

**Time and Date**

2.00 pm on Tuesday, 16th January, 2024

Place

Council Chamber - Council House

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 December 2023** (Pages 5 - 16)
3. **Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor**
4. **Petitions**
5. **Declarations of Interest**

Matters Left for Determination by the City Council/Recommendations for the City Council

It is anticipated that the following matter will be referred as Recommendation from the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities meeting held on 15 January 2024. The report is attached. The relevant Recommendations will be circulated separately.

6. **Proposed Amendments to the Constitution** (Pages 17 - 30)

Items for Consideration

7. **Review of Members' Allowances Scheme** (Pages 31 - 54)
Report of the Chief Legal Officer
8. **Appointment to the West Midlands Investment Zone Joint Committee**
(Pages 55 - 58)
Report of the Chief Legal Officer
9. **Local Government Boundary Review - Response to Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Draft Recommendations** (Pages 59 - 70)
Report of the Chief Legal Officer

Other Matters

10. Question Time (Pages 71 - 72)

10.1 Written Question – Booklet 1

10.2 Oral Questions to Chairs of Scrutiny Boards/Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

10.3 Oral Questions to Chairs of other meetings

10.4 Oral Questions to Representatives on Outside Bodies

10.5 Oral Questions to Cabinet Members and Deputy Cabinet Members on any matter

11. Statements (if any)

12. Debates

12.1 To be moved by Councillor D Welsh and seconded by Councillor J Innes

“Coventry has a great many residents renting their homes from private landlords. Although the Government promised to reform the private rented sector, still nothing has been done to stop the issue of Section 21 notices.

The Government accepted the need to end no fault evictions, but still they dither and delay in bringing forward the necessary legislation to make this happen.

This Council calls on the Government for immediate action to scrap Section 21, which will bring a much needed measure of security to our residents renting in the private rented sector.”

12.2 To be moved by Councillor R Simpson and seconded by Councillor M Heaven

“This Council notes the significant capital funding awarded to Coventry by the West Midlands Combined Authority.”

Julie Newman, Chief Legal Officer, Council House, Coventry

Monday, 8 January 2024

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Carolyn Sinclair/Suzanne Bennett 024 7697 2302 / 2299

Membership: Councillors F Abbott, S Agboola, N Akhtar, P Akhtar, M Ali, R Bailey,

L Bigham, J Birdi (Chair), J Blundell, R Brown, K Caan, G Duggins, J Gardiner, S Gray, L Harvard, G Hayre, M Heaven, P Hetherington, A Hopkins, J Innes, T Jandu, A Jobbar, A Kaur, L Kelly, S Keough, T Khan, AS Khan, R Lakha, R Lancaster, M Lapsa, J Lepoidevin, G Lloyd, P Male, A Masih, K Maton, J McNicholas, C Miks, B Mosterman, M Mutton (Deputy Chair), S Nazir, J O'Boyle, E M Reeves, G Ridley, E Ruane, K Sandhu, T Sawdon, P Seaman, R Simpson, B Singh, R Singh, R Thay, CE Thomas, A Tucker and D Welsh

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Carolyn Sinclair/Suzanne Bennett
024 7697 2302 / 2299

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Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 5 December 2023

Present:

Members: Councillor J Birdi (Chair)

Councillor F Abbott	Councillor R Lakha
Councillor S Agboola	Councillor M Lapsa
Councillor N Akhtar	Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor P Akhtar	Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor M Ali	Councillor P Male
Councillor R Bailey	Councillor A Masih
Councillor L Bigham	Councillor K Maton
Councillor J Blundell	Councillor C Miks
Councillor R Brown	Councillor B Mosterman
Councillor K Caan	Councillor M Mutton
Councillor G Duggins	Councillor S Nazir
Councillor J Gardiner	Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor S Gray	Councillor E M Reeves
Councillor L Harvard	Councillor G Ridley
Councillor G Hayre	Councillor E Ruane
Councillor M Heaven	Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor P Hetherton	Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor T Jandu	Councillor P Seaman
Councillor A Jobbar	Councillor R Simpson
Councillor A Kaur	Councillor B Singh
Councillor L Kelly	Councillor R Singh
Councillor S Keough	Councillor R Thay
Councillor T Khan	Councillor CE Thomas
Councillor AS Khan	

Honorary Alderman J Clifford, D Skinner and T Skipper

Apologies: Councillors A Hopkins, J Innes, R Lancaster, J McNicholas, A Tucker and D Welsh
Honorary Alderman M Hammon

Public Business

73. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 October 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record.

74. Return of Councillor

The City Council noted the return of Dr Lynnette Kelly as a Labour Councillor elected for Earlsdon Ward in the City, on 26 October 2023, for a term expiring in 2026. .

On behalf of the Council, the Lord Mayor welcomed Councillor Dr Kelly back to Council.

75. **Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor**

1. Former Councillor Becky Gittins

The Lord Mayor referred to former Councillor Gittins who resigned from her position as an Earlsdon Ward Councillor in September. Becky was elected in 2019 and was extremely proud to represent her constituents. During her term of office, she was Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services and did an excellent job engaging with young people.

Members paid tribute to Becky, thanked her for her hard work and dedication and wished her every success in the future.

2. Death of Rosie Brady

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of Rosie Brady who was the co-founder of Coventry Resource Centre for the Blind, one of the charities chosen for the Mayoral year.

Rosie herself was blind due to macular degeneration and understood how difficult life could be for people living with sight loss. She helped and inspired many people and will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

Members paid tribute to Rosie and noted that a letter of condolence had been sent to Rosie's family.

3. Installation of Christopher Cocksworth as Dean of Windsor

The Lord Mayor reported that he, together with the Leader, the Deputy Leader and the Lady Mayoress recently had the pleasure of attending Windsor Castle for the installation of the former Bishop of Coventry as Dean of Windsor, the head of St George's Chapel. The Lord Mayor remarked that it was an honour and a privilege to witness this special occasion. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress were extremely fortunate to meet the King, who very graciously took time to speak to them.

Members noted that Bishop Ruth Worsley had taken up the position of acting Bishop of Coventry and a letter welcoming her to the City would be sent by the Lord Mayor.

76. **Petitions**

RESOLVED that the following petitions be referred to the appropriate bodies/outside organisations:

- (a) Request for the installation of a pedestrian crossing across Baginton Road, near to the junction with the Chesils – 202 signatures, sponsored by Councillor Tucker, presented by Councillor Kelly.
- (b) Request for the City Council to work with Transport for West Midlands and National Express to keep the No. 19 Tile Hill to Coventry via Cannon Park Shopping Centre Bus Service – 110 signatures presented by Councillor Blundell.
- (c) Petition calling on Transport for West Midlands to bring forward plans to move the bus stop currently outside 282 Broad Lane – 21 signatures, presented by Councillor Ridley.
- (d) Request for the installation of outdoor gym equipment in the Willenhall area in line with neighbouring Cheylesmore – 70 signatures, presented by Councillor Thomas.
- (e) Urgent request for the implementation of a pedestrian crossing at the end of Charter Avenue, leading to Cromwell Lane – 41 signatures, presented by Councillor Masih.
- (f) Petition objecting to planning application PL/2023/0001989/FUL for Charter Avenue Post Office – 217 signatures presented by Councillor Lapsa.
- (g) Petition objecting to planning application PL/2023/0001989/FUL for Charter Avenue Post Office – 216 signatures presented by Councillor Masih.
- (h) Petition requesting a pause in the proposed programme for measures relating to the Earlsdon ‘Liveable Neighbourhood’ programme – 276 signatures, presented by Councillor Heaven.

77. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

78. Proposed Amendments for the Constitution

Further to Minute 37 of the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, the City Council considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer which outlined proposed changes to the Constitution.

The Constitutional Advisory Panel at its meeting on 31 October 2023 considered the following proposed changes to the Constitution:

- (a) Amendments to the Contract Procedure Rules as set out in Part 3G of the Constitution
- (b) Amendments to the Council Procedure Rules as set out in Part 3A of the Constitution
- (c) The establishment of Sub Committee of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee to consider Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing applications.

(a) Contract Procedure Rules (Part 3G of the Constitution)

The background and the proposed amendments to the Contracts Procedure Rules were set out in Appendix A of the report. The amendments proposed support SME’s in tendering for below threshold tenders and quotation exercises following

feedback received in response to Procurement Services' Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) survey. The proposed amendments could be summarised as follows:

- Administrative changes (titles, up-to-date PCR thresholds)
- Furtherance of the Council's Social Value agenda through increasing minimum number of tenders/quotes sought and establishing minimum timescales below threshold.
- Clear identification of legislative requirements with regards to publication of notices to ensure compliance with the regulations.
- Explicit reference to contracting with Local Authority Trading Companies (teckal) in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- Reflect the recently issued revised public procurement thresholds for goods, services and works that would come into force from 1 January 2024.

The Cabinet Member noted that the proposed amendments were the first of three potential set of amendments to the Contracts Procedures Rules due to forthcoming legislative changes.

The Constitutional Advisory Panel agreed that all of the proposed amendments, as detailed in Appendix A, be recommended to the Cabinet Member for approval.

(b) Council Procedure Rules (Part 3A of the Constitution)

The background and the proposed amendments to the Council Procedure Rules were set out in Appendix B to the report and follow a review of the Council Procedure Rules by David McGrath, an external trainer with expertise and knowledge of Council Procedure Rules, their application and best practice. The review provided a number of recommendations and items for consideration relating to the following:

- The modernisation use of language throughout the Procedure Rules
- A change in relation to the effect on quorum of a Member declaring an interest and leaving the meeting
- A change in relation to Members being required to stand to address the meeting
- The introduction of a limit on the number of supplementary questions and a time limit on the length of question Time, together with guidance to questioners to assist with precision and fairness in questioning
- A change in relation to not allowing Motions to be submitted to the February Council Tax and Budget setting meeting
- The clarification in relation to requiring Motions to have a discernible link to the City Council.

The Constitutional Advisory Panel considered these and noted that other matters raised by the review had not been included as they helpfully reflected wider practice but were not as relevant to the City Council's approach.

The Advisory Panel agreed with the recommended amendments, except for the introduction of a limit on the number of supplementary questions and a time limit on the length of Question Time. The Advisory Panel noted that in relation to

supplementary questions, the Lord Mayor has the power to disallow supplementary questions which, in their opinion is irrelevant or frivolous or a repetition of on substantially similar to a question or questions already asked. The Advisory Panel considered that, if this power was applied effectively by the Lord Mayor, there was no need for any further restriction on Question Time. It was agreed that providing clarity in relation to guidance to questions to assist with precision and fairness in questioning would be helpful.

The Constitutional Advisory Panel therefore agreed that all of the proposed amendments, as detailed in Appendix B, should be recommended to the Cabinet member for Policing and Equalities for approval.

(c) Establishment of Licensing and Regulatory Sub-Committees to deal with Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing

The Constitutional Advisory Panel considered a proposal to establish Licensing and Regulatory Sub Committees to deal with Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Applications to provide more efficient decision making. The proposal, which was recommended should be introduced from the start of the new Municipal Year 2024/25:

- Would establish two equal, politically balanced, Sub-Committee by dividing the membership of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee would sit on both Sub-Committees.
- Each Sub-Committee would meet bi-monthly and Members would know at the start of the year which Sub-Committee they were appointed to and the dates of those meetings. This would ensure that all Members of the Committee would deal with such applications during the year.
- The quorum of each Sub-Committee would be four. And if they were unable to attend a meeting, Members would be entitled to nominate a substitute member from the membership of the other Sub-Committee.
- The Licensing and Regulatory Committee would still meet in full to consider any other matters delegated to them as necessary.

Councillor F Abbott, Chair of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee, attended the meeting of the Constitutional Advisory Panel and indicated her support for the above proposals.

The Advisory Panel indicated that it would important that the membership of each Sub-Committee ensures that there is a mix of both experienced and less experienced Members in licensing matter, and it was noted that this would be addressed with Group Leaders during the appointment process prior to the Annual Meeting of the Council.

The Constitutional Advisory Panel agreed that the proposal as outlined above be recommended to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities for approval.

