.

The Office for National Statistics recognised Coventry as the fastest growing city outside Greater London with continuing job growth and two successful universities. The Local Plan responded to the growth and the policies and proposals within it to provide a blueprint to support the Council's overarching aim of re-establishing itself as a Top Ten City.

The Plan identified out how and where the city would grow, develop and change and how the Council would work jointly with its partners and neighbouring authorities to support and facilitate this growth. It would be managed through a range of policies, designations and allocations, which would cover a broad selection of policy areas, including:

- Sustainable Development and the Duty to Cooperate;
- Housing;
- The Economy, Jobs and Employment;
- Public Health;
- Retail, Social, Community and Leisure Uses;
- The Green Belt and the Wider Green Environment;
- Heritage and Conservation;

- Urban and Landscape Design;
- Accessibility and Transport;
- Environmental Management, Climate Change and Minerals and Waste; and
- Infrastructure Provision.

The Cabinet noted that although all elements of the plan present specific policy implications and proposals for different parts of the city, of particular importance was the quantum of growth proposed and the impacts it would have on the city's Green Belt. The development pressures outlined in the report submitted were testimony to the growing demand from people who wanted to live and work in the City, and who were increasingly attracted to the area as a result of the resurgence of manufacturing industries in the sub-region, the success of Coventry's two world class universities and the growth in jobs across many sectors.

As such, an Objectively Assessed Need for Housing had been identified of 42,400 homes for Coventry between 2011 and 2031. This had been informed by the Government's most recent population projections. It was not possible however to accommodate this level of housing within the City's administrative boundaries, with the Council's housing land supply identifying a capacity of approximately 25,000 homes. A Memorandum of Understanding had therefore been prepared with the six Warwickshire authorities to propose how the remaining housing need would be redistributed and planned for (see Minute 102 above). The total capacity for new homes was approximately 400 homes higher than the housing requirement agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding with Warwickshire. This helped provide some flexibility to the City's housing land supply, which was a requirement of national guidance. Included as part of this growth were two proposed urban extensions at Keresley and Eastern Green. These two areas represented the first sizeable planned expansion of Coventry's urban area in over 50 years.

In addition to housing needs the plan also responded to the need for employment land. A total requirement of 354ha had been identified, which reflected both the need for new land but also an allowance for qualitative improvements to the City's employment land offer. The plan made provisions for 128ha of employment land within Coventry's boundaries (but with a further 89ha of employment land at Ansty Park and Ryton Park in Rugby Borough). The remaining requirement was expected to be largely delivered as part of the Gateway proposals in Warwick District.

This would however require the removal of approximately 600ha of land from Coventry's existing Green Belt to provide approximately 6,600 of these new homes and 41.5ha of the new employment land (potentially supporting the creation of 7,000 new jobs). The Cabinet noted, however, that only 48% of the land removed from the Green Belt was likely to be developed, meaning less than 10% of the City's existing Green Belt would be built on over the course of the plan. This was due to assets such as ancient woodlands being protected by other policy designations and new developments incorporating new publicly accessible and useable green spaces to ensure high quality environments. The majority of the remaining supply would be on brownfield land.

The Plan had also continued to ensure the most sensitive and highest value green spaces remained protected in the most appropriate and robust way. This led to the re-designation of some areas previously referred to as Green Belt being redefined to the new national designation of Local Green Space and reflected the fact they did not meet the purposes of Green Belt policy but perhaps more importantly reflected their importance to local communities within the more urbanised parts of the City. It was also noted that Local Green Space designations carried a very similar level of protection as Green Belt policy.

Notwithstanding the levels of growth expected within Coventry's boundaries, the City would not be able to achieve its ambition of becoming a Top 10 City again without the support of its neighbouring authorities, and continued working through the Duty to Cooperate. This reflected the City's tight administrative boundaries and that a substantial amount of the City's housing and employment needs would be delivered in Warwickshire, whilst links to the wider Birmingham conurbation would also be vital for longer term economic growth. The report indicated that there was a genuine chance therefore that some of the development could be brought forward adjacent to the City's boundaries, most notably to the north, east and south. The Local Plan identified its support for such proposals where they supported the sustainable growth of the City, but recognised that the final decisions rested with respective authorities. Indeed, recent proposals such as the Coventry Gateway and the growth of Warwick University were prime examples of how such developments could be achieved.

