

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 20 October 2020

Present:

Members: Councillor A Lucas (Chair)

Councillor F Abbott	Councillor R Lakha
Councillor N Akhtar	Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor P Akhtar	Councillor M Lapsa
Councillor M Ali	Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor R Ali	Councillor P Male
Councillor A Andrews	Councillor K Maton
Councillor R Auluck	Councillor T Mayer
Councillor R Bailey	Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor L Bigham	Councillor C Miks
Councillor J Birdi	Councillor J Mutton
Councillor J Blundell	Councillor M Mutton
Councillor R Brown	Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor K Caan	Councillor G Ridley
Councillor J Clifford	Councillor E Ruane
Councillor G Duggins	Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor B Gittins	Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor L Harvard	Councillor P Seaman
Councillor G Hayre	Councillor B Singh
Councillor M Heaven	Councillor R Singh
Councillor P Hetherton	Councillor D Skinner
Councillor J Innes	Councillor R Thay
Councillor T Jandu	Councillor C Thomas
Councillor B Kaur	Councillor S Walsh
Councillor L Kelly	Councillor D Welsh
Councillor T Khan	Councillor G Williams
Councillor AS Khan	

Apologies: Councillor J Lepoidevin
Honorary Alderman M Hammon

Public Business

35. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September, 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2020 were agreed as a true record.

36. Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor

Birthday Honours

The Lord Mayor referred to the awards made to the following people associated with City in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours List:

- **OBE:** To Professor Ramesh Arasaradnam, an honorary clinical academic and consultant gastroenterologist in Coventry, for his dedication to patient care, education and clinical research during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **CBE:** To Peter Barnett, Coventry City Council Officer, for services to refugees in Coventry.
- **OBE:** To Professor Debra Bick, Professor of Clinical Trials in Maternal Health at Warwick University for services to Midwifery
- **MBE:** To Rosemarie Brady and Patricia Griffiths, co-founders of the Coventry Resource Centre for the Blind for services to visually impaired people.
- **OBE:** To Rosemary Drinkwater for services to higher education, innovation and enterprise in the West Midlands.
- **MBE:** To Carmel McCalmont, a celebrated midwife who has dedicated almost 40 years to helping expectant mothers and students across the Midlands, for services to midwifery.
- **MBE:** To Anna McGee for services to homeless people in the City.
- **MBE:** To Judith Oliver JP, from Warwickshire, for services to justice, for her part as a member of the Youth Referral Panel in Coventry and serving as a magistrate.
- **OBE:** To Barbara Tudor, who works with victims for the National Probation Service, for services to victims of crime.

Members paid tribute to the recipients and Council noted that a letter of congratulations has been sent to all of the recipients, on behalf of the City Council.

37. **Petitions**

RESOLVED that the following petitions be referred to the appropriate City Council bodies:

- (a) The residents of Thomas Court and business owners in Queens Road are concerned about the huge increase in anti-social behaviour in the area and request the City Council, West Midlands Police and registered social landlords to draw up an action plan for this area which will tackle these growing problems; 34 signatures presented by Councillor N Akhtar.
- (b) Residents concerned about the safety of pedestrians and property at Malmesbury Road/Charlecote Road request a review to be undertaken to explore possible parking options using part of green space, to

remove vehicles off road and to give safe crossing areas for pedestrians; 7 signatures presented by Councillor R Lancaster.

38. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

39. Annual Report of the Ethics Committee 2019-20

Further to Minute 10 of the Ethics Committee, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance setting out the work of the Committee over the last Municipal Year.

RESOLVED that the City Council notes the Annual Report of the Ethics Committee.

40. Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/2020

Further to Minute 22 of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, the City Council considered the Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-20.

RESOLVED that the City Council notes the Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-2020.

41. Contingency & Recovery Plan 2020/21 (Youth Justice Plan)

Further to Minute 34 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Children's Services which sought endorsement to The Coventry Youth Offending Service (CYOS) Contingency and Recovery Plan.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB), in recognition of the unprecedented circumstances and challenges created by Covid 19, removed the expectation and grant condition that youth offending teams submit a standard Youth Justice Plan. The new grant condition, notified to Youth Offending Teams (YOTS) on 7 April 2020, was that each service must submit a Covid 19 Contingency and Recovery Plan by 30 April 2020, which was done. Given the indeterminate period that the impact of Covid would be experienced for, the decision by the YJB was entirely appropriate and welcomed.