RESOLVED that, the City Council approved Recommendations (1) to (3) below and authorises the Chief Legal Officer to make necessary amendments to the Constitution:

- (1) The proposed amendments to the Contracts Procedure Rules (Part 3G of the Constitution) as detailed in Appendix A to the report with immediate effect.**
- (2) The amendments to the Council Procedure Rules (Part 3A of the Constitution) as detailed in Appendix B to the report with immediate effect.**
- (3) The establishment of Sub-Committees of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee to consider Hackney Carriage and Private Hire applications from the start of the Municipal Year 2024/25.**

79. Amendments to Appointments

The City Council considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer which sought to appoint to Labour Party vacant seats on Council bodies in accordance with the political balance calculation.

At the Annual Meeting on 18 May 2023, the City Council noted the allocation of seats to Political Groups in accordance with the political balance rules and made appointments to Council bodies accordingly.

Following the resignation of former Earlsdon Ward Councillor Becky Gittins, a by election was held on 26 October 2023 at which Councillor Dr Lynnette Kelly a Labour Party councillor, was elected. Therefore, the political balance of the Council remains as it was in May 2023.

RESOLVED that the City Council approves the appointment of Councillor Dr L Kelly to the following Council bodies with immediate effect:

- (a) Licensing and Regulatory Committee**
- (b) Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)**
- (c) Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)**

80. Delivery of a Future "Best in Class" Refuse Collection Service for Coventry

The City Council considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services which reported on the delivery of a Future "Best in Class" refuse collection service for Coventry.

The City Council has a legal duty to collect and treat household waste as laid out in the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Whilst the waste types collected are prescribed by national government, the method of treatment and the frequency of collection are matters for each local authority.

The collection of household waste is one of the most visible universal services provided by any local authority with a weekly transaction at every household. Coventry is no different, and it is therefore important that the residents of the city received a "best in class" waste collection and treatment service.

In order to continue to develop a “best in class” waste collection service, it was imperative that the City Council has a good quality trained workforce with appropriate terms and conditions of employment, reflecting a modern and responsive service delivering for the residents of Coventry.

The report sought to outline measures to be taken to develop a “best in class” waste collection service, how waste collection colleagues would be deployed to meet the evolving needs of Coventry Residents and how the terms and conditions on which colleagues are employed would support those aims. The report did not propose to change the method or frequency of domestic refuse collection in Coventry.

The City Council has, historically, operated an in-house waste collection service for household waste and recycling. The City Council also operates a household recycling collection service for the residents of Nuneaton and Bedworth on behalf of the Borough Council. The disposal and / or treatment of both commercial and domestic waste are managed on the City Council’s behalf by several subsidiary companies owned by the City Council. There is no proposal to change the existing arrangements for the disposal and / or treatment of domestic waste in Coventry. Nor is there any proposal to change the method or frequency of refuse collection for Coventry residents.

Since the cessation of the industrial action by waste HGV drivers in August 2022, the City Council has operated waste collections using a mixed workforce directly employed on City Council terms and conditions or employed by Tom White Waste on their terms and conditions. The City Council terms and conditions provide for the operation of “task and finish” for waste collection rounds, whilst Tom White Waste terms and conditions do not. The use of task and finish means that the Council’s directly employed staff can finish their shift once a group of collection rounds have completed their assigned task (e.g. the collection of recyclable waste) and have returned to the depot.

The use of Tom White Waste employees to assist in the delivery of the City Council’s domestic refuse collection service since the beginning of 2022 has provided many benefits to the service, not least through an overall change in culture to one that better serves the residents of Coventry. However, the current mixture of staff working on different terms and conditions, with one set of terms and conditions providing for the operation of “task and finish” reduces the flexibility to deliver a “best in class” service. For example, deploying resources effectively whilst working to two sets of terms and conditions is not conducive to delivering the best service for the residents of Coventry and is expensive to operate. It also hampers the service’s ability to be reactive to demand led service needs. The City Council is looking to modernise the service, and as part of this, it considers that change is best delivered by having a single directly employed workforce, with new terms and conditions providing for standardised and predictable working hours and the removal of “task and finish”.

Over the last six months, negotiations on the realignment of terms and conditions have taken place with the trade unions recognised by the City Council, namely: Unite, Unison and GMB. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts all parties, no agreement on a mechanism for change has been reached. In addition, there is currently no agreement on the single proposal from the three trade unions to move

forward with the continued development of a “best in class” refuse collection service as outlined below.

Officers sought independent legal advice on a way forward to introduce new contractual arrangements, including a move away from “task and finish” so as to allow the City Council to continue to develop a “best in class” waste collection service. The following two options were considered to provide an equitable and legally compliant way forward.

Option 1 was to market test and outsource the waste collection service to a third party not owned by the City Council. Having robustly explored the feasibility of this, including the timescale to deliver this option; and given the potential increase in cost from an outsourced waste collection service, the inevitable loss of direct control of a highly visible universal service, and the Council’s inability to achieve direct change to support the continued development of the service, this option was not recommended.

The second option was to modernise the service and establish standardised and predictable patterns of waste collections, a single set of terms and conditions for those working in waste collection be introduced without the use of “task and finish” system, via direct recruitment and changes to the contractual terms of existing employees.

This option would retain an in-house waste collection service, and, by virtue of that continued direct control, it would achieve the City Council’s aim of continuing to improve the service by delivering a change in terms and conditions, including a move away from “task and finish”. In support of this option, it was proposed that:

Vacant posts in the Council’s establishment which were currently being covered by Tom White Waste employees would be recruited to directly on new City Council terms and conditions. These new terms and conditions would not include continued use of “task and finish”.

Following collective consultation, existing employees on City Council terms and conditions would be offered the same terms and conditions as new starters. After collective consultation is concluded, and assuming that no new information comes to light as part of that process, any employee not agreeing to the variation of their terms and conditions would be given notice to terminate their existing contract of employment and offered re-engagement on the City Council’s new contract.

Once that process was concluded, the waste service would also look at rebalancing the rounds to ensure that work was being allocated effectively and in line with the capacity of the service

Allowing for both the consultation time, and contractual notice to be given (if required), this option could be delivered in less than nine months.

This was the preferred option, as it would retain control of the service, it would achieve a uniform set of terms and conditions, and would reach a conclusion sooner, which in turn would allow the progress to a “best in class” service to continue at a pace.

RESOLVED that the City Council notes the measures to be taken to create a modern and responsive waste collection service and the subsequent changes to terms and conditions upon which those operating in the service will be employed.

81. **Exercise of Emergency Functions**

The City Council noted a report of the Chief Executive informing the Council of a decision undertaken by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Constitution and following consultation with the Leader of the Council, Councillor G Duggins, to exercise emergency functions to accept and allocate a grant of £2,539,200 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (“DLUHC”) pursuant to the grant scheme known as the Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2 (LAHF2).

On 10 November, 2023 the Chief Executive was satisfied that the following decision was required to be taken pursuant to the emergency provision in connection with the acceptance and allocation of a grant of £2,539,200 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (“DLUHC”) pursuant to the grant scheme known as the Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2 (LAHF2). The Council received a Memorandum of Understanding to receive the grant from the DLUHC on 3 November, 2023 which was required to be signed by 13 November, 2023.

- Accept a grant in the sum of £2,539,200 and use the grant in line with the grant determination issued
- Approve that Stonewater Limited (via a legal agreement) will be transferred up to £423,200 in grant to deliver upon the purchase of 4 properties purchased for families on an Afghan resettlement scheme.
- Approve that the grant of £2,539,200 is added to the City Council’s Revenue Budget
- Delegate authority to the Director of Adults and Housing to administer the grant in accordance with the grant determination referenced above.

The purpose and objectives of the grant were to:

- Provide sustainable housing to those on Afghan resettlement schemes at risk of homelessness so that they can build new lives in the UK, find employment and integrate into communities.
- Reduce local housing pressures beyond those on Afghan resettlement schemes by providing better quality temporary accommodation to families owed homelessness duties by Local Authorities.
- Reduce emergency, temporary and bridging accommodation costs.
- Reduce impacts on the existing housing and homelessness systems and those waiting for social housing.

The City Council (in accordance with the requirements of the grant) would purchase 20 properties for use as temporary accommodation. The LAHF2 funding will be match funded by the City Council utilising capital funding to purchase family temporary accommodation units which was approved by Cabinet in March 2022. The City Council appointed the registered housing provider (Stonewater Limited) to deliver the requirements of LAHF 1. The Council would extend the arrangement

with Stonewater Limited so that the Council (in accordance with the requirements of the grant) deliver upon the requirements of the purchase of 4 properties purchased for families on an Afghan resettlement scheme.

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

82. Question Time

Councillors O'Boyle and Welsh provided written answers to the questions set out in the Questions Booklet, together with oral responses to supplementary questions asked 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 Masih	Councillor Bigham	Consultation to remove the current care home in Canley
2	Councillor Lepoidevin	Councillor Seaman	The number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children currently in the care of Coventry's Children's Services and whether the Council receives any additional funding for them.
3	Councillor Simpson	Councillor Agboola	The cost to the Council of the Planning Inspectorate's decision regarding the development on brownfield land at Abbots Lane and whether there had been discussions with finance officers regarding the costs the Council would have to pay.
4	Councillor Simpson	Councillor Duggins	The purpose of Deputy Cabinet Member roles and whether they should be abolished
5	Councillor Lapsa	Councillor Caan	Illegal sales of vapes and cigarettes and damage to health

6	Councillor Lapsa	Councillor AS Khan	Prosecution of those found selling illegal vapes and cigarettes
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83. **Statements**

Councillor Seaman, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People made a Statement in respect of Childrens Services.

Councillor Lepoidevin, Shadow Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, responded to the Statement.

Councillor Reeves, on behalf of the Green Group, responded to the Statement.

Councillor Seaman made a short reply.

84. **Debate: Request Government to Review the Governance Arrangements for Future Events of City of Culture**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Male and seconded by Councillor Ridley:

"In light of Coventry's recent experience hosting the City of Culture, this Council calls upon the Government to review the governance arrangements for future events."

The following amendment was moved by Councillor Duggins, seconded by Councillor Agboola, and in accordance with the Constitution, accepted by Councillor Male:

At the end of the debate, delete the full stop and add :-

"and commit dedicated legacy funding to secure legacy work beyond the year itself"

The amended Motion now to read:-

"In light of Coventry's recent experience hosting the City of Culture, this Council calls upon the Government to review the governance arrangements for future events and commit dedicated legacy funding to secure legacy work beyond the year itself"

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

85. **Debate: Call on Government to Level Up Per Capita Funding for Coventry to National Average Levels**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor N Akhtar:

“Since 2010 Coventry City Council has suffered drastic funding cuts of over £100m per year. At £678 per household these cuts are significantly more than the national average of £581 per household. Funding levels per head in Coventry are now at £89 below the national average.

This means that Coventry people are being “short-changed” by this Conservative government by £31m each year with a funding level also well below the average for the West Midlands region.

Although this Labour led council has managed its finances with prudence and robust control over the last 13 years, rising demand pressures in social care operating within deregulated markets overlaid by soaring inflation has seen our ability to deliver a balanced budget, whilst protecting the most vulnerable, severely compromised. Coventry people should not have to suffer unduly for 13 years of Tory failure.

This council calls on government to immediately level up per capita funding to national average levels.”

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

86. Debate: New Waste and Recycling Management Plant at Whitley

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Gray and seconded by Councillor Reeves:

“This council welcomes the fact that the new recycling plant at Whitley is now in operation.

It therefore commits to making every reasonable effort to increase the proportion of waste that is reused and recycled, and to ensure that the plant is used to its full capacity. It also commits to making every reasonable effort to reduce the amount of carbon emissions and other forms of pollution produced by our waste management operations”.

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

(Meeting closed at 5.00 pm)



Public report

Cabinet Member

**Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities
Council**

**15 January, 2024
16 January, 2024**

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities – Councillor AS Khan

Director approving submission of the report:

Chief Legal Officer

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title:

Proposed Amendments for the Constitution

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive summary:

The Constitutional Advisory Panel, at its meeting on 2 January, 2024, considered proposed amendments to the Constitution in relation to changes to the Council's policies and procedures that specifically relate to employment, namely Disciplinary, Enabling Attendance, Capability, Grievance, and Collective Disputes.