The Cabinet were advised that the version of the Local Plan included at Appendix 1 of the report submitted was the Publication Draft, which meant it was the version of the plan the Council believed was suitable to submit for public examination. It had been developed over a number of years and had full regard to a wide range of consultation responses, a robust evidence base and the Council's responsibilities under the statutory Duty to Cooperate.

The Plan had been prepared in accordance with relevant National Legislation and Planning Regulations, which meant, prior to submission, the plan must be published for a statutory period of 6 weeks public engagement (referred to as a period of representations) which focused on the Plans "soundness" and "legal compliance". This would commence on 18th January 2016.

It would however be necessary to consider all representations to the plan and potentially propose minor amendments prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for Public Examination. In order to avoid the need for a further report to full Council and the delay to the process that would result, it was intended that the Council delegate responsibility for this to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, the Chair of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) [Scrutiny Board 3] and the Chair of Planning Committee. This delegated power would also include a special meeting of Scrutiny Board 3 and the Planning Committee in March 2016. In the event that significant issues were highlighted with the Local Plan that would affect its legal compliance or overarching soundness and result in the need for major amendments, a further report would be submitted to Cabinet and Council for their consideration.

Accompanying this stage of the new Local Plan was an update of the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS was a mandatory requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and set out which documents the Council would produce to establish its new planning policies and when they would be produced. The LDS contained four separate documents planned for development. These included the Local Plan, the City Centre Area Action Plan, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and a Supporting Housing Delivery Development Plan Document.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet recommend that Council:

- 1. Consider the responses received to the Local Plan – Delivering Sustainable Growth: September 2014, which are referenced in Paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2, and summarised in Appendix 3 of the report submitted and contained in full on the Councils website.**
- 2. Approves the "Local Plan Publication Draft (2011-2031)" document.**
- 3. Approves the updated Local Development Scheme (2016).**
- 4. Authorises a period of six weeks statutory public engagement beginning on 18th January 2016 and ending on 29th February 2016.**
- 5. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, the Chair of Scrutiny Board 3 and the Chair of Planning Committee, to take full account of the responses received to the statutory period of public engagement, propose minor amendments to the Local Plan (where this is necessary to correct any errors and aid clarity) and submit the plan to the Secretary of State for a period of Public Examination.**

105. Coventry City Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) - Publication Draft

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Place, which sought approval of the City Centre Area Action Plan for a period of public consultation.

The Cabinet note that the development of a successful City Centre was an essential component of promoting the growth and prosperity of Coventry. For many visitors, investors, business and local people the City Centre was a gateway to Coventry that represented their principal location for work, learning, leisure and shopping. It offered a fantastic opportunity to exploit the City's historic assets, rich 20th century heritage and showpiece innovative 21st century buildings and public realm, which together would create a unique city centre environment. The City Centre Area Action Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted, set out how this could be promoted and achieved.

At a time when Coventry's population continued to grow, its city centre would continue to be a focal point, but must respond in order to stop a period of decline, primarily within its retail offer. This was placed in context through the Council's Shopping and Centres Study (2014), which identified Coventry as the country's 13th biggest city but with a retail centre ranked 58th. As such, there was a clear disparity between the City's population and the quality of its retail offer.

In recent years however, significant investment in city centre public realm improvements had complemented substantial investments in job creation such as the new Severn Trent head offices and hi-tech business at the University Technology Park. Likewise, more people were now living in the city centre following delivery of new homes over the last 10 years. Coventry University also continued to grow, not only in terms of its student numbers, but also its national and global reputation and the size and quality of its campus.

The Area Action Plan looked to build upon these recent successes and provide a platform for the future to help guide and deliver new developments and investment. It included well known and established proposals such as Friargate, City Centre South and the completion of Belgrade Plaza, but also introduced new ideas and aspirations. For example, new residential led regeneration around the area north of Corporation Street and Fairfax Street, continued growth of the Technology Park, new approaches to city centre parking provision and longer term aspirations for the regeneration of the northern half of the City's retail area.

