

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor AS Khan (Deputy Chair)

Councillor R Brown
Councillor K Caan
Councillor AS Khan
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor D Welsh
Councillor P Seaman
Councillor P Hetherton
Councillor R Brown
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor CE Thomas

Non-Voting Deputy
Cabinet Members Councillor S Agboola
Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor S Nazir

Non-Voting Opposition
Members: Councillor P Male
Councillor S Gray

Other Members: Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor CE Thomas

Employees (by Service Area):

Chief Executive: J Nugent (Chief Executive) M Burrows

Adults and Housing: J Crawshaw, J Reading

Finance and Resources: B Hastie (Director)

Law and Governance: O Aremu, S Bennett

Partnerships and
Performance: A Cole, L Lambert, M Legard, R Sugars

Property Services and
Development R Moon (Director), A Hunt, L Lewis

Public Health and
Wellbeing: R Chapman, J Ross

Regeneration and Economy A Williams (Director), C Booth, D Nuttall, S Weir

Transportation, Highways and Sustainability C Knight (Director), M Adams

Apologies: Councillor L Bigham, G Hayre, G Ridley

Public Business

81. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

82. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 13 and 20 February, 2024 were agreed and signed as true records.

There were no matters arising.

83. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded under Sections 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the consideration of the following private reports on the grounds that the reports involve the likely disclosure of information defined in Paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act as indicated, and that in all circumstances of the cases, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information:

| Minute Number | Report Title | Paragraph(s) Of Section 12A Of the Act |
|---------------|---|--|
| 97 | City Centre Cultural Gateway Project Update | 3 |
| 98 | Procurement of a New Contract for the Supply of Electricity and Ancillary Services | 3 |
| 99 | Coventry and Warwickshire Religion and Worldviews Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2024 - 2029 | 3 |

84. Acceptance of Accommodation-based Support Grant 2024 -2025: Part 4 Duties of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing that sought approval of a grant of £885,733 for 2024/25 from the Department of Levelling Up to fulfil the functions of the new statutory duty arising from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act

introduced several new duties and a range of implications for local authorities including safe accommodation strategic planning, safe accommodation provision and support for victims, and the prioritisation of domestic abuse victims within homelessness applications.

In July 2022 Cabinet noted the acceptance of the grant of £852,283 in 2022/2023 from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to fulfil the functions of the new statutory duty placed on Tier 1 Local Authorities relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within safe accommodation: and delegated authority to the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, to approve further grant due for 2023/24 up to a maximum of £2.5 million pound. Coventry was awarded £869,332 for 2023/2024.

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has now determined under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, that the DA (Domestic Abuse) Grant funding will be provided to local authorities, for the financial year 2024/2025, to fulfil the functions of the new statutory duty on Tier 1 Local Authorities relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within safe accommodation.

The report detailed the newly commissioned services in response to the needs assessment undertaken to ensure the Council complies with its new duties under the Act. The grant also funds a domestic abuse programme manager to co-ordinate delivery of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and action plans, Appendices to the report provided details on each of the services commissioned and brief evaluations on what has been achieved so far.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- 1) Approves the acceptance of the grant of £885,733 for 2024/2025 from the Department of Levelling up to fulfil the functions of the new statutory duty on Tier 1 Local Authorities relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within safe accommodation: and**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, following consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources and the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, to accept any future additional grant funding to fulfil the functions set out in this report in subsequent years 2025 – 2026 and 2026 - 2027 up to a combined total amount of £2.5 million pounds.**
- 3) Delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Resources to make the necessary adjustments to the revenue budget to give effect to the recommendations set out in this report.**

85. Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2024: Acceptance of Grant

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Partnerships and Performance which indicated that the Government's Holiday Activity and Food programme

(HAF) is an enrichment programme for disadvantaged children which includes the provision of healthy food. The programme is primarily for pupils of statutory school age, who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. Initially the programme was funded for the 2021/22 financial year only and operated through the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays. The delivery details were set out in the Cabinet report of 9 March 2021, the Council report of 16 March 2021 and the Cabinet reports of 15 March 2022 and 14 March 2023.