It is proposed that Appeal Hearings are delegated to the Chief Executive (or Nominated Officer) so that Members no longer directly hear Appeals for employees or the trades unions as part of these processes. (As currently set out in Part 3J and part 2M of the Constitution).

The Advisory Panel agreed with the proposed amendments. This report seeks approval from the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities and Council to the proposed amendments.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities is requested to recommend that Council approves Recommendations (1) and (2) below:-

- (1) The proposed amendments to the Appeals Committee Procedure Rules (Part 3J of the Constitution) as detailed in **Appendix A** to the report with immediate effect
- (2) The amendments to the Scheme of Functions Delegated to Employees (Part 2M of the Constitution) as detailed in **Appendix B** to the report with immediate effect

Council is recommended to approve Recommendations (1) to (2) above and authorise the Chief Legal Officer to make any necessary amendments to the Constitution.

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached to the report:

Appendix A – Details of the proposed amendments to the Appeals Committee Procedure Rules (Part 3J)

Appendix B – Details of the proposed amendments to the Scheme of Functions Delegated to Employees (Part 2M)

Background papers:

N/A

Other useful documents

N/A

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

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

Yes - Constitutional Advisory Panel – 2 January, 2024

Will this report go to Council?

Yes – 16 January, 2024

Report title: Proposed Amendments for the Constitution

1. Context

- 1.1 The Council's Constitution sets out how the Council carries out its business and makes decisions. It is a living document and is reviewed and updated from time to time to ensure that it meets changing legislative requirements and reflects changes in practise within the Council.
- 1.2 The Constitutional Advisory Panel at its meeting on 2 January, 2024 considered proposed changes to the Constitution. These were:-
 - a) Amendments to the Appeals Committee Procedure Rules as set out in Part 3J of the Constitution
 - b) Amendments to the Scheme of Functions Delegated to Employees as set out in Part 2M of the Constitution

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 Employment Policy Appeals - Background

Every employee must have a right to an appeal against an outcome in a process, as that is natural justice. Where appropriate, all the of City Council's policies offer that right namely, the Disciplinary, Enabling Attendance, Capability, Grievance and Collective Disputes policies. This appeal right reaches elected Members following a dismissal or alternative action short of dismissal, or for the Grievance and Collective Disputes policies, as a fourth-tier challenge. This is above and beyond best practice as contained in the ACAS guidance which is based on three stages.

A fourth-tier results in a lengthy and protracted process and a delayed outcome. There is no legal requirement for a fourth stage, nor does the option reduce the number of cases that are submitted to Tribunal.

Between 2018-2023 (to date) a total of 20 Appeals have been heard by Members. During this 6 year period, Members have not reinstated or changed the outcome of Appeal submitted on behalf of either the trade unions or employees.

There is sufficient resource to resolve these matters internally, for example the Grievance Policy has been revised and does now ask about resolution, and places emphasis on early conclusion/resolution. In relation to the Collective Disputes Policy, again there is sufficient internal resource, but also the ask in these cases as to the type of issue and involvement for Members is in relation to terms and conditions, which is the responsibility of Officers.

Dismissal cases can result in Members giving evidence at Employment Tribunals and potentially having a wider involvement than they were aware of at the start of the Appeal. The proposed changes would prevent difficult positions if Council decisions have been taken which might result in an Appeal, meaning Members are not brought into a position of conflict.

Other authorities for example Solihull and Wolverhampton have already adopted this approach and in the last Peer Review, it was suggested informally as something to be considered. This is therefore a timely review in the light of the Peer Review in January 2024. Birmingham and Brighton have also both been recently advised to alter their practice, so that Members no longer hear Appeals.

2.2 Proposed Amendments

The amendments to the Constitution would be to delegate the responsibility of employment Appeals to the Chief Executive (or Nominated Officer), removing the need for Members to part of the Appeals process for the following policies:-

- Disciplinary
- Enabling Attendance
- Capability
- Grievance
- Collective Dispute

In addition, Part 3J of the Constitution would need to be amended to reference that employment Appeals are delegated to the Chief Executive (or nominated officer).

Appeals would be heard at Director or Chief Executive level, dependant on the case and the level of the hearing Officer, and the Appeal would always be heard by a more senior officer.

Employee relations statistics would be reported to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources bi-annually and shared with trade union colleagues.

The Constitutional Advisory Panel agreed that the proposed amendments, as detailed in **Appendices A and B**, should be recommended to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities for approval.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The proposed amendments have been considered by the Constitutional Advisory Panel to which all Group Leaders were invited to attend.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 It is proposed that following Council approval, the amendments to the Constitution be implemented immediately.

5. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer

5.1. Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

5.2. Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications. The named policies need to ensure that a fair procedure is in place and that ACAS guidance has been followed. The proposed amendments do both of these things by having an appeal hearing chaired by the Chief Executive or their nominee.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

Not applicable.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

There is no direct risk to the organisation as a result of the contents of this report.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

The impact on the organisation is that employment policies and procedures will be completely managed by Officers

6.4. Equalities / EIA?

An EIA is not required as employees will continue to be able to access an independent Appeal and the change applies to all employees equally.

Monitoring and reporting on protected characteristics for employment policies already takes place, there is a legal obligation to publicly report on this information under the Equality Act. Commitment has been given this information will be shared with the relevant Cabinet Member once a quarter.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

None

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

None

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Susannah Newing	Chief People Officer	Human Resources	23/12/23	23/12/23

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Director: Julie Newman	Chief Legal Officer	Law and Governance	23/12/23	02/01/24
Councillor M Mutton	Chair of the Constitutional Advisory Panel	-	02/01/24	03/01/24
Councillor A S Khan	Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities	-	02/01/24	02/01/24

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PART 3
RULES OF PROCEDURE

PART 3J: APPEALS COMMITTEE PROCEDURE RULES

1. ~~Appeals Committees dealing with employment appeals or trade union disputes will have in attendance the relevant Senior Human Resources Manager or his or her nominee to advise as appropriate. Appeals relating to employment matters are delegated to the Chief Executive (or Nominated Officer)~~
2. An Appeals Committee will consist of Councillors who have been trained in hearing appeals. ~~Members who are Cabinet Members may sit on an Appeals Committee which has been convened to hear appeals by employees but not on Appeals Committees dealing with other types of appeal.~~
3. The membership of each Appeals Committee and any Statutory Review Board will comprise the appropriate number of members as selected by the City Solicitor on an ad hoc basis from a Panel of Councillors who have had training in determining appeals and any statutory or other requirements for review boards.
4. The Chair of an Appeals Committee or a Statutory Review Board will be appointed by the Committee or Review Board at the start of each meeting.
5. Each Appeals Committee will comprise three Councillors (subject to any statutory requirements to the contrary) and all three Councillors will be required to be present to consider the appeal.
6. No Councillor who has had any previous knowledge or dealings with the matter which is the subject of an appeal will be eligible to serve on an Appeals Committee that considers that matter. ~~In relation to an Appeals Committee dealing with an employment dispute, no Councillor who is a trade union official, employee or other office holder shall be permitted to be a Member of the Committee.~~
7. Appeals Committees are subject to the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in Part 3B.
8. Appeals Committees are the subject of the proportionality requirements set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the City Solicitor in selecting membership of any Appeal Committee or statutory review board will ensure that the membership properly reflects the political make-up of the Council.
9. Decisions of the Appeals Committees are not the subject of call-in.
10. The City Solicitor or ~~their~~his or her representative will attend all meetings to advise and record proceedings.

PART 2

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Decision-Making and Responsibility for Functions

6. SPECIFIC DELEGATIONS

The following employees have the powers and functions delegated to them as listed. Where indicated those powers and functions may be exercised on his/her behalf by the officer so nominated. The delegations are subject to any limitations specified.

6.1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Statutory or other Functions		Nominee/Limitations
General		
1	Witness and receipt of Declarations of acceptance of office.	City Solicitor
2	To act as the Proper Officer for the purposes of receiving requests for dispensations under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.	City Solicitor
3	To give to any Cabinet Member with a declared conflict of interest a note of dispensation in connection with: (a) any matter which is to be decided by the Cabinet of which the Cabinet Member is a member; or (b) any matter upon which the Cabinet Member is consulted by another Cabinet Member who is making the decision; or (c) any matter upon which the Cabinet Member is consulted by an employee who is making an executive decision.	City Solicitor
4	Power to make payments or provide other benefits in cases of maladministration.	Chief Finance Officer as Section 151 Officer
5	To assure the reinstatement of services as result of a major disaster in line with the Corporate Disaster Recovery Plan and to be responsible for emergency planning and business continuity generally.	Director of Adult Services & Housing in consultation with relevant Cabinet Member.
6	Maintain a list of all Proper Officer functions.	City Solicitor, the Chief People Officer. Directors are responsible for individual service business continuity plans.
7	To be responsible for, and take any action	Directors, and Heads of

Part 2M - Scheme of Functions Delegated to Employees

	necessary in connection with, the Council's functions relating to: (a) Customer Relations and statutory social care complaints; (b) complaints other than those in (a); and (c) freedom of information and data protection.	Service.
8	To declare as Proper Officer, vacancies that occur in relation to Section 86 of the Local Government Act 1972, following consultation with the appropriate Group Leader (where applicable).	City Solicitor
Human Resources		
8	Approval of special payment arrangements.	Chief People Officer
9	Hold on deposit the list of politically restricted posts; determine applications for exemptions from the list of politically restricted posts; and give directions, on the application of any person or otherwise, requiring the inclusion of a post in the list of politically restricted posts.	Chief People Officer
<p>10 <u>Employment Appeals for the following Policies:- Nominated Officer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Disciplinary</u> • <u>Enabling Attendance</u> • <u>Capability</u> • <u>Grievance</u> • <u>Collective Dispute</u> 		
Electoral Functions		
11 10	To exercise functions under the Representation of the People Act 1983 and in particular, to act as Registration Officer/Returning Officer for local elections and Acting Returning Officer for parliamentary elections and Local Returning Officer for European Parliamentary Elections and elections for a Police and Crime Commissioner and Combined Authority Mayor.	Deputy Returning Officers and Acting Returning Officers may be appointed from any of the Council's employees, or otherwise.
12 11	To act as Electoral Registration Officer.	City Solicitor/ Electoral Services Manager as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers.

Part 2M - Scheme of Functions Delegated to Employees

13 <u>2</u>	To exercise functions in relation to any referendum to change governance arrangements under the Local Government Act 2000 and to hold elections for an Elected Mayor.	City Solicitor/ Electoral Services Manager as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers.
13 <u>4</u>	To act as Proper Officer and Counting Officer for any referendums held under the Local Government Act 2000 or under any other legislation.	Deputy Counting Officers may be appointed.
14 <u>5</u>	Hold a referendum under the Localism Act 2011 to veto excessive Council Tax rise.	City Solicitor/ Electoral Services Manager as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers.
Communications		
16 <u>5</u>	To promote the working of the Council, within the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority publicity.	Chief People Officer
16 <u>7</u>	To issue statements to the press on behalf of the Council if the public standing of the Authority could be affected by the absence of a statement, whether or not it has been agreed with the Cabinet Member or committee chairman concerned	Chief Partnerships Officer
18 <u>7</u>	To promote the Council's views as agreed by members in the relevant decision-making forum	Chief Partnerships Officer
Coronavirus		

Part 2M - Scheme of Functions Delegated to Employees

<p>18 9</p>	<p>To take any actions required under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (no.3) Regulations 2020 or under any subsequent or amending primary or secondary legislation and specifically the power to:</p> <p>(a) Give a direction imposing prohibitions, requirements or restrictions in relation to the entry into, departure from, or location of persons, specified premises in the council's area (regulation 4)</p> <p>(b) Give a direction imposing prohibitions, requirements or restrictions in relation to the holding of an event in the council's area. (regulation 5)</p> <p>(c) Give a direction imposing prohibitions, requirements or restrictions in relation to a specified public outdoor place in</p>	<p>Following consultation with the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>Power is delegated to the Chief Partnerships Officer, Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer), Chief People Officer or Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) in the absence of the Chief Executive.</p>
	<p>the council's area, or public outdoor spaces in its area of a specified description. (regulation 6)</p>	

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Public report Council Report

Council

16 January 2024

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, Councillor AS Khan

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Chief Legal Officer

Ward(s) affected:

N/A

Title:

Review of Members' Allowances Scheme

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

All local authorities are required to have a Members' Allowances Scheme, agreed locally, which makes provision for a range of allowances and expenses available to elected Members. Since its introduction, Coventry's scheme has included provision for Member allowances to rise automatically in line with any pay increases that are made to local government employees on a specific spinal point on the National Joint Council (NJC) scale for Local Government Services. Where a local authority scheme provides for increasing allowances by an index, this can operate for maximum period of four years and a further review is required before any further index can be applied.

