

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 20 February 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor J Birdi (Chair)

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

Honorary Alderman D Chater, J Clifford, H Fitzpatrick and M Hammon

Apologies: Councillor M Heaven, A Hopkins, J Innes, A Kaur, L Kelly, T Khan, R Lancaster, A Masih, E Ruane and R Singh

Public Business

99. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 January 2024**

The minutes of the Meeting held on 16 January 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record.

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

The Lord Mayor referred to his recent visit to the twin city of Cork, Ireland where he and the Lady Mayoress were hosted by the city's Lord Mayor, Kieran McCarthy. The cities have been twinned for 66 years and it was clear to see how much this relationship was valued.

101. **Petitions**

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

- 1. Petition to address a chronic parking problem of vehicles parked on the footpath along Pickford Green Lane Allesley – 138 signatures, presented by Councillor T Jandu.**
- 2. Petition requesting the Council to twin Coventry, the city of peace and reconciliation, with the city of Khan Younis in Gaza – 414 signatures, presented by Councillor S Nazir.**
- 3. Petition requesting the Council to resurface the whole length of the footpath along Leaf Lane – 103 signatures, presented by Councillor B Mosterman.**
- 4. Petition against the Clifford Bridge Road Cycle Lane development and request the council to move it to a safer route – 56 signatures, presented by Councillor F Abbott.**

102. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

103. Motion without Notice

In accordance with the Constitution, a Motion without Notice was moved by Councillor M Mutton, seconded by Councillor G Lloyd, and adopted that agenda item 6 (Council Tax Setting Report 2024-25) and item 7 (Budget Report 2024/25) be considered together.

It was noted that a recorded vote would be taken in respect of all decisions relating to matters the subject of Minutes 104 (Council Tax Setting Report 2024-25) and 105 (Budget Report 2024/25), including any amendments.

104. Council Tax Setting Report 2024-25

Further to Minute 76 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer), that calculated the Council Tax level for 2024/25 and made appropriate recommendations to Council, consistent with the Budget Report 2024/25. The report recommended a 4.9% increase in the City's Council Tax.

The report incorporated the impact of the Council's gross expenditure and the level of income it would receive through Business Rates, grants and fees and charges. This resulted in a Council Tax requirement, as the amount that its expenditure exceeded all other sources of income.

The report included a calculation of the Band D Council Tax that would be needed to generate this Council Tax requirement, based on the City's approved Council Tax base. The 2024/25 Band D Council Tax that was calculated through this process had increased by £94.44 from the 2022/23 level.

Each year the Government determined the maximum Council Tax increases that local authorities could set without triggering a referendum. For 2024/25 the Secretary of State had published a report which proposed that the rise in Coventry City Council's Council Tax must be below 5% in 2024/25 to avoid triggering a referendum, comprising a 2% precept for expenditure on adult social care and a maximum of 3% for other expenditure. At the time of writing the Secretary of State's report was subject to parliamentary approval. The recommendations within the Budget Report 2024/25 were based on a proposed increase in Council Tax of 4.9%, incorporating a core Council Tax rise of 2.9% and a 2% Adult Social Care Precept.

Members noted that the recommendations followed the structure of resolutions drawn up by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, to ensure that legal requirements were fully adhered to in settling the tax. As a consequence, the wording of the proposed resolutions was necessarily complex.

RESOLVED that, the City Council:

(1) Notes the following Council Tax base amounts for the year 2024/25, as approved by Cabinet on 9 January 2024, in accordance with Regulations made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 ("the Act"):

a) 87,734.0 being the amount calculated by the Council as its Council Tax base for the year for the whole Council area;

b) Allesley	403.7
Finham	1,564.8
Keresley	561.8

being the amounts calculated by the Council as its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(2) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Act:

(a) £867,820,927 being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils (Gross Expenditure and reserves required to be raised for estimated future expenditure);

(b) £691,923,346 being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act. (Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet the Gross Expenditure but excluding Council Tax income);

(c) £175,897,581 being the amount by which the aggregate at (2)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at (2)(b) above, calculated by the

Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year;

$$(d) \text{ £2,004.90} \qquad \frac{(2)(c)}{(1)(a)} = \frac{\text{£175,897,581}}{87,734}$$

being the amount at (2)(c) above divided by the amount at (1)(a) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. (Average Council Tax at Band D for the City including Parish Precepts).