The Government have made a commitment for this next phase of the programme through to the end of March 2025. Coventry has received an allocation of £1,587,840 for the financial year 2024/25 (compared to an allocation of £1,553,530 for the financial year 2023/24), subject to meeting the conditions of the grant determination letter.

The report sought approval to acceptance of the grant and detailed the intended approach for delivering HAF in 2024/25. A summary of 2023/24 HAF activity was appended to the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- 1) Approves the acceptance of the Department for Education Holiday Activities and Food grant allocation, of up to £1,587,840 for the 2024/25 financial year.**
- 2) Delegates authority for decisions about the planning and delivery of the Holiday Activities and Food grant allocation to the Director of Partnerships and Performance, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skill, including but not limited to:**
 - a) Co-ordinating and awarding monies to relevant organisations in order to ensure the delivery of the programme to a high standard; and**
 - b) Acceptance of any future opportunities for additional in-year grant funding up to a total amount in the sum of £2.5 million pounds, in 2024/25.**

86. Transportation and Highways Maintenance Capital Programme 2024/25

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability which detailed a £19.249m capital programme for the maintenance and improvement of the city's roads, pavements and transport infrastructure. The programme is funded through City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), external funding and Citizen Housing Right to Buy receipts.

The report highlighted the ambitious range of major projects to be delivered in the city. With increased funding as a result of additional grants and CRSTS re-profiling, it is possible to further extend the successful Average Speed Enforcement programme and provide additional funding to better protect homes and communities in response to the January floods, as well as deliver an expanded programme of pavement works.

These projects support the aims of the recently adopted Transport Strategy and the One Coventry Plan to promote continued growth and investment, tackle the causes and consequences of climate change and inequalities by widening travel choice and promoting active travel.

With the continued success in attracting external funding, the Council is able to develop and deliver schemes and infrastructure that enable transformation and progression.

This report set out a detailed capital programme of all highway maintenance and transport schemes which are due to be carried out during 2024/25 and outlined individual allocations and the various sources of funding in a table in the report. Specific details of each project are detailed in Appendices 1 to 3.

As with previous programmes, there is an emphasis on making the best use of existing infrastructure. The maintenance programme will focus on ensuring that the worst affected roads and pavements across the City are properly repaired and preventative maintenance is carried out. This is a key theme in the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan and is driven by the City Council's Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy (January 2016).

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- 1) Approves the 2024/25 Programme of Transportation and Highway schemes marked 'A' in Table 2 of the report.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Cabinet Member for City Services, to approve a programme of scheme development and externally funded schemes, marked 'B' in Table 2 of the report.**

87. City Centre South - Appropriation of Land for Planning Purposes and Use of Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Property Services and Development which indicated that City Centre South (CCS) will deliver transformational improvements to Coventry city centre through the creation of a new residential led community providing new homes, jobs, commercial and leisure opportunities and high-quality public spaces.

In January 2022, as part of a wider report authorising the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to support scheme delivery, Cabinet approved the appropriation of the land needed for the development for planning purposes and the application of Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 in order for certain third party rights over the land to be overridden and enabling anyone who suffers loss in terms of a reduction in value of their land to be able to claim statutory compensation.

Since Cabinet approved these matters in January 2022, the CCS scheme has progressed significantly with the Hill Group becoming funding and development partners for the scheme and a S73 Planning Consent (Ref: PL/2023/0002218/RVC) establishing key development parameters for the scheme, including up to 1575 new homes. As the Planning Consent establishes the

proposed development parameters for the CCS scheme, the report sought approval for Cabinet to reconfirm the appropriation of scheme land within this updated context.