Whilst each authority approves its own Scheme, legislation requires that each authority appoints an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to make recommendations on allowances, including the amounts payable. This report presents the outcomes of the Independent Remuneration Panel review of Coventry's Members' Allowances Scheme and makes recommendations. When approving changes to its Scheme, the Council must have regard to the Panel's recommendations although it is not bound by them.

Recommendations:

Council is recommended to:

- a) Consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and approve, reject or approve alternative proposals for the following recommendations made by the Panel:

Recommendation 1: That the Basic, Special Responsibility, co-optee and civic allowances continue to be increased each year by any percentage increase in pay agreed for local government employees, (pegged to spinal column point 43 of the NJC scheme); this indexing to be effective from 1 April 2024 and expire on 31 March 2028.

Recommendation 2: That the current Scheme be clarified to confirm that Special Responsibility Allowances for any opposition groups are only paid to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the largest Opposition Group on the Council.

Recommendation 3: That provision is made for maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and continue to pay Members' Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance (where applicable) for up to 6 months with the option to extend for up to one year as set out in this report.

Recommendation 4: That the existing co-optee allowance be extended to Independent Members/Persons.

Recommendation 5: That the telephone and line rental allowances element of the Scheme be closed to existing Councillors who have not claimed since April 2020 and all incoming Councillors, while allowing existing claimants to continue for the remainder of their time in office.

Recommendation 6: That the Members' Scheme be aligned with HMRC guidance to pay a rate of 45p per mile for qualifying travel by car and an additional 5p per passenger per mile for carrying fellow Councillors and/or officers in a car or van on journeys which are also qualifying journeys for them.

Recommendation 7: That the Scheme be amended to include reimbursement for travel by private motorcycle at 24p per mile and bicycle at 20p per mile.

- b) Delegate authority to the Chief Legal Officer to amend the Scheme of Members' Allowances according to the decisions taken by Council for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

List of Appendices included

Appendix 1 - Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, December 2023

Background papers

Local Authorities (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2003/1021/contents/made>

Other useful documents

Coventry City Council Scheme of Member Allowances

<https://internaldemocraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s58753/Part%205%20-%20Members%20Allowances%20Scheme%20June%202023.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?

Yes – 16 January 2024

Report title: Review of Members' Allowances Scheme

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 All local authorities are required to have a Scheme which makes provision for a range of allowances and expenses to elected Members. This must be agreed locally, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended).
- 1.2 While each authority approves its own scheme, legislation requires that it appoints an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to make recommendations on allowances and expenses.
- 1.3 Where a local authority Scheme provides for increasing allowances by an index, this can operate for maximum period of four years and a further review is required before any further index can be applied. Coventry's current scheme indexed any increase in allowances to a fixed point on the pay scale set by National Joint Council for local government for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2024 and a further review is due.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 A Panel was appointed in October 2023 to review the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme. The Panel Members appointed were:
 - Tina Costello, Chief Executive, Heart of England Community Foundation
 - Major John Lam, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers
 - Dr Abdullah Shehu MBE DL, Consultant Neurologist, University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Coventry Muslim Forum
- 2.2 The Panel reviewed the City Council's Scheme of Member Allowances and Expenses during November 2023 and December 2023 in accordance with the provisions of the regulations.
- 2.3 In preparing the scope for the review, it was noted that the roles carried out by Councillors and structure of responsibilities had not changed significantly since the last two reviews and it was agreed that the review of allowances should be limited to consideration of the matter of whether they should continue to be indexed. However, it was also noted that several elements of the Scheme needed clarification or updating, and it was proposed that these were also reviewed to ensure the Scheme remains up to date and fit for purpose.
- 2.4 As a result, the Panel were asked:
 - a) To make recommendations to the City Council on whether adjustments to the level of Member allowances should be made in line with an index and if so which index and for how long in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003 (as amended).
 - b) If application of an index is proposed, to make recommendations to the City Council whether any index should be applied retrospectively to the start of the 2024/25 financial year.
 - c) To make recommendations to the City Council on changes and amendments to the following elements of the Scheme:
 - Minority Opposition Group Leader Allowances
 - Maternity/Paternity/Shared Parental/Adoption Leave Allowances
 - Allowances for Independent Members

- Telephone and Line Rental Costs
- Mileage expenses

2.5 The Panel has made seven recommendations and produced a report of its work, attached at Appendix 1. In doing so, the Panel points out that while it has considered the Scheme in its entirety and some issues are linked, the recommendations are not to be considered as a single “all or nothing” decision by the City Council and most recommendations could be dealt with on an individual basis.

2.6 The decision to approve these recommendations is that of the City Council. The Council must have regard to the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel before it proposes any changes to the current Members Allowances Scheme. The City Council should consider the recommendations individually and decide whether each recommendation should be approved or rejected. The Council is not bound by the decisions of the Panel and may reject any of the proposals made, but the Council should have regard to the implications of such decisions and alternative provisions can be put forward and agreed.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 The views of the Leadership and opposition group Leaders were sought in drawing up the scope for the Panel.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 It is proposed that any recommendations making changes to allowances and expenses should take effect from 1 April 2024 and cover the period to 31 March 2028.

5. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer

5.1 Financial implications

The table below summarises the estimated financial implications of the recommendations which are not material. The budget for telephone allowances is set at a more historical level of claims so if the recommendations are approved, it is proposed to utilise this budget to offset the small increase in other allowances.

#	Recommendation	Change from Existing Arrangements	Estimated Cost / (Saving) £ 000
1	Allowances continue to be increased each year by any percentage increase in pay agreed for local government employees	No	0
2	Confirm that Special Responsibility Allowances for any opposition groups are only paid to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the largest Opposition Group on the Council	No	0
3	Provision is made for maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave *	Yes	Not possible to quantify
4	Existing co-optee allowance be extended to Independent Members **	Yes	2.4
5	Telephone and line rental allowances element of the	Yes	(0.5)

	scheme be closed to existing councillors who have not claimed since April 2020 and all incoming councillors		
6	Members' scheme be aligned with HMRC guidance to pay a rate of 45p per mile for qualifying travel by car and an additional 5p per passenger per mile for carrying fellow Councillors and/or officers in a car or van on journeys which are also qualifying journeys for them	Yes	<0.1
7	Scheme be amended to include reimbursement for travel by private motorcycle at 24p per mile and bicycle at 20p per mile	Yes	<0.1
	Total		2.0

* Any payments associated with maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave would need to be met on a one-off basis, but are not expected to be significant.

** The cost of extending the existing co-optees allowance to existing independent members of the Ethics Committee would be £2,352 and at current rates a further £588 per person in the event of any further independent members being appointed

5.2 Legal implications

Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) require the Council to review Members' allowances at least once every four years for the purpose of agreeing how it will index link its scheme of allowances. The Council must have regard to the recommendations made by the IRP and determine whether and how these are implemented before it amends any part of the current Members' Allowances Scheme. The Local Government Act 1972, provides for Councils to pay an allowance to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Council.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

Having an effective and up to date Members' Allowances Scheme in place ensures that elected Members are supported fairly and appropriately for the roles they carry out. It also plays a part in attracting and retaining people from across the community as local Councillors.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

By considering this report, the Council will ensure that the Members' Allowances Scheme remains up to date and meeting the requirements for supporting and remunerating elected Members. In approving any changes to the Scheme, the Council must have regard to the recommendations of the Panel and this report ensures that this is the case.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4 Equalities / EIA

The Panel has recommended inclusion of provision for maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave to promote equality, ensure the Council meets its equalities obligations and encourage a diverse and representative range of candidates for election and to support the retention of Councillors.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

The Panel has recommended the inclusion of expenses under the travel scheme to reimburse car-sharing, motorcycle and cycle use. While it recognises that the impact of this will be small, it sends an important message in relation to the Council's priorities for climate change and encouraging modal shift.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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Members: Councillor A Khan	Cabinet Member Policing and Equalities		08/01/24	08/01/24

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Coventry City Council

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

December 2023

Recommendations to Coventry City Council

1. Introduction and Context

- 1.1. All local authorities are required to have a Members' Allowances Scheme, agreed locally, which makes provision for a range of allowances and expenses available to elected Members. Whilst each authority approves its own scheme, legislation requires that each authority is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to make recommendations on allowances, including the amounts payable. When agreeing its scheme of allowances, an authority must have regard to the Panel's recommendations although it is not bound by them.
- 1.2. Coventry's current Scheme of Allowances are set out in the Council's Scheme of Allowances at:
<https://internaldemocraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s58762/Part%205%20-%20Members%20Allowances%20Scheme%20June%202023.pdf>
- 1.3. The Council last considered a report from an Independent Remuneration Panel in December 2020 when the scheme was updated. The Panel recommended that allowances be indexed, allowing an increase to be applied in line with any local government pay awards for officers. This index covered the period April 2020 to March 2024.
- 1.4. The national framework for Member Allowances states that an index may not run for more than four years before a further recommendation on it is sought from an Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 1.5. The members of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) were appointed in October 2023 by the Chief Legal Officer and the scope of the review set following consultation with the Leaders of the controlling and opposition groups in line with the Council's Constitution and the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Panel was asked to make recommendations for the scheme to cover the period April 2024 to March 2028.
- 1.6. The IRP has now completed its review and its recommendations are set out in this report and summarised at Appendix A.
- 1.7. The Members of the Panel were:
 - Tina Costello, Chief Executive, Heart of England Community Foundation
 - Major John Lam, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers
 - Dr Abdullah Shehu MBE DL, Consultant Neurologist, University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Coventry Muslim Forum
- 1.8. Background information about the Panel members is included at Appendix B.

2 Scope and Methodology

- 2.1 In preparing the scope for the review, it was noted that the roles carried out by councillors and structure of responsibilities had not changed significantly since the last two reviews and it was agreed that the review should be limited to consideration of the matter of whether allowances should continue to be indexed. However, it was also noted that several elements of the scheme needed clarification or updating, and these were also reviewed to ensure the scheme remains up to date and fit for purpose.
- 2.2 As a result, the Panel reviewed the City Council's scheme of Member Allowances and Expenses in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations, the underlying philosophy and the scope for this review and were asked:
- a) To make recommendations to the City Council on whether adjustments to the level of Member allowances should be made in line with an index and if so which index and for how long in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003 (as amended).
 - b) If application of an index is proposed, to make recommendations to the City Council whether any index should be applied retrospectively to the start of the 2024/25 financial year.
 - c) To make recommendations to the City Council on changes and amendments to the following elements in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003 (as amended):
 - Minority Opposition Group Leader Allowances
 - Maternity/Paternity/Shared Parental/Adoption Leave Allowances
 - Allowances for Independent Members
 - Telephone and Line Rental Costs
 - Car Mileage
 - Cycle and Motorcycle Mileage
- 2.3 The Panel met in November and December 2024 and considered a range of information to support its work. These included:
- Background information to the review including the regulatory context
 - Information from reports of previous Independent Remuneration Panels
 - Information about the current Council Member structure
 - Information about activity and time commitments as prepared for the Local Government Boundary Review
 - The current Allowances Scheme
 - Benchmarking information about other comparative authorities' schemes.
- 2.4 The guidance states that it is important that some element of the work of Councillors continues to be voluntary – that some hours are not remunerated. This must be balanced against the need to ensure that financial loss is not suffered by elected Members and to ensure that despite the input required people are encouraged to come forward as elected Members and that their service to the community is retained. Ensuring representation from a broad section of society is an important objective for local democracy.
- 2.5 Like its predecessors, the Panel was also acutely aware of the sensitivity surrounding payments to Councillors and the financial constraints placed on local authorities. In making its recommendations, the Panel has sought to take a balanced view of these important but sometimes conflicting pressures.