(e) £51,447 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act. (Parish Precepts);

$$(f) \text{ £2,004.31} \qquad = (2)(d) - \frac{(2)(e)}{(1)(a)} \qquad = \qquad \text{£2,004.90} - \frac{\text{£51,447}}{87,734.0}$$

being the amount at (2)(d) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at (2)(e) above by the amounts at (1)(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the area to which no special item relates. (Council Tax at Band D for the City excluding Parish Precepts);

(g)

Coventry (unparished area)	£2,004.31
Allesley	£2,046.16
Finham	£2,017.93
Keresley	£2,027.86

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (2)(f) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at (1)(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate. (Council Taxes at Band D for the City and Parish).

h)

Valuation Band	Parts to which no special item relates	Parish of Allesley	Parish of Finham	Parish of Keresley
	£	£	£	£
A	1,336.21	1,364.11	1,345.29	1,351.91
B	1,558.91	1,591.46	1,569.50	1,577.23

C	1,781.61	1,818.81	1,793.72	1,802.54
D	2,004.31	2,046.16	2,017.93	2,027.86
E	2,449.71	2,500.86	2,466.36	2,478.49
F	2,895.11	2,955.56	2,914.78	2,929.13
G	3,340.52	3,410.27	3,363.22	3,379.77
H	4,008.62	4,092.32	4,035.86	4,055.72

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (2)(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

- (3) To note that for the year 2024/25 the Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands and West Midlands Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:

Valuation Band	Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands	West Midlands Fire Authority
	£	£
A	143.70	50.13
B	167.65	58.49
C	191.60	66.84
D	215.55	75.20
E	263.45	91.91
F	311.35	108.62
G	359.25	125.33
H	431.10	150.40

- (4) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (2)(h) and (3) above, the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2024/25 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Band	Parts to which no special item relates	Parish of Allesley	Parish of Finham	Parish of Keresley
	£	£	£	£
A	1,530.04	1,557.94	1,539.12	1,545.74
B	1,785.05	1,817.60	1,795.64	1,803.37
C	2,040.05	2,077.25	2,052.16	2,060.98
D	2,295.06	2,336.91	2,308.68	2,318.61
E	2,805.07	2,856.22	2,821.72	2,833.85
F	3,315.08	3,375.53	3,334.75	3,349.10

G	3,825.10	3,894.85	3,847.80	3,864.35
H	4,590.12	4,673.82	4,617.36	4,637.22

(5) That the Council determines that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not excessive in accordance with the principles set out in the Secretary of State’s report, under Sections 52ZC and 52ZD of the Act.

Note: The Councillors voting For and Against the Recommendations were as follows:

<u>For</u>		<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Councillors:	Councillors:		
F Abbott	J Lepoidevin		
S Agboola	G Lloyd		
N Akhtar	P Male		
P Akhtar	K Maton		
M Ali	J McNicholas		
R Bailey	C Miks		
J Birdi	B Mosterman		
L Bigham	M Mutton		
J Blundell	S Nazir		
R Brown	J O’Boyle		
K Caan	E Reeves		
G Duggins	G Ridley		
J Gardiner	K Sandhu		
S Gray	T Sawdon		
L Harvard	P Seaman		
P Hetherton	R Simpson		
T Jandu	B Singh		
A Jobbar	R Thay		
S Keough	CE Thomas		
AS Khan	A Tucker		
R Lakha	D Welsh		
M Lapsa			
	Total: 43	Total: 0	

Result: Carried

For: 43
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

105. Budget Report 2024/25

Further to Minute 77 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer), that followed on from the Pre-Budget Report approved by Cabinet on 12 December 2023 (minute 50/23 refers) which had since been subject to a period of public consultation. The proposals within the report would now form the basis of the Council’s final revenue and capital budget for 2024/25 incorporating the following details:

- Gross budgeted spend of £867.8m (£55.8m or 7% higher than 2023/24)
- Net budgeted spend of £277.5m (£17.0m or higher than 2023/24) funded from Council Tax and Business Rates less a tariff payment of £22.2m due to the Government
- A Council Tax Requirement of £175.9m (£11.5m or 7% higher than 2023/24), reflecting a City Council Tax increase of 4.9% detailed in the separate Council Tax setting report also for consideration at the meeting.
- A number of new expenditure pressures, policy proposals and technical savings proposals.
- A Capital Strategy including a Capital Programme of £157.5m including expenditure funded by Prudential Borrowing of £41m.
- An updated Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy, and a Commercial Investments Strategy.

The financial position in the budget report was based on the Final 2024/25 Local Government Finance Settlement published on 5 February 2024. Whilst the Government provided an additional £3.2m of social care grant for 2024/25, the Settlement represented an ongoing net reduction in resources compared to the Pre-Budget report of c£2.1m per annum. The position after 2024/25 remained uncertain as the Government's spending plans were effectively in the second year of a 2-year settlement, and the final year of the 5-year Comprehensive Spending Review. This therefore provided no certainty or stability for local government finances beyond 204/25.

The Pre-Budget Report was based on an increase in Council Tax of 4.9% and this position had been maintained for the final proposals in the report. This incorporated an increase on 2.9%, which was within the Government's limit of 3% above which a referendum would need to be held plus a further 2% Adult Social Care Precept in line with Government expectations. The precept was essential to enable councils, including Coventry to manage increases in the costs of care. In total, the rise in Council Tax bills would be the equivalent of around £1.60 a week for a typical Coventry household including the expected rises in the precepts for Police and Fire.

The Council had closed the significant financial gap for 2024/25 which it had at the start of the budget process. Measures in achieving this included the identification of additional Council Tax resources, a range of technical adjustments and newly identified cost savings or income streams. All these proposals were set out in detail in Appendix 2 of the report. The report indicated that there were no new savings required (over and above those set out in the pre-budget report) as a result of this budget report.

The proposals did not provide the Council with a balanced budget beyond 2024/25. The Council's current medium term bottom line incorporated a combination of future inflationary and service pressures and the fall-out of uncertain specific grant resources.

Whatever the future holds for national changes to local government finance in the next parliament, the Council remained committed to maintaining, and where possible, strengthening its own financial self-sustainability and the need to support the vibrancy and growth of the city.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), included as Appendix 1 to the report, set out the financial planning foundations that supported the setting of the council's revenue and capital budgets, including policy assumptions and financial management framework that underpinned the strategy.

The recommended Capital Programme proposals were a key part of the Council's approach and amounted to £157.5m in 2024/25. The proposals reflected the Council's ambitions for the city and included extensive highways infrastructure works including specific schemes relating to continued delivery of the City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement programme that included transport packages for the Foleshill and London Road corridor; moving towards Stage Gate 2 of the Very Light Rail project; the commencement of CityCentre Cultural Gateway; progressing the City Centre South redevelopment; and the commencement of the Woodlands School project. Over the next 5 years the Capital Programme was estimated at a total of £405m as part of on-going investment delivered by and through the City Council.

The report detailed the annual Treasury Management Strategy, incorporating the Minimum Revenue Provision policy and the Commercial Investment Strategy. These covered the management of the Council's treasury and wider commercial investments, cash balances and borrowing requirements. These strategies and other relevant sections of the report reflected the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code and Prudential Code for Capital Finance, as well as statutory guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and Investments.

Appendix 9 of the report contained detailed of proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) which had been modified from those included in the pre-budget report following public consultation. The report requested approval for these changes to be implemented from 1 April 2024. The budgetary challenges faced by the council for 2024/25 required the council to review all areas of discretionary expenditure including the option to revise the amount of support provided through the CTSS for working age households.

An amendment, as detailed in Appendix 1 to these Minutes, was moved by Councillor Male, seconded by Councillor Ridley, and lost.