In addition to new buildings, the Area Action Plan provided a fundamental focus on urban and landscape design, environmental quality, protection of historic assets, green infrastructure, water courses and new routes and linkages helping people move around the city centre and its adjoining areas in an easier and more coherent way. These aspects would all be fundamental in continuing to improve the overall feel and safety of the city centre and the quality of its built environment.

The development of an Area Action Plan was therefore essential to help provide a clear overview of how all these different aspects could work together to improve the city centre whilst shaping and directing future development. The Cabinet noted however, that the Area Action Plan could not define exactly how specific sites would be developed, but it could set clear markers and provide a firm steer as to how development could be brought forward. This provided a blueprint for the city centre, allowing it to respond to the rapid change that it was expected to face in the coming years.

In this context, the Area Action Plan had been developed in two specific sections. The first would consider overarching policy guidance focused around the four key areas of city centre heritage; the built environment; the natural environment; and accessibility.

The second section would provide a more detailed overview of:

- Nine Principal Areas that have been identified around specific characteristics and include:
 - i. The Business Area – Friargate;
 - ii. Cathedrals and Cultural Area;
 - iii. The Civic Area;
 - iv. Far Gosford Street Area;
 - v. Health and Learning Area – Swanswell;
 - vi. Leisure and Entertainment Area – Sky Dome and Belgrade Plaza;
 - vii. Primary Shopping Area – the Retail Core;
 - viii. Technology Park Area – Parkside; and

ix. University and Enterprise Area

- Two further regeneration areas to the north of the city centre, focused around Bishop Street and Fairfax Street; and
- An area of planned stability with small infill opportunities to the south of the city, focused around Warwick Row.

Both sections follow on from an introductory section which explained where the city centre currently sits and where it looks to go in the future. This section also included a new policy which clarified the city centre development strategy and created a primary link between the Area Action Plan and the Local Plan.

The Cabinet noted that the version of the Area Action Plan included at Appendix 1 of the report was the Publication Draft, which meant it was the version of the plan the Council believed was suitable to submit for public examination. It had been developed over a number of years and had full regard to a wide range of consultation responses, a robust evidence base and the Council's responsibilities under the statutory Duty to Cooperate.

The Plan had been prepared in accordance with relevant National Legislation and Planning Regulations, which meant prior to submission the plan must be published for a statutory period of 6 weeks public engagement (referred to as a period of representations) which would focus on the Plans "soundness" and "legal compliance". This would commence on 18th January 2016.

It would however be necessary to consider all representations to the plan and potentially propose minor amendments prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for Public Examination. In order to avoid the need for a further report to full Council and the delay to the process that would result, it was intended that the Council delegate responsibility for this to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, the Chair of the Business, Enterprise and Economy Scrutiny Board (3) [Scrutiny Board 3] and the Chair of Planning Committee. This delegated power would also include a special meeting of Scrutiny Board 3 and the Planning Committee in March 2016. In the event that significant issues were highlighted with the Area Action Plan that would affect its legal compliance or overarching soundness and result in the need for major amendments, a further report would be submitted to Cabinet and Council for their consideration.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet recommend that Council:

- 1. Consider the responses received to the City Centre Area Action Plan – The Preferred Approach, which are referenced in Paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2, and summarised in Appendix 2 of the report submitted and contained in full on the Council's website.**
- 2. Approves the "City Centre Area Action Plan – Publication Draft (2011-2031)" document.**
- 3. Authorises a period of six weeks statutory public engagement beginning on 18th January 2016 and ending on 29th February 2016.**

- 4. Delegate to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, the Chair of Scrutiny Board 3 and the Chair of Planning Committee, to take full account of the responses received to the statutory period of public engagement, propose minor amendments to the Area Action Plan (where this is necessary to correct any errors and aid clarity) and submit the plan to the Secretary of State for a period of Public Examination.**
106. **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 10.30 am)