3 Background Information – Coventry City Council

- 4.1 Coventry City Council has 54 Councillors representing 18 wards. The current political composition of the Council is:

Party	Number of Seats
Conservative	15
Green	2
Labour	37

- 4.2 The Council operates a Leader and Cabinet model of governance. The Cabinet is currently made up of the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and eight other Cabinet Members. Each of the 10 members of the Cabinet has a specific portfolio of responsibilities.
- 4.3 The Council currently has five themed Scrutiny Boards and an overarching Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee whose role is to hold the executive to account, contribute to policy development, carry out reviews and monitor the performance of the Council. Each Board is responsible for setting its own work programme with oversight from the Co-ordination Committee.
- 4.4 The Council also appoints a number of other Committees to exercise its regulatory functions and other functions that are not the responsibility of the executive.

4 Annual Adjustment of Allowances

- 4.1 The regulations governing schemes of allowances allow annual adjustments to the level of allowances in line with an index. The Panel can recommend which index should be used and for how long the index should apply, subject to a maximum of four years. After this period, the regulations require that the issue of indexation should be reviewed. The terms of reference for this review asked the Panel to decide whether an index should continue be applied to the scheme of allowances, and if so which and for how long.
- 4.2 Since its introduction, Coventry's scheme of allowances has included provision for allowances to rise by an index. This has meant that Councillor allowances have risen in line with any pay awards made to local government employees on a specific spinal point on the National Joint Council Scheme for local government.
- 4.3 The Panel considered the framework and context for the payment of allowances to Councillors. It noted the requirement for all local authorities to pay a basic allowance to recognise the calls on Councillors' time including meetings of the Council and external bodies, meetings with council officers, meetings with constituents, attendance at political group meetings and incidental costs such as use of their homes. It also noted the provision for paying Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for Councillors who have significant responsibilities in additional roles. Separate legislation provides for allowances to be paid to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Council and, in line with recent reviews, these civic allowances were included in the scope of this review.
- 4.4 In forming their recommendations, the Panel discussed issues including:
- the current financial context and pressures on local authorities. They asked about the financial impact on the authority and noted that inflationary impact of pay awards agreed via the National Joint Council for Local Government Services is

provided for as part of Council's medium-term financial strategy planning each year.

- the range of activities undertaken by Councillors in the city and the commitment and time given in evidence which had been produced earlier in the year for the Local Authority Boundary Commission Review.
- the need to ensure the Council does everything it can to ensure that its Councillors are diverse and representative of the communities that they serve and recognised the importance of appropriate remuneration as a key part in this.

- 4.5 They noted the findings of the previous Panel, together with benchmarking information which compared the types and levels of allowances paid by Coventry City Council with those paid by neighbouring West Midlands Metropolitan Councils and others across the country who are statistically similar to Coventry. Overall they observed that Coventry pays a higher than average basic allowance (it was also noted that Coventry Councillors serve a higher number of members of the population than the majority of comparator authorities) and that while there are some specific variations, the majority of SRAs are at or below the average. The Panel was assured that the broad basis of the scheme and the levels of allowances paid remain broadly sound in comparison to other similar authorities and more information about the information considered is shown in Appendix C.
- 4.6 The Panel supported the principle that allowances should continue to be increased by an index and noted that the majority of comparator authorities do so. They discussed the other types of index that could be applied but it was clear that the existing index which aligns increases in allowances to any increase in the pay of local authority employees remains the most appropriate for a number of reasons including that it is negotiated nationally and is thus removed from any local determination and that it avoids creating any difference between Member and officer arrangements from year to year. The point of the national scale to which any rise is linked is at the top, which also means that, as in the last two years when pay awards have been higher for local government employees on lower grades, Members only receive the lowest percentage increase that is offered and therefore are not put in the position of receiving a higher award than some officers.
- 4.7 The Panel considered the period for which the index should be applied and agreed that it should continue to run concurrently from the point at which the previous index expired for a period of four years.
- 4.8 In agreeing its recommendation, the Panel asked that the Council ensure the Scheme is kept under review to make sure it reflects any changing circumstances and that the Scheme is recognised as an important element to support the attraction of a diverse and representative range of candidates for election and to support the retention of Councillors.

Recommendation 1: That the Basic, Special Responsibility, co-optee and civic allowances continue to be increased each year by any percentage increase in pay agreed for local government employees, (pegged to spinal column point 43 of the NJC scheme); this indexing to be effective from 1 April 2024 and expire on 31 March 2028.

5 Minority Opposition Group(s) Allowances

- 5.1 As well as making provision for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) to Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, it also makes SRAs available to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the 'Opposition Group'. Coventry's Scheme does not state a position in relation to the Leaders of any other groups. Since the last review of the current scheme, a third political group has been recognised on the Council and the Panel were asked to clarify the position.
- 5.2 The Panel reviewed the way comparator Councils' Schemes provide for smaller opposition groups.
- 5.3 Some authorities, as is currently the case in Coventry and Wolverhampton, SRAs are paid only to the Leader (and often the Deputy Leader) of the Largest Opposition Group.
- 5.4 Some authorities provide SRAs for the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of minority opposition groups with a specific minimum number of members in their party required to reach the threshold for payment. For example, Oldham pays an SRA to the Leader of the Minority Opposition Group because their group has reached their Local Authority's minimum threshold of 6 elected Members.
- 5.5 Other authorities pay allowances to opposition group Leaders and deputies depending on their percentage size of either the controlling group or the overall number of Councillors in the Local Authority. For example, Sandwell pays an SRA to the Leader of the largest Opposition Group and the Leader of the next biggest group because both groups are in the 15% bracket size in comparison to the controlling group, while Bolton pays an SRA to the Leader of the Minority Opposition Group because they have 10% of the total seats of the Council.
- 5.6 Where authorities do pay allowances for minority opposition groups, the vast majority only pay an SRA to the group Leader.
- 5.7 The Panel considered the information from other authorities, together with the size of the current groups and the thresholds at which it might be appropriate to pay an allowance and on balance decided to leave the scheme unchanged and simply clarify the position that SRAs should only be paid to the largest opposition group. (In the event of the number of members in the largest opposition group being equalled by another group, the same allowances should be paid to both.) They did however propose that this be considered again when the scheme is next reviewed to reflect any changing circumstances.

Recommendation 2: That the current scheme be clarified to confirm that Special Responsibility Allowances for any opposition groups are only paid to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the largest Opposition Group on the Council.

6 **Maternity / Paternity / Shared Parental / Adoption Leave**

- 6.1 Currently, the scheme makes no provision for Members allowances during maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave.
- 6.2 As part of the Panel's review, they were provided with information about what measures other local authorities have in place. In preparing for the meeting, advice was also sought from the Council's Human Resources (HR) service about what should be considered bearing in mind the Equality Act and other relevant legislation and the nature of the Councillor role.
- 6.3 Most other local authority schemes simply state that any allowances will continue to be paid for the appropriate fixed period, while any Councillor appointed to cover a vacant role for which an SRA is payable, would also receive the relevant allowance on a pro rata basis for the period being covered.
- 6.4 The Panel were made aware of the fact that a small minority of Local Authorities, recognised in the benchmarking data and by HR, have linked Members' allowances during maternity/paternity/shared parental and adoption leave to statutory pay. However, this is not recommended due to Members not being employees but elected officials.
- 6.5 The Panel noted that legislation states that an elected Member who does not attend a formal meeting of the Council for a period of 6 months ceases to be a Councillor, unless a meeting of full Council determines that they be granted a dispensation, and this is taken into account in other schemes.
- 6.6 The Panel debated the length of time schemes should apply; whether it should apply to both basic and SRA allowances; the impact of the legislation which requires Councillors to attend at least one meeting in a six month period and how this might be managed in terms of keeping in touch days; and any requests for an extension to leave beyond 6 months; as well as the circumstances in which payments would stop. They also recognised the role that such provision could play in encouraging diversity and community representation when attracting candidates and retaining Councillors, as well as the importance of the Council both meeting its legal and equalities obligations in this area.
- 6.7 The Panel decided to recommend the inclusion of provisions for Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental and Adoption Leave for Members based on the following:
- 6.7.1 Leave Periods
- Councillors who give birth or adopt a child can take up to six months of leave, with the option to extend to up to 52 weeks.
 - Where a birth is premature, the Councillor is entitled to take leave during the period between the date of the birth and the due date in addition to the 6 months' period.
 - Councillors who are biological fathers or nominated carers can take at least two weeks of paternity leave.
 - The Council will endeavour to replicate Shared Parental Leave arrangements agreed with any Councillor's external employers.
 - Councillors who share parental leave arrangements can split the leave up to 50 weeks.

- Councillors must comply with the notice requirements of the Council and keep the Council informed of their intended return dates and requests for extensions.

6.7.2 Allowances during parental leave (Basic Allowance and SRAs)

- Councillors will receive their basic allowance in full during their leave.
- Councillors who have a special responsibility allowance (SRA) will also receive it in full, and their replacements will receive an SRA on a pro rata basis for the period a role is covered.
- The payment of SRAs will continue for six months or until the next annual Council meeting or election of said Councillor, whichever is sooner – leading to a review and possible further 6-month extension.
- If the Councillor covering a role for which an SRA is payable and is already in receipt of another, they will only receive one payment in line with the allowances scheme.
- Unless they are removed from their post at an annual meeting or their party loses control of the Council during their leave period. Councillors on leave should return to the same post where possible.

6.7.3 Resigning from Office and Elections

- Councillors who decide not to return after their leave must notify the Council immediately (allowances will cease from the effective resignation date).
- Councillors who are not re-elected or who do not stand for re-election will stop receiving all their allowances on the retirement date, usually four days after the election.

Recommendation 3: That the Scheme is amended to make provision for maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and continue to pay Members' Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance (where applicable) for up to 6 months with the option to extend for up to one year as set out in this report.

7 **Co-optees and Independent Members/Persons Allowances**

- 7.1 Coventry's scheme includes an allowance to co-opted members of Committees. This is currently limited to co-opted members of Scrutiny Boards who sit on the Board with responsibility for education where there are places for statutory co-optees. The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board also has appointed co-optees.
- 7.2 The Panel were made aware that currently, the Council appoints four Independent Persons to its Ethics Committee who do not currently receive any allowance for their role. The Ethics Committee meets less frequently than Scrutiny Boards (normally 4 meetings a year on average) but have additional responsibilities. In the event of a code of conduct complaint against a Councillor, the views of an Independent Person may be sought at various points during the investigation and hearing process regarding any action to be taken following a finding of failure to comply with the Code.
- 7.3 Furthermore, the Panel were informed that following a national independent review into local audit and local authority financial reporting which recommended local authorities consider appointing at least one Independent member to their Audit Committees, government committed to work with key stakeholders to issue new guidance, although this has yet to be published.

- 7.4 The Audit and Procurement Committee meet on average 6 times a year and consider matters relating to financial management, governance and risk. Responsibilities would be similar to those of the other co-optees and they would also be expected to bring relevant experience to the role.
- 7.5 The Panel considered the type and level of allowances paid by other authorities and the nature of the roles carried out by co-optees and Independent Members/Persons and determined that it would be appropriate to extend co-optees' allowances to any Independent Members/Persons appointed. This approach would also future proof the allowances scheme in the event of independent Persons/Members being appointed to the Audit and Procurement Committee.

Recommendation 4: That the existing co-optee allowance be extended to Independent Members/Persons.

8 Telephone and Line Rental Allowance

- 8.1 The Telephone and Line Rental Allowance has been a long-standing provision for Councillors to be able to claim up to £30.15 for line rental per quarter and up to £488.80 per year.
- 8.2 Since the introduction of the scheme all Members have been given access to a laptop with a built-in telephone facility, giving Members access to the Council's network from any location (providing there is a suitable mobile phone signal) where there is no Wi-Fi available. In addition, all Members are offered a smartphone, which allows access to email and the internet, as well as the provision of unlimited calls. IT and telephone provision is part of the Council's corporate procurement framework.
- 8.3 The number of Councillors claiming the allowance has reduced over time with longer serving Councillors tending to use the scheme and only four Councillors having made claims since the scheme was last reviewed. For context:
In 2015/16: 13 Councillors claimed for telephone costs totalling £2,585.
In 2022/23: 3 Councillors claimed for telephone costs totalling £453.
- 8.4 The Panel recognised the change in IT and telephone provision and ways of working and alternative methods of communication in place for Councillors to conduct their duties. They also noted the increasingly challenging climate in which Councillors now operate and the clear benefits from maintaining a distinction between Councillor and personal contact details. However, for those remaining Councillors using the scheme, they also recognised that their contact details may be well established as part of their way of working and that there may be some challenges associated with changing these.
- 8.5 The Panel agreed that the aim should be to completely remove provision from the scheme, and that the Councillors who currently use their home phone for work purposes should be supported to transition away from this where possible. However, given the relatively low cost of the allowance now claimed and the context, the Panel felt that on balance the allowance should be closed to new Councillors and who have not claimed over the last four years and eventually withdrawn when the final claiming Councillor steps down.