RESOLVED that the Council:

- 1) Approves the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in Appendix 1 to this report, as the basis of its medium-term financial planning process.**
- 2) Approves the Budget proposals in Appendix 2, after due consideration of the consultation responses set out in Appendix 3 and the Equality Impact Assessment set out in Appendix 11 to 28 in relation to proposals to revise the Council Tax Support scheme.**
- 3) Approves the total 2024/25 revenue budget of £870m in Table 1 and Appendix 5, established in line with a 4.9% City Council Tax increase and the Council Tax Requirement recommended in the Council Tax Setting Report considered on today's agenda.**

- 4) **Notes the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) comments confirming the adequacy of reserves and robustness of the budget in Section 5.1.2 and 5.1.3.**
- 5) **Approves the Capital Strategy incorporating the Capital Programme of £157.5m for 2024/25 and the forward commitments arising from this programme totalling £405m between 2024/25 to 2028/29 detailed in Section 2.3 and Appendix 6.**
- 6) **Authorise in respect of food waste, the introduction of a separate weekly food waste collection to be implemented with effect from 1 April 2025 delivering the savings in Appendix 2 and detailed in Section 2.3.4, including:**
 - **the acceptance of the capital grant funding of £1.87m from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs specifically for the delivery of a separate food waste collection, and**
 - **the addition of £1.87m grant funding to the capital programme in 24/25 to facilitate the necessary capital investment required to bring this recommendation into effect.**
- 7) **Approves the addition to the capital programme of a new capital scheme for Temporary Accommodation acquisition at a total cost of £1.5m funded from prudential borrowing to support the delivery of the saving line Increasing alternative Temporary Accommodation provisions in Appendix 2 - Budget Proposals and Financial Position and detailed in Section 2.3.5.**
- 8) **Approves the expansion of the existing Residential Children's Home Strategy scheme at a total cost of £1.4m funded from prudential borrowing to support the delivery of the saving line Expansion of Residential Strategy in Appendix 2 - Budget Proposals and Financial Position and detailed in Section 2.3.6.**
- 9) **Approves the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2024/25 in Section 2.4 and the Prudential Indicators and limits described and detailed in Appendix 8, the Commercial Investment Strategy for 2024/25 in Section 2.5 and Appendix 7 and the Commercial Investment Indicators detailed in Appendix 8.**
- 10) **Considered and notes the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme set out in Appendix 9 to the report, as a result of the consultation (Appendix 10) and the Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 16).**
- 11) **Approves the implementation of the revised Council Tax Support scheme as laid out in Appendix 9a of this report with effect from 1st April 2024.**

Note: 1) The Councillors voting for and against **the amendment** (as detailed in Appendix 1 to these Minutes) were as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Councillor: R Bailey J Birdi J Blundell J Gardiner T Jandu S Keough M Lapsa J Lepoidevin P Male B Mosterman G Ridley T Sawdon R Simpson	Councillor: F Abbott S Agboola N Akhtar P Akhtar M Ali L Bigham R Brown K Caan G Duggins S Gray L Harvard P Hetherton A Jobbar AS Khan R Lakha	Councillor: G Lloyd K Maton J McNicholas C Miks M Mutton S Nazir J O'Boyle E Reeves K Sandhu P Seaman B Singh R Thay CE Thomas A Tucker D Welsh
Total: 13	Total: 30	Total: 0

Result: Lost

For: 13
Against: 30
Abstain: 0

2) The Councillors voting for and against the **Recommendations as detailed in the report** were as follows:

<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Councillors: F Abbott S Agboola N Akhtar P Akhtar M Ali L Bigham R Brown K Caan G Duggins S Gray L Harvard P Hetherton A Jobbar AS Khan R Lakha	Councillors: G Lloyd K Maton J McNicholas C Miks M Mutton S Nazir J O'Boyle E Reeves K Sandhu P Seaman B Singh R Thay CE Thomas A Tucker D Welsh	Councillors: R Bailey J Birdi J Blundell J Gardiner T Jandu S Keough M Lapsa J Lepoidevin P Male B Mosterman G Ridley T Sawdon R Simpson
	Total: 30	Total: 13
		Total: 0

Result: Carried

For: 30

Against: 13

Abstain: 0

106. **Statements**

There were no Statements.

(Meeting closed at 5.15 pm)