Appendices to the report detailed land to be appropriated and the report detailed the powers available to the Council for the acquisition and appropriation of land for planning purposes, together with the consequential powers to override existing third-party rights and restrictions over such land and the availability of compensation to affected parties.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1) Agrees to appropriate, for planning purposes, the land owned by the Council within the proposed redevelopment site shown on the plan at Appendix 1 to the report pursuant to section 122 Local Government Act 1972 in order to facilitate the CCS scheme.**
- 2) Authorises the Director of Property Services and Development, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, the Director of Finance and Resources and the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to settle claims for compensation under s204 Housing and Planning Act 2016 in respect of rights, interests or restrictions which are overridden and/or to reach agreement for the release of any such rights etc. by affected third parties**
- 3) Delegates authority to the Director of Property Services and Development, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, the Director of Finance and Resources and the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to:**
 - (a) Place statutory advertisements as required by section 122(2A) Local Government Act 1972 of the Council's intention to appropriate for planning purposes the open space land in the Council's freehold ownership shown on the plan at Appendix 2 to the report; and**
 - (b) Consider any representations received in response to the statutory advertisements referred to in paragraph (a) above and to decide whether any such land should be appropriated for planning purposes and dispose of to facilitate the CCS scheme; and**
 - (c) Take all necessary, incidental or ancillary steps for the carrying into effect any of the recommendations set out in this report.**

88. **Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme - Coventry City Council Public Buildings Phase 2**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Property Services and Development, which would also be considered by Council on 19 March, 2024, which indicated that the UK has committed to reduce the carbon emissions associated with its public buildings compared to 2017 levels by 50% by 2032 and 75% by 2037. To support this, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) has continued offering the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), but now requires a local match contribution. The PSDS grant scheme provides grants of up to £325 per tonne of carbon emissions saved by capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects that directly reduce fossil fuel use.

Coventry City Council has previously been successful in Phase 1 of the grant scheme which has helped the Council reduce emissions from its buildings and schools by over 1000 tonnes of carbon per year.

The Council has now submitted a bid to the Phase 3c grant scheme to support the delivery of a second phase of building decarbonisation projects. Due to the change in criteria for the PSDS grant, a smaller pipeline of buildings than in Phase 1 has been identified as suitable candidates for Phase 2. The proposed scope of works has a combined project value of up to £1.85m with a maximum grant contribution of £786k available via the PSDS grant scheme.

The report sought approval to provide match funding for the project on an “invest to save” basis. Any investment would look to be recovered through revenue savings achieved from reductions in the buildings’ energy bills. Overall, the project is targeting carbon savings of up to 174 tonnes of carbon per year and estimated net savings of £40k per year after repayment of financing costs.

The report indicated that the energy improvement opportunities were identified during the building selection process and that, by delivering all of the measures together, the Council will achieve reduced carbon emissions associated with these buildings and will deliver financial savings estimated at £40k per year, net of financing costs. The buildings proposed for improvement and the measures proposed were detailed in the report.

Cabinet noted that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, had considered the report at their meeting on 11 March, 2024 and a detailed Briefing Note, outlining their consideration, was circulated. Cllr N Akhtar, Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee was present at the meeting and outlined a number of concerns raised by the Committee in relation to the financial position of the project and the importance of ensuring the most beneficial interest is obtained. Cabinet received assurances from the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Property Services and Development in relation to the financial position, how the match funding would be met and the expected savings which would be achieved by reducing property running costs, as detailed in the financial business case.