Recommendation 5: That the telephone and line rental allowances element of the scheme be closed to existing Councillors who have not claimed since April

2020 and all incoming Councillors, while allowing existing claimants to continue for the remainder of their time in office.

9 Travel

- 9.1 Allowance schemes are required to set out the approved duties for which travelling allowances are payable in line with regulations and Coventry's scheme meets this requirement.
- 9.2 The Panel notes that claims against the travel elements of the scheme are low – less than £2,000 in each of the last two financial years. This in part reflects the arrangements in place for advanced bookings by the Council on behalf of Members for attendance at approved events. This means that costs can be kept to a minimum by taking advantage of advanced or bulk rail bookings for example and the Panel supports this continued approach.
- 9.3 The basis for the scheme is to ensure that reasonable costs are covered and the Panel supports this.
- 9.4 In reviewing the car mileage element of the scheme, the Panel noted that currently the scheme allows for car mileage to be paid at two rates according to the size of engine (45p per mile for engines up to 1199cc or at 48.5p per mile for engines over 1199cc). This is out of line with the PAYE dispensation granted by the HM Revenue and Customs and the scheme for Council officers which both have a single rate of 45p per mile. While the numbers and amount claimed are very small, the current arrangements are outdated and could be seen as not in line with the Council's environmental objectives.
- 9.5 In 2015/16: 10 Councillors claimed travel allowances totalling £1,675 (NB most of this will have been for mileage but some will have included train travel.) In 2022/23: no Councillors claimed any mileage.
- 9.6 The Panel also noted that the HMRC scheme has an approved passenger rate of 5p per passenger per business mile for carrying fellow employees in a car or van on journeys which are also work journeys for them. While this is not currently included in the officer scheme, this was seen as providing an incentive to encourage car sharing where appropriate.
- 9.7 In addition, the Scheme does not make any provision for Councillors to claim mileage for use of their own cycles or motorcycles. The Council officer scheme provides reimbursement for travel by private motorcycle at 24p per mile and bicycle at 20p per mile in line with the PAYE dispensation granted by the HM Revenue and Customs.
- 9.8 The Panel concluded that while the impact may be small, the introduction of these allowances would support the Council's environmental priorities for carbon reduction and modal shift and that the Scheme should be updated accordingly.

Recommendation 6: That the Members' Scheme be aligned with HMRC guidance to pay a rate of 45p per mile for qualifying travel by car and an additional 5p per passenger per mile for carrying fellow Councillors and/or officers in a car or van on journeys which are also qualifying journeys for them.

Recommendation 7: That the Scheme be amended to include reimbursement for travel by private motorcycle at 24p per mile and bicycle at 20p per mile.

10 Financial Implications of Recommendations

- 10.1 The inflationary impact of pay awards agreed via the National Joint Council for Local Government Services is provided for as part of Council's medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) planning each year. This applies to both Members' allowances and officer pay.
- 10.2 Any payments associated with maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave would need to be met on a one off basis, but are not expected to be significant.
- 10.3 The additional costs of paying Independent Members/Persons an allowance could be taken from the existing budget for telephone and line rental which could be reduced and still provide a small saving.

11 Review Implementation

- 11.1 While the Panel has made recommendations on the issues identified in the scope, and some issues are linked, the recommendations are not to be considered as a single "all or nothing" decision by the City Council and most recommendations can be dealt with on an individual basis.
- 11.2 In considering the Panel's report the Council must have regard to the recommendation of the Panel but may reject any of them. Should the Council amend or reject any recommendations, it should consider the implications of such decisions, including the impact on the overall financial position.
- 11.3 Recommendations that are approved will need to be incorporated in a revised Scheme of Allowances and Expenses to be published within the Council's Constitution.
- 11.4 Any amendment to the indexing arrangements will cover the period from April 2024 to March 2028.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That the Basic, Special Responsibility, co-optee and civic allowances continue to be increased each year by any percentage increase in pay agreed for local government employees, (pegged to spinal column point 43 of the NJC scheme); this indexing to be effective from 1 April 2024 and expire on 31 March 2028.

Recommendation 2: That the current Scheme be clarified to confirm that Special Responsibility Allowances for any opposition groups are only paid to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the largest Opposition Group on the Council.

Recommendation 3: That provision is made for maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and continue to pay Members' Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance (where applicable) for up to 6 months with the option to extend for up to one year as set out in this report.

Recommendation 4: That the existing co-optee allowance be extended to Independent Members/Persons.

Recommendation 5: That the telephone and line rental allowances element of the Scheme be closed to existing Councillors who have not claimed since April 2020 and all incoming Councillors, while allowing existing claimants to continue for the remainder of their time in office.

Recommendation 6: That the Members' Scheme be aligned with HMRC guidance to pay a rate of 45p per mile for qualifying travel by car and an additional 5p per passenger per mile for carrying fellow Councillors and/or officers in a car or van on journeys which are also qualifying journeys for them.

Recommendation 7: That the Scheme be amended to include reimbursement for travel by private motorcycle at 24p per mile and bicycle at 20p per mile.

Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Tina Costello

Tina has been the Heart of England Community Foundation's Chief Executive since 2013.

Her responsibilities include developing and implementing high-level strategies, building effective relationships with our stakeholders, developing major corporate partnerships and managing the overall operations and resources of the charity.

Tina has over 24 years' experience in senior positions as Head of Awards for all of the West Midlands region at Big Lottery Fund and managing external funding at Coventry City Council, with a lengthy track record of delivering successful community investment and grant making programmes as well as working with donors to develop new funding streams.

She is a proud Brummie and hugely passionate about philanthropy and supporting grassroots community activity.

Major John Lam

Major Lam is a Chinese origin from Hong Kong who studied an MBA at Coventry University and served as a volunteer officer in the Royal Hong Kong Regiment when he was attached to the 5th (Warwickshire) Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers that based in Keresley.

He was employed by HSBC Hong Kong as Human Resources Officer and the Hong Kong Exchange and Clearing as Administration Manager before being commissioned into the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

He resumed active service with the Army Reserve in 2007 when he settled in Coventry and was deployed to Afghanistan, London for the Olympics and Uganda for various military operations. He also served as a Staff Officer at different HQs and now acts as the Aide-De-Camp to the Deputy Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

He is involved in several associations and trusts related to the Fusiliers and the Army Cadet Force and actively engages in civic events in Warwickshire and the West Midlands.

Dr Abdullah Shehu MBBS, Diploma Clinical Neurology, FRCP, MBE, DL

Dr Shehu was originally from Nigeria and came to UK in 1986. He has been in Coventry since 1993 and a consultant neurologist at University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust for more than twenty five years.

He is the chairman of the Coventry Muslim Forum which carries out community activities including community building, health education to the communities and safeguarding among others. The Forum was awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Services in 2017.

Dr Shehu is also a chairman or member of board of trustees in many organisations in the UK and abroad.

He was a recipient of The Coventry Award of Merit in 2014 and awarded an MBE by the late Her Majesty The Queen in 2019.

Dr Shehu was appointed as one of the Deputy Lord Lieutenants of HM's Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands in 2017.

Benchmarking Information

As part of their review, the Panel looked at benchmarking information which compared the levels and types of allowances paid in Coventry with those in other similar authorities. The authorities selected for comparison were the other West Midlands Metropolitan Authorities and local authorities that are identified by the Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy as being statistically the most similar to Coventry.

Extracts of the information considered by the Panel relating to the levels of allowances paid by other authorities are shown below. While the framework for Member Allowances is common to all, local authorities are free to apply this to suit local circumstances which means that not all elements of the schemes are directly comparable. Local authorities have their own political management structures which means that decision-making bodies operate in different ways and this is reflected accordingly in roles and responsibilities. In addition, local authorities present information in different ways and update their published information at different times in the year. Where information is not readily available or cannot be appropriately compared, gaps have been left.

Finally, during the work of the Panel, the 2023/24 pay award for local government officers was agreed and local authorities are in the process of updating their schemes. For consistency, comparative data relates to the 2022/23 year unless otherwise stated (Walsall, Leicester, and Salford) - the most up-to-date data available has been used in its absence. Coventry's updated allowances for 2023/24 are shown at Appendix D.

Summary of Benchmarking Information – Basic Allowance

West Midland Metropolitan Councils	
Coventry	£15,340
Birmingham	£18,876
Dudley	£11,435
Sandwell	£11,552
Solihull	£10,500
Walsall (2021-22)	£11,938
Wolverhampton	£11,500
Average	£13,020

CIPFA Nearest Neighbours for Coventry (2023)	
Coventry	£15,340
Blackburn with Darwen	£7,667
Bolton	£11,848
Bradford MBC	£13,463
Bristol	£15,169
Derby	£12,145
Kirklees	£15,080
Leicester (2021-22)	£11,276
Newcastle Upon Tyne	£9,200
Medway	£11,474
Oldham MBC	£10,514
Rochdale	£11,172
Salford (2021-22)	£11,043
Sandwell	£11,552
Sheffield	£15,606
Wolverhampton	£11,500
Average	£12,128

Summary of Benchmarking Information – Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) – Executive, Opposition and Scrutiny

Authority	Leader	Deputy Leader	Leader of the largest Opposition Group	Deputy Leader of Opposition	Leader of Minority Opposition	Cabinet Member	Deputy Cabinet Member	Scrutiny Co-ordination Chair	Scrutiny Co-ordination Dep Chair	Scrutiny Chairs
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West Midland Metropolitan Councils:										
Coventry	£27,609	£19,936	£5,659	£2830		£12,273	£4,171	£12,273	£3,071	£7,673
Birmingham	£56,579	£45,263	£16,973	£9,618	£7,921	£28,289		£14,145		
Dudley	£26,852	£21,236	£12,024	£9,499		£15,288				£10,181
Sandwell	£28,584	£21,438	£4,173		£4,173	£17,151				£9,519
Solihull	£26,429	£16,175	£10,571		£5,264	£10,571		£8,456		
Walsall (2021-22)	£33,325	£20,614	£11,158			£11,660				£10,821
Wolverhampton	£27,000	£20,000	£12,000	£5,500		£15,000		£10,000	£4,000	£8,500
Average	£32,340	£23,523	£10,365	£6,862	£5,786	£15,747	£4,171	£11,219	£3,536	£9,339

CIPFA Nearest Neighbours for Coventry (2023):										
Coventry	£27,609	£19,936	£5,659	£2,830		£12,273	4,171	£12,273	£3,071	£7,673
Blackburn with Darwen	£21,908	£13,145	£7,667		£2,191	£7,667	£3,286	£4,272	£1,643	£3,286
Bolton	£31,989	£19,104	£10,741	£4,833	£2,991	£8,665				£6,089
Bradford MBC	£37,056	£18,528	£25,939	£16,675		£25,939	£16,675	£12,970		£12,970
Bristol	£71,270	£28,281				£26,105		£8,702		£7,174
Derby	£36,436	£27,327	£9,109	£4,554	£9,109	£18,218				£9,109
Kirklees	£27,210	£20,618	£11,083		£4,157	£13,709		£12,423		£6,927
Leicester (2021-22)					£1,165	£65,787	£44,343	£10,483	£2,620	£8,736
Newcastle Upon Tyne	£18,400	£9,200	£6,900	£3,450		£6,900	£2,300	£4,600	£2,300	£4,600
Medway	£34,422	£22,948	£13,769	£6,885		£17,211		£11,474	£4,016	£6,572
Oldham MBC	£37,848	£22,079	£15,771	£6,309	£4,731	£18,925	£7,885			£9,462
Rochdale	£33,516	£16,758	£11,731		£1,676	£15,082				£8,379
Salford (2021-22)	£65,697	£33,296	£14,253		£14,253	£10,689				£8,910
Sandwell	£28,584	£21,438				£17,151				£9,519
Sheffield	£26,010	£13,005	£10,404			£13,005	£5,202			
Wolverhampton	£27,000	£20,000	£12,000	£5,500		£15,000		£10,000	£4,000	£8,500
Average	£34,997	£20,378	£11,925	£6,380	£5,034	£18,270	£11,980	£9,689	£2,942	£7,860