The Crime and Disorder Act imposed a duty to complete and submit a Youth Justice Plan each year and this year as an exception, a Contingency and Recovery Plan. The Plan provided an overview of Coventry Youth Offending Services activities in response to Covid 19, in order to discharge its statutory functions and activities to aid recovery.

RESOLVED that the City Council endorses the Youth Justice Contingency and Recovery Plan 2020/21.

42. Responses to Government Planning Consultations

Further to Minute 39 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services which referred to recently launched Government consultations on two Planning documents:

- Changes to the Current Planning System
- Planning for the Future (White Paper).

The former was a technical consultation that concluded on 1 October 2020, the response was drafted and submitted by officers in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities and was included as Appendix 1 to the report. The proposals included increasing the housing requirements and reducing the amount of affordable housing provided by some sites, both of which the Council strongly opposed.

The White Paper consultation would close on 29 October 2020 and the proposed response was included at Appendix 2 of the report. The White Paper proposed a fundamental change to the nature of the planning system in England and Wales, moving away from the current “discretionary” planning system to a zonal system.

The report indicated that the proposals would lead to less public scrutiny and ability to influence planning decision and that the Council strongly opposed this and a number of other measures proposed. The White Paper could have significant implications to the way that planning would be delivered and funded, both in terms of fees earned and costs incurred and specifically around funding the cost of infrastructure. The report also indicated that there was insufficient detail currently available to quantify this risk, and that future reports would address this as appropriate.

In relation to Question 26 in Appendix 2, and as per legal advice, a response to this question was circulated to all Members prior to the Council meeting and would be incorporated into the response prior to submission.

RESOLVED that the City Council:-

- 1) Notes the response submitted on the 1 October 2020 to the Government Consultation “Changes to the Current Planning System”.**
- 2) Delegates to the Director Streetscene and Regulatory Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, the final submission of the White Paper consultation response attached as Appendix 2 to the report with the inclusion of the response to Question 26 as circulated.**

43. Amendments to Appointments

The City Council considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which sought to make changes to appointments in relation to City Council bodies and representatives on outside bodies.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- 1) Approves the appointment of Councillor L Bigham as a City Council Representative and the appointment of Councillor P Akhtar as the Council's Lead Member, on the West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Delivery Committee for the remainder of the annual term of office 2020/2021, to replace Councillor D Welsh.
- 2) Approves the appointment of Councillor P Akhtar as the Council's Principal Director on the Board of West Midlands Rail for the remainder of the annual term of office 2020/2021, to replace Councillor D Welsh.
- 3) Approves the appointment of Councillor D Welsh to the following outside bodies for the remainder of the annual term of office 2020/21 to replace Councillor T Khan:-

Coventry Ambassadors Social Enterprise Board
West Midlands Combined Authority Housing and Land Delivery Board
West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership

- 4) Approves the appointment of Councillor N Akhtar as Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee in place of Councillor R Brown.
- 5) Approves the appointment of Councillor R Ali as the Labour Group named substitute on the Audit and Procurement Committee in place of Councillor R Brown.
- 6) Delegates any further changes to appointments to any Council body or representatives to outside body required as a result of Recommendation 4 above to the Director of Law and Governance, following consultation with the Leader and taking into account the wishes of the Group; and that all Members be notified of those changes at the earliest opportunity.

44. **Report of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

The City Council considered a report of the Director of Education and Skills which reported that in August 2020, The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) published a report in the public interest setting out the findings of a complaint against Coventry City Council in respect of the appeals process for Home to School Transport applications. The Council's process did not at that time provide a right for an appellant to attend the second and final stage appeals panel.

The LGO identified that was a flaw in operational process as it may disadvantage an appellant who may not have the skills to express their grounds for appeal in writing. Coventry City Council has accepted that finding, apologised to the complainant and amended its process.

The LGO publication was made in the public interest to share wider learning, with the intent that other local authorities would now review their own operational procedures to ensure compliance, as this was not necessarily a Coventry specific issue.

RESOLVED that the City Council acknowledges the recommendations of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) in its published decision of the 10th August 2020, reference number: 19008896 and notes that the Council has accepted and implemented all recommendations.