RESOLVED:-

That Cabinet:-

- 1) Notes the concerns raised by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, together with the assurances provided in relation to those concerns.**
- 2) Approves the acceptance of a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant of up to the sum of £786k from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, if successful, to be utilised on the delivery of the Project as set out in the report.**
- 3) Delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Director of Property Services and Development, the Director of Law and Governance, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, to undertake all necessary due diligence and actions required to enter into a grant funding agreement with Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (or nominee).**

That Cabinet recommends that Council:

- 1) Approves the proposal to allocate up to £1m of corporate capital funding, funded from prudential borrowing towards Public Building Decarbonisation Phase 2 works with a total capital value of up to £1.85m as set out in the report ("the Project"), subject to successful award of the PSDS grant.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Director of Property Services and Development, the Director of Law and Governance, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, to approve the final scope and finances allocated to the Project, including in the event that grant funding is not successful.**
- 3) Delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Director of Property Services and Development, the Director of Law and Governance, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, to commence any necessary procurement activities and finalise the terms and conditions of the required contracts to facilitate delivery of the Project.**
- 4) Approves the addition of up to £1.85m to the Capital Programme to reflect the delivery of the works recommended as part of this report.**

89. **Social Housing Decency Fund**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Property Services and Development which indicated that Coventry City Council has been awarded £2.1m as a capital grant as a share of £15m being made available to the West Midlands Combined Authority through a grant from Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The funding is being distributed to the seven Local Authorities to support the physical standards of social housing within the region. The funding is made available to Coventry City Council as a Section 31 Local Authority grant with the Council being responsible for allocating the funds to Registered Housing Providers in the city to tackle disrepair issues specifically with regards to damp and mould. The Council is not a Registered Housing Provider and therefore in order to discharge its obligations under the grant, will pass such funding (via a grant agreement) to Citizen Housing.

The Council's Constitution requires Cabinet approval prior to signature of a grant agreement where such grant is between £500,000 and £2,500,000. Where time does not allow this to happen approval can be sought by the relevant Director following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Chair with a requirement to then report retrospectively to Cabinet. As time was not available to report in advance of signature for this grant, approval was gained by the Director of Adults and Housing, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities and the Chair of the Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board (4). The report therefore acts as the retrospective report for the grant received and also sought delegated authority to enter into a grant agreement with Citizen Housing in order to discharge the Council's obligations.

The report indicated that Registered Providers in Coventry were formally notified of their opportunity to apply for the funding in November 2023 and were encouraged to submit a bid in line with timescales provided by the WMCA. Citizen Housing Group were the only Registered Provider to submit a bid for the funding and provided a detailed application which set out their intention to apply for the full £2.1m of available funding.

Following a selection process to ensure that the bid complied with the relevant grant conditions, Citizen have been awarded the full amount of the grant funding available for Coventry. Work has commenced, due to the fact that the funding must be allocated by 31st March 2024. The works planned to be carried out by Citizen include improvement works to 1045 properties in Coventry which will benefit from the installation of mechanical ventilation systems and Switchee Home Monitoring technology to help combat issues relating to damp and mould and alleviate category 1 or 2 hazards from homes. These homes had previously been identified by Citizen as requiring improvements however were not included in the current work programme.

In addition to the above-mentioned works, Citizen will also be contributing funding which will cover remedial works and chemical treatments to up to 1045 properties that have been identified to undergo works as part of this programme. The exact number of properties that are improved as a result of this work will be reliant on any additional works/costs identified as part of the surveys undertaken. Citizen Housing have provided an ambitious works schedule and project plan which demonstrates how they intend to complete works on all homes prior to the given

the initial deadline of 31st of March 2024. (It was noted at the meeting that extensions had been provided to this deadline). Although the grant delivery timescale is very short, Citizen were able to mobilise existing contractors who were working on similar projects to scale up delivery of works and ensure all works are delivered prior to the deadline. They have commenced work on over 500 properties and completed them on 149 by 27th February. They are confident they will have commenced work on all of the properties by the deadline date.

The overall project plan and works schedule is monitored by officers in the Housing & Homelessness service and fortnightly meetings have been convened to review progress and ensure delivery.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- 1) Notes the approval of the acceptance of the grant of £2.1m from the West Midlands Combined Authority (already received in accordance with the Constitution).**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Adults and Housing to enter into the necessary grant agreement with Citizen Housing to deliver upon the requirements of the grant funding.**

90. Accelerating Reform Fund

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Housing which indicated that the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF) is a grant program available from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to accelerate the process of reform of adult social care in England. The sum of £42.6m has been made available nationally, with a minimum £25m earmarked for support to informal carers.