Summary of Benchmarking Information – Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) – Committees, Panels and Co-optees

Authority	Planning Chair	Planning Deputy Chair	Licensing Chair	Licensing Deputy Chair	Ethics/ Standards Cttee Chair	Ethics/ Standards Deputy Chair	Fostering Panel Member	Adoption Panel Member	Audit Chair	Audit Deputy Chair	Co-optee of Scrutiny
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West Midland Metropolitan Councils:

Coventry	£7,673	£3,071	£7,673	£3,071	£1,191		£3,071	£3,071	£7,673	£3,071	£556
Birmingham	£16,973		£16,973		£1,093				£5,658		£909
Dudley	£11,898	£5,574	£10,181	£4,909					£10,181	£4,909	
Sandwell	£11,434	£5,716	£11,434	£5,716	£9,519	£2,858			£9,519		
Solihull	£8,456		£4,229				£3,171				
Walsall (2021-22)	£11,006		£10,478		£5,348				£8,551		
Wolverhampton	£11,000	£5,000	£12,500	£5,000	£10,000	£2,500			£10,000	£2,500	
Average	£11,206	£4,840	£10,495	£4,674	£5,430	£2,679	£3,121		£8,597	£3,493	£733

CIPFA Nearest Neighbours for Coventry (2023):

Coventry	£7,673	£3,071	£7,673	£3,071	£1,191		£3,071	£3,071	£7,673	£3,071	£556
Blackburn with Darwen	£5,367	£1,971	£5,149	£1,863	£1,643	£822			£1,643	£822	
Bolton	£8,321		£7,875	£2,565							
Bradford MBC	£12,970		£12,970		£3,706		£2,965	£2,965	£12,970		£597
Bristol			£7,174		£7,174				£7,174		£626
Derby	£9,109	£4,554	£9,109	£4,554					£6,377		
Kirklees	£6,927		£5,543				£1,384	£1,384	£2,770		
Leicester (2021-22)	£10,483	£2,620	£10,483	£2,620	£3,116				£6,406		
Newcastle Upon Tyne	£6,900	£3,450	£4,600	£2,300	£2,300	£1,150			£3,450	£1,725	£460
Medway	£13,769	£5,737			£4,016				£8,032		
Oldham MBC	£9,462		£9,462						£2,325		
Rochdale	£11,172				£8,379		£1,676				
Salford (2021-22)	£8,910		£8,910						£8,910		£408
Sandwell	£11,434	£5,716	£11,434	£5,716	£9,519	£2,858			£9,519		
Sheffield	£7,803	£5,202	£7,802	£5,202					£7,803		£809
Wolverhampton	£11,000	£5,000	£12,500	£5,000	£10,000	£2,500			£10,000	£2,500	
Average	£9,420	£4,147	£8,620	£3,655	£5,104	£1,832	£2,274	£2,473	£6,789	£2,029	£576

Updated to reflect 3.88% Pay Award for 2023/24 agreed in November 2023

Roles for which Coventry pays an SRA, level of SRA and ratio to basic allowance

Role	SRA	Ratio to Basic Allowance
Basic Allowance	£15,935	
Leader of the Council	£28,680	1.80
Deputy Leader of the Council	£20,710	1.30
Leader of the Opposition Group	£5,879	0.37
Deputy Leader of the Opposition Group	£2,940	0.18
Cabinet Member	£12,749	0.80
Deputy Cabinet Member	£4,333	0.27
Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee	£12,749	0.80
Chair of Scrutiny Boards	£7,971	0.50
Deputy Chair Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee	£3,190	0.20
Chairs of Planning Committee, Licensing and Regulatory Committee, and Audit and Procurement Committee	£7,971	0.50
Deputy Chairs of Planning Committee, Licensing and Regulatory Committee, and Audit and Procurement Committee	£3,190	0.20
Member of the Fostering Panel and the Adoption Panel	£3,190	0.20
Chair of Ethics Committee	£1,237	0.08
Co-opted member	£578	-
Lord Mayor	£36,919	-
Deputy Lord Mayor	£16,286	-



Public report

Council

16 January, 2024

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership – Councillor G Duggins

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Chief Legal Officer

Ward(s) affected:

Not Applicable

Title:

Appointment to the West Midlands Investment Zone Joint Committee

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The Chancellor announced the establishment of a West Midlands Investment Zone (WMIZ) in the recent Autumn Statement. The West Midlands Combined Authority is required by the Government to act as the accountable body for the successful and compliant implementation of the WMIZ. The WMCA has initially established a Joint Committee as the governance body, which will be chaired by the Mayor of the West Midlands.

This report seeks to appoint a Coventry City Council voting representative to the West Midlands Investment Zone Joint Committee.

Recommendation:

That Council approves the appointment of Councillor J O'Boyle as the City Council's voting representative to the West Midlands Investment Zone Joint Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

List of Appendices included:

None

Useful background papers:

None

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

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

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes – 16 January, 2024

Report title: Appointment to the West Midlands Investment Zone Joint Committee

Context (or background)

- 1.1 The Chancellor announced the establishment of a West Midlands Investment Zone (WMIZ) in the recent Autumn Statement. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is required by the Government to act as the accountable body for the successful and compliant implementation of the WMIZ. This includes the allocation of the initial WMIZ programme support funding (£80m) and future business rate surplus remitted as a result of the WMIZ development.
- 1.2 The development of WMIZ governance must meet a number of timed gateways if Orders for relevant fiscal measures are to be laid before Parliament in time for a final announcement of the WMIZ at the Spring Statement and launch of the scheme in April 2024. The Government needs sufficient confidence that the appropriate governance arrangements and agreements are in place for the fiscal measures to be developed.
- 1.3 The WMCA has initially established a WMIZ Joint Committee between WMCA and Warwick District Council, which will be chaired by the Mayor of the West Midlands, and includes, as voting members, all 7 Constituent Authorities of the WMCA, Warwick District Council as the business rate billing authority for sites within the WMIZ and Warwickshire County Council, who are closely affected by business rates arrangements for those sites. Additional non voting members of the Joint Committee will include Universities that have signed up to the IZ. Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees of the WMCA will attend as observers.
- 1.4 The WMIZ Joint Committee has delegated authority from the WMCA Board and from Warwick District Council to make all decisions in relation to the IZ up to a financial threshold to be set by the WMCA Board as the IZ's accountable body.
- 1.5 Should Warwick District Council become a non-Constituent Authority of the WMCA, at that point the Joint Committee would become a WMIZ Board of the WMCA.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

Following consultation with the Leader, Councillor G Duggins, it is recommended that Councillor J O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, be appointed as the City Council's voting representative to the WMIZ Joint Committee.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

The Leader, Councillor G Duggins, has been consulted.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 If approved, the appointment will take effect from the date of the Council Meeting on 16 January, 2024.

All City Council appointments to outside bodies are reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting.

5. Comments from the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and the Chief Legal Officer

5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. Other implications

Not applicable

Name and job title:

Suzanne Bennett
Governance Services Co-ordinator

Service:

Law and Governance

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person

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Steve Weir	Head of Economic Development	Economic Development	12/12/23	12/12/23
Names of approvers: (officers and members)				
Julie Newman	Chief Legal Officer	Law and Governance	20/12/23	20/12/23
Barry Hastie	Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer)	Finance	20/12/23	20/12/23
Councillor G Duggins	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership	-	21/12/23	21/12/23

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Public report

Council

16 January 2024

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership - Councillor G Duggins

Director approving submission of the report:

Chief Legal Officer

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Local Government Boundary Review – Response to Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Draft Recommendations

Is this a key decision?

No. Although, the proposals could have a significant impact on residents or businesses in two or more electoral wards in the City, this report responds to a consultation and the Council will not make the final decision on this matter.

Executive summary:

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) commenced an electoral review of Coventry in January 2023. The review looks at whether the boundaries of wards within the local authority need to be altered to ensure fairer representation at local government elections.

The LGBCE carried out their initial consultation between 23 May and 31 July 2023. On 31 October 2023 they published their draft recommendations for Coventry for consultation the closing date for responses to this is 22 January 2024.

This report seeks the Council's views on whether or not to submit a response to the draft recommendations.

Council is requested to approve one of the following options:

1. That Council does not respond to the draft recommendations to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, or
2. That Council approves Appendix 1 of the report as the Council's response to the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, or
3. That Council considers and approves any other response to the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached to the report:

Appendix 1 – Response to the draft recommendations of the LGBCE

Background papers:

Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Electoral Review of Coventry City Council – A Guide for Councillors

Draft recommendations from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on the Warding patterns for Coventry.

Other useful documents

None

Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?

No – matter reserved to Council.

Has it or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes – 16 January 2024

Report title:

Local Government Boundary Review – Response to Local Government Boundary Commission for England’s Draft Recommendations

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) commenced its initial consultation on the review of Coventry City Council in May 2023.
- 1.2. On 18 July 2023 the Council approved a submission to the LGBCE in relation to the proposed warding patterns for Coventry.
- 1.3. The LGBCE have published its draft recommendations on the warding patterns for the City for consultation the closing date of the consultation is 22 January 2024.
- 1.4. Appendix 1 contains an option for responding to the draft recommendations of the LGBCE on warding patterns for the City in response to their consultation.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

The options are:

1. That Council does not respond to the draft recommendations to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, or
2. That Council approves Appendix 1 of the report as the Council’s response to the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, or
3. That Council considers and approves any other response to the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. None required for this report.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. This report is to consider the draft recommendations published by the LGBCE for public consultation. The consultation on the draft recommendations concludes on 22 January 2024. The next stage will be when the LGBCE publishes its recommendations on 7 May 2024. The final recommendations for the Local Government Boundary Commission will be implemented at the local elections in May 2026.

5. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer

- 5.1. Financial Implications
None in relation to this report.
- 5.2. Legal Implications
The LGBCE is an independent body established by Parliament in April 2010. The LGBCE has a statutory duty to undertake electoral reviews.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

The LGBCE is conducting an electoral review of Coventry City Council to ensure fairer representation at local government elections.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

There are no risks associated with this report.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

None in relation to this report.

6.4. Equalities / EIA?

No equalities impact assessment has been completed in relation to this report.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

None.

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

None.

Report author(s):

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Service: Electoral Services

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person

Contributor/approver name	Title	Service Area	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
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Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Tina Pinks	Finance Manager	Finance	03/01/24	03/01/24
Legal: Julie Newman	Chief Legal Officer	Law and Governance	03/01/24	03/01/24
Members: Cllr George Duggins	Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership	-	03/01/24	03/01/24

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Coventry City Council's Response to the Draft Recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document is in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) initial recommendations for the local government boundaries for Coventry City Council, *New electoral arrangements for Coventry City Council Draft Recommendations* published in October 2023.
- 1.2. We thank the LGBCE and the inspectors for the work they have done and their dedication to engaging constructively with the points raised by all parties.
- 1.3. We broadly welcome the draft recommendations which are very much in the spirit of the proposals submitted by Coventry City Council.
- 1.4. It was our belief that the broad pattern of the wards as they exist is correct. The wards as they currently exist are well established, with each ward combining two to three distinct neighbourhoods which have been united in wards since the establishment of the council as a Metropolitan District in 1974.
- 1.5. The basis of the proposal is the criteria set out by the LGBCE and:
 - I. Where possible have taken into account historic links i.e. areas have previously been in different wards; and
 - II. Where possible parliamentary boundaries have been respected; and
 - III. In drawing boundaries, consideration was given to natural boundaries- major roads, railway lines, industrial estates etc.
- 1.6. It is therefore welcomed that the inspectors have agreed Coventry should be represented by 54 councillors, the same number as there are now and that Coventry should have 18 wards. We are also pleased that in the vast majority of cases the LGBCE have come to similar conclusions to those contained in our initial proposals.
- 1.7. On a number of proposals which differ from those put forward by Coventry City Council, we offer further points as to why our initial proposals may ensure wards effectively fulfil the criteria set by the LGBCE.