45. Amendments to Allocation of Executive Functions within Cabinet

The City Council noted a report of the Leader which informed the Council of changes to the allocation of Executive Functions within Cabinet.

On 14 September, 2020, in accordance with Paragraph 9.4 of Part 2B of the Constitution, the Leader of the Council notified the Director of Law and Governance that Councillor David Welsh had been appointed to the role of Cabinet Member Housing and Communities following the resignation of Councillor T Khan from the role.

On 8 October, 2020, in accordance with Paragraph 9.4 of Part 2B of the Constitution, the Leader of the Council notified the Director of Law and Governance that Councillor Richard Brown had been appointed to the role of Cabinet Member Strategic Finance and Resources following the resignation of Councillor J Mutton from the role.

46. Exercise of Emergency Functions

The City Council noted a report of the Chief Executive that informed Council of a decision undertaken by the Chief Executive since the last Council Meeting on 8 September, 2020, in accordance with the Constitution and following consultation with the Leader of the Council, Councillor G Duggins, to exercise emergency functions as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure the continuous functioning of the business of the Authority, including its response to the pandemic.

The decision, including the reasons for the decision taken, had been published on the City Council's website.

47. Question Time

Councillors P Hetherton and D Welsh provided written answers to the questions set out in the Questions Booklet together with oral responses to supplementary questions put to them at the meeting.

The following Members answered oral questions put to them by other Members as set out below, together with supplementary questions on the same matters:

No	Questions asked by	Question put to	Subject matter
1	Councillor L Bigham	Councillor K Maton	Additional funding for schools to cope with Covid 19 during the winter months
2	Councillor G Williams	Councillor R Brown	Council tax 2021/22

3	Councillor G Williams	Councillor J O'Boyle	E-scooter trial
4	Councillor J Blundell	Councillor K Maton	In view of Covid 19, the possibility of an increase in choice of schools in relation to the admissions policy
5	Councillor P Hetherton	Councillor K Maton	Free school meals
6	Councillor T Mayer	Councillor P Hetherton	Current Covid rules regarding pall bearers in Coventry
7	Councillor A Andrews	Councillor P Hetherton	Progress of a petition submitted in early 2020 in relation to The Chesils/Knoll Drive

48. **Statements**

The Leader, Councillor G Duggins, made a Statement in respect of a number of issues relating to Covid-19 including ongoing work by the City Council and the possibility of Coventry being placed in Tier 2.

Councillor A Andrews responded to the Statement.

49. **Debate: 20 MPH Zones**

The following was moved by Councillor J Blundell and seconded by Councillor M Lapsa:

"This council commits itself to commence work on all outstanding 20 MPH zones by the end of this municipal year, 31st March 2021, to include the necessary measures to ensure effective enforcement. Since the outbreak of Covid19 while there has been a decrease in the number vehicles on the city's roads there has been a significant increase in the number of vehicles travelling at excessive speed. We urge the council together with the money from the government to implement dedicated cycle ways to fulfil their commitment to bring in the 20 MPH Zones so Coventry can truly be considered a safe city."

RESOLVED that the Motion be remitted to allow further discussions between the Groups.

50. **Debate: Windrush Scandal**

"This council pledges to oppose the criminalisation of Windrush families, calling for an end to the "hostile environment" policies and for support for

those who have been affected by them. We call for 22nd June to be celebrated as annual Windrush Day and we will press central Government for a public enquiry into the scandal.” Furthermore we will:

- Continue actively campaigning for an end to all “hostile environment” policy measures and to continue to call on the Government to enable the Windrush generation to acquire British citizenship at no cost and with proactive assistance throughout the process.
- Join with other councils and celebrate an annual Windrush Day in Coventry and for Coventry to welcome the Government’s announcement to make 22nd June each year an annual celebration to recognise and honour the enormous contribution of those who arrived between 1948 and 1971.
- Press the Prime Minister to call for an independent public enquiry into the Windrush scandal.
- Demand the Government fully supports advice agencies in their work to achieve justice for all Coventry residents of the Windrush generation.
- Support the call for fees for naturalisation to be waived for all those who have been affected.
- Oppose the criminalisation of Windrush families”.

RESOLVED that the Motion, as set out above, be unanimously adopted.

(Meeting closed at 5.10 pm)