Monies are to be spent on projects that meet at least one of twelve priorities outlined by DHSC. Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care System has been awarded the sum of £779,604.

Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for ARF were based on Integrated Care System footprints and Coventry City Council is accepting the grant on behalf of both Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council and will disburse the grant as per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in line with receipt of grant monies from DHSC in March and October 2024.

Coventry and Warwickshire councils have identified six projects for funding, details of which were detailed in the report.

The Memorandum of Understanding (which was appended to the report) outlines the responsibilities of the Council and DHSC in the administration of the grant including requirements to disburse allocations to Warwickshire County Council. There is a requirement for mid and end point grant reports to DHSC and for co-operation with evaluation partners.

The Council's Constitution requires Cabinet approval prior to signature of a grant agreement where such grant is over £500,000 and up to £2,500,000. Where time does not allow this to happen, approval can be sought by the relevant Director

following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Chair with a requirement to then report retrospectively to Cabinet. As time was not available to gain approval of Cabinet in advance of signature, approval was gained by the Director of Adults and Housing, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities and the Chair of the Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board. This report therefore acts as the retrospective report for the grant received and also seeks delegated authority to enter into further grants and/ or procurement exercise/s (and resulting contract/s) necessary in order to discharge the Council's obligations.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- 1) Notes the approval of the acceptance of the grant of £779, 600 from the Department of Health and Social Care (already received in accordance with the Constitution)**
- (2) Delegates authority to the Director of Adults and Housing to enter into the necessary grant agreement/s (including the grant to Warwickshire County Council for their element of the grant as described in the Executive Summary) and/ or procurement exercise/s (and resulting contract/s) to deliver upon the requirements of the grant funding.**

91. West Midlands Investment Zone

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy, which would also be considered by Council on 19 March, 2024, which indicated that the UK Government has invited the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to prepare a proposal for a West Midlands Investment Zone (WMIZ). The sectoral focus for WMIZ will be advanced manufacturing, which is an excellent fit with the One Coventry Plan ambition to increase the economic prosperity of the city and region. A total of £160m in funding is available for WMIZ over a ten-year period, and this will be used for tax incentives for investors in WMIZ sites, capital funding to prepare these sites for development, and revenue schemes designed to develop the target sector. The WMIZ proposals will also allow business rates growth on designated sites to be retained locally for 25 years for reinvestment in the development of the Advanced Manufacturing Sector. Business rates will be retained above existing levels on a "no detriment" basis such that no Local Authority will be worse off through its involvement in the WMIZ.

The WMIZ includes sites in Coventry/Warwick, Birmingham and Wolverhampton. There are four sites in Coventry and Warwick District; Whitley East in Coventry and Whitley South, Coventry Airport and Segro Park in Warwick District. Whitley East has been allocated as an employment site in the Coventry Local Plan. The WMIZ £160m budget includes an initial £23m for infrastructure works to prepare the Coventry Airport site for development, and this report seeks approval to accept that funding together with any additional funding that becomes available from the IZ budget up to a total value of £35m. The report also sought delegated approval to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for business rates retention related to the Whitley East site.