2. North and North East Coventry

Foleshill, Henley and Longford

- 2.1. The fact that there is a broad consensus about the boundaries of Foleshill and Longford reflects the overwhelming consensus that the existing boundaries are correct and make for wards that are coherent and meet the criteria set by the LGBCE.

- 2.2. We are pleased that the inspectors have come to the same conclusion as we have with regards to altering Henley Ward as set out in para 39. We maintain that this move ensures electoral equality whilst recognising the historic link between Manor Farm and Wyken.
- 2.3. We do not recognise the proposed Sowe ward as described in the proposal set out in para 40 as a viable solution in this part of the city, particularly with Hinckley Rd being the only way in or out of the estate, therefore not meeting the requirement to support effective and convenient local government. Furthermore, the proposal does not reflect established community ties or how local people view their neighbourhoods. We agree with para 44 of the draft recommendations about the links between Walsgrave, Potter's Green and Woodway Park.

Holbrooks and Radford

- 2.4. We agree with the main recommendation for Holbrooks Ward. The inclusion of the 's' in Holbrooks, and the small amendment to the existing Radford ward to move the existing boundary from Sadler Road to Keresley Road and Wallace Road as outlined in para 47.
- 2.5. We would like to provide an alternative perspective on the proposal outlined in para 52 with the use of Burnaby Rd as the boundary between Holbrooks and Radford.
- 2.6. There are significant historical links identifying Yelverton Road as being in Holbrooks Ward, predominantly associated with the numerous metalworking factories and heavy industry. The Brico engineering company is based on Yelverton Road and also had several factories in the ward, employing countless local residents.
- 2.7. The railway line branched into Holbrooks at the top of Yelverton Road, providing a natural boundary, and factories such as the original Jaguar factory in Holbrooks and motor panels linked up with the Brico, sending munitions and aerospace parts throughout the country during both world wars, and afterwards.
- 2.8. Yelverton Road itself opens straight onto Holbrook Lane, the main arterial road running through the centre of the ward, and the top of the road onto Burnaby Road also in Holbrook's ward. Both ends of the road open into Holbrook's Ward.
- 2.9. Another point to note is the catchment area for children in this area would be a Holbrooks school.
- 2.10. We agree with the LGBCE to reject the proposal to include the area between Halford Lane and Bennetts Road South, currently located in Holbrook ward into Bablake ward. It is unnecessary and does not meet the aims of the criteria as set out by the LGBCE.

3. North West Coventry

Bablake and Woodlands

- 3.1. We recognise the significant challenge posed by the population growth which will follow the completion of the Eastern Green SUE as identified in para 55. We believe that such a steep increase fundamentally changes the North West of the city.
- 3.2. We reaffirm that the A45 forms a strong natural boundary between Bablake and Woodlands and that the Eastern Green SUE will mirror the existing community of Woodlands Ward which broadly consists of Eastern Green. Furthermore even with the issue of the SUE addressed we recognise that it is important to address the electoral equality issues by redistributing parts of Bablake to Sherbourne ward which in turn recognises the community ties in Coundon that underpin much of Sherbourne Ward.
- 3.3. We would stress that geographically the new Eastern Green SUE will be next to Eastern Green in Woodlands ward and with a major road separating it from Bablake. We agree with para 60 and 61 that the A45 is the most appropriate boundary.
- 3.4. A further point to note is that north of the A45 is allocated as greenbelt within the current local plan and the new draft local plan for Coventry does not propose any reallocation of greenbelt land, therefore the A45 will not form a spine road as put forward within the alternative proposals.
- 3.5. We recognise these proposals will require a warded parish council and reaffirm this will better reflect the changing nature of the area with the growth of the Eastern Green SUE and the community that will grow in this area.

Sherbourne

- 3.6. We agree with the recommendation put forward for Sherbourne Ward. The proposed Sherbourne Ward includes more of what is known as Coundon than the current Ward boundaries and other proposals put forward in this consultation.
- 3.7. We agree with the point in para 67 that the alternative proposals put forward will split communities within Sherbourne Ward. The use of Holyhead Rd as the boundary between Sherbourne and Whoberley Wards splits Coundon down the middle in a change that does not reflect community identity. The division of Lower Coundon and Spon End from the rest of Coundon would further divide Coundon unnecessarily and does not fit the criteria set out by the LGBCE.
- 3.8. We are pleased the LGBCE have included the Scots Lane area in the proposals for Sherbourne Ward as set out in para 69. We agree with the recommendation to use Norman Place Rd as the boundary to the top end of Sherbourne Ward, providing a strong and identifiable boundary between Sherbourne and Bablake Wards and propose that it should remain the boundary in this area.
- 3.9. We do not agree with the amendment put forward as part of the recommendation in para 71 to move 26–140 Allesley Old Road, Sunnyside Close and Rushmoor Drive, and streets off Rushmoor Drive, which are currently included in Sherbourne ward. The estate itself is

accessed by Allesley Old Rd, however the estates connection to the River Sherbourne is strong and people living in this area identify more with Sherbourne Ward to Whoberley ward.

4. South East and Central Coventry

Binley and Willenhall

- 4.1. The fact that there is a broad consensus about the boundaries of Binley and Willenhall reflects the overwhelming consensus that the existing boundaries are correct and make for a ward that are coherent and meet the criteria set by the LGBCE as discussed in para 73.

Cheylesmore and St Michael's

- 4.2. We recognise that each city wide proposal varied greatly as the LGBCE identified in para 78 and again in para 88 and hope to bring clarity to the final recommendations with the comments below.
- 4.3. St Michael's Ward is made up of three distinct areas – Hillfields, City Centre and Charterhouse. The ring road roughly represents the footprint of the medieval city walls of Coventry, and Hillfields was the first suburb of the city. These connections can be seen in the housing stock, the connections that still exist within communities and how they interact. For example, Sidney Stringer Academy sits just outside the ring road, serving both Hillfields and the city centre, likewise with doctors' surgeries and other support services.
- 4.4. These historic connections can also be seen in how residents move around St Michael's Ward between these neighbourhoods. The easiest and most used walkways are under the ring road by the Swanswell leading into Hillfields and from Gosford St leading into Far Gosford St to Charterhouse area of the ward. This connection does not exist to the same degree in other parts of the city centre, particularly in how people navigate the ring road.
- 4.5. The proposals put forward in the council submission reflected how areas have changed due to development. We recognise the concern of the LGBCE by moving the former railway line boundary between St Michael's and Lower Stoke, however this boundary has changed a great deal since the last review. The railway line boundary between St Michael's and Lower Stoke made sense before it was decommissioned and even after it closed. It is now used as a cycleway linking neighbourhoods in the area. This is distinguished from Jimmy Hill Way which runs between Upper Stoke and St Michael's and remains a strong and identifiable boundary.
- 4.6. Alder Moor Lane is what residents recognise as the boundary between the Stoke Alder Moor and the newer development on the Humber factory site. Residents on the new estate would consider the estate to be separate from Stoke Alder Moor.
- 4.7. We would submit that this is an option to consider in reaching electoral equality in Earlsdon and would suggest this better meets the criteria recognising community identity.
- 4.8. We agree with the proposal in para 86 to include Parkside in Cheylesmore and that this is sole change for Cheylesmore.

Lower Stoke, Upper Stoke and Wyken

- 4.9. We recognise the need for electoral equality in Lower Stoke and the challenge in providing electoral equality whilst recognising community identity.
- 4.10. The proposal adopted by the LGBCE in para 93 reaches electoral equality however it splits the Poets Corner area in Lower Stoke and removes the identifiable boundary of Ansty Rd between Upper and Lower Stoke. We agree that the inclusion of the Kingsway and Marlborough Road area in Lower Stoke Ward makes sense and provides clearer boundaries between Upper and Lower Stoke.
- 4.11. If the recommendation remains to use Longfellow Rd as the boundary between Upper and Lower Stoke as set out in para 93, we ask that the commission reconsider the boundary along Hipswell Highway. Hipswell Highway is undoubtedly Wyken in the minds of residents, yet it is split between three wards in the proposal. We propose if this boundary change is adopted, that Hipswell Highway is put entirely in Wyken Ward.
- 4.12. We agree with the LGBCE on para 94 to not include Walsgrave in a Wyken Ward and that Wyken is a well established and recognised neighbourhood in the minds of residents across the city.

5. South West Coventry

Earlsdon and Whoberley

- 5.1. We are pleased the LGBCE adopted the council's proposal to find a solution for electoral inequality between Earlsdon and Whoberley Wards and agree with the proposal to move Broad Lane and Tile Hill Lane area of Earlsdon Ward into Whoberley as set out in para 100.
- 5.2. We agree with the LGBCE on the use of the A45 as a major boundary between Bablake and Woodlands Wards, however a point to note is people living in the Mantilla Drive area identify more with Wainbody Ward and Finham with facilities on the other of the A45 such as Finham Park school and the doctors surgery.
- 5.3. It is notable that the speed of the A45 between the two wards is 40mph and not 60mph as it is between Bablake and Woodlands, and there are crossings, particularly for people crossing to reach the school. We submit that the LGBCE may want to reconsider this area a part of Wainbody Ward if it is possible to include the Earlsdon part of St Michael's in an Earlsdon Ward.

Tile Hill and Canley and Wainbody

- 5.4. We are pleased to see that inspectors have agreed with our solution to the challenge of electoral equality between Wainbody and the former Westwood Ward, which the LGBCE agreed should be renamed Tile Hill and Canley.
- 5.5. As discussed previously, the large expansion in population in the North West of the city requires addressing the boundaries between Woodlands and Westwood, this allows for Woodlands to accommodate the Eastern Green SUE and address the severe electoral inequality in the south of the city.

- 5.6. On reflection we agree with the changes proposed by the LGBCE as set out in para 107, transferring all of box QG to Wainbody Ward. This provides a clear boundary and effective local government, maintaining all of Westwood Heath in one ward. It also recognises that Tile Hill Village, is linked with the rest of Tile Hill.
- 5.7. The current Westwood ward is dominated by the neighbourhoods of Canley and Tile Hill. The solution in the draft recommendation seek to gather the majority of Tile Hill in one ward where as previously it was split between two.
- 5.8. The draft recommendation recognises that the neighbourhoods of Tile Hill and Canley have far more in common and links, in terms of community facilities and amenities than they do with Westwood Heath, which is also geographically separated from Canley by a business park.
- 5.9. Westwood Heath (Box QG) is similar in terms of demographic profile and in terms of community need to its neighbouring boxes in Wainbody ward. We therefore maintain that Westwood Heath would be better served as part of Wainbody Ward.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. In conclusion, we thank the inspectors for the work. We believe that the draft recommendations are a sensible and fair solution to the challenge of a growing population. In particular we believe that the warding patterns are the correct ones. We appreciate that the draft recommendations came to a similar conclusion.
- 6.2. The further amendments suggested in this report seek to refine points around community identity for the commission's final proposals.
- 6.3. In summary, the options for the LGBCE to consider are as follows:
 - i. The boundary between Radford Ward and Holbrooks Ward with Yelverton Rd remaining in a Holbrooks Ward.
 - ii. The inclusion of 26–140 Allesley Old Road, Sunnyside Close and Rushmoor Drive, and streets off Rushmoor Drive in Sherbourne Ward instead of Whoberley Ward.
 - iii. The historic and current links within the central area and the options contained in para 4.2-4.8 of this report and within the Council's initial consultation submission.
 - iv. The division of Poets Corner in Lower Stoke Ward and Ansty Rd as an identifiable boundary between Upper and Lower Stoke.
 - v. The whole of Hipswell Highway included in a Wyken Ward.
 - vi. Consider box PA as part of a Wainbody Ward instead of including in a future Earlsdon Ward.

Council Meeting

16 January 2024

Booklet 1

Written Question

1.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor M Heaven

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor D Welsh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Would the Cabinet Member join me in paying tribute to the people of Coventry who have enthusiastically welcomed, and taken in, refugees from Ukraine as a result of Russia’s illegal invasion?”