Governance decisions for WMIZ will be taken by a WMIZ Joint Committee / Board which Coventry City Council, Warwick District and Warwickshire County Council will all be represented on. West Midlands Universities including Coventry University and University of Warwick are also non-voting members of this group. A Coventry and Warwickshire Investment Zone office group will meet to ensure that consistent briefings are provided to Coventry and Warwickshire members of the WMIZ Joint Committee / Board.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:-

- 1) Notes the aspirations of, and supports the principle of participation in, the West Midlands Investment Zone (WMIZ) proposed to benefit the WMCA area and Warwick District, conditional upon there being agreed no detriment position in respect of business rates income.**
- 2) Notes the governance arrangements for the WMIZ as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.**
- 3) Agrees in principle to entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding business rates and their retention across the WMCA area and the Warwick District Council (WDC) area and delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Resources (s151) and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources to enter into this agreement.**

That Cabinet recommends that Council:-

- 4) Approves acceptance of up to £35m in West Midlands Investment Zone (WMIZ) funding, noting that initially £23m will be available for infrastructure provision on the Coventry Airport site (subject to the conditions of the grant being satisfactory).**
- 5) Grants delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration and Economy, following consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources, the Director of Law and Governance, and Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to:
 - a) Undertake all necessary due diligence in relation to acceptance of the WMIZ funding allocation.**
 - b) Continue to negotiate on all the matters associated with this report and to take such action as is deemed necessary, incidental or ancillary to or in consequence of bringing into effect the recommendations contained in this report, including but not limited to entering into any associated legal agreements (including the authority to effect any lease variations/surrender and any associated documents if appropriate) that are necessary to deliver the West Midlands Investment Zone.****

- 6) Authorises the addition to the 5 Year Capital and/or Revenue Programme (as appropriate) of any West Midlands Investment Zone funding received by the Council up to a maximum of £35m.**

92. **City Centre Cultural Gateway Project Update**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy, which would also be considered by Council on 19 March, 2024, which sought approval for additional capital funding to cover an increase in cost for the main construction works to the former IKEA building which will be known as the City Centre Cultural Gateway (CCCG). The CCCG will be a landmark destination that will be home to a Collections Centre of national significance and will bring together multiple partners and investors across creative, cultural and technology sectors to engage local people.

Approval had previously been given for the acquisition and development of the CCCG, however currently the economic conditions and volatility within the construction market have returned tender prices from a selected Contractor that take the overall project cost beyond the approval by Council in March 2023 (Minute 127/23 refers).

A corresponding private report detailing commercially sensitive confidential matters was also submitted for consideration (Minute 97 below refers).

The project will bring together a collaboration of key national and local partners: Arts Council England (ACE), British Council (BC), Culture Coventry Trust (CCT) and Coventry University. Coventry University will be developing a new Cultural Hub that will offer a student gallery, café, library and exhibition space, dance studio, conference area, artists' studios, post-production filming facilities and a shop to sell students' artwork, with some of these facilities being accessible to the public.

The report also sought future additional capital (under delegation once there has been a developed and approved business case for future tenancies), for the basic fitting out of Floors 1 and 2 to enable them to earn future rental income.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends that Council:

- 1) Approves capital expenditure of a further sum in the amount set out in the private element of the Report to be financed from prudential borrowing to fund the construction and professional fees for delivery of the City Centre Cultural Gateway Project.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Economy, the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to approve capital expenditure of a further sum in the amount set out in the private element of the Report to be financed from prudential borrowing to fund the construction and professional fees to be utilised towards the delivery**

of further works to Floors 1 and 2 , only once there has been a developed and approved business case for future tenancies.

- 3) **Notes that the Agreement for Lease between Coventry City Council and Arts Council England, British Council and Culture Coventry in respect of the Collection Centre Development will include a mechanism that facilitates the ability for a request to be made to the City Council to deliver Partner Variations (including fit-out works) on their behalf with the cost being repaid to the City Council.**
- 4) **Delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Economy, the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to undertake the necessary due diligence including approving any incidental and ancillary actions required to bring into legal effect the recommendation set out in Recommendation (3) above.**

93. **Procurement of a New Contract for the Supply of Electricity and Ancillary Services**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy, which would also be considered by Council on 19 March, 2024 which indicated that electricity spending fluctuates due to various factors like global events affecting energy markets. The current Council's electricity contract ends on 30 September, 2024 and covers electricity for over 250 Council facilities and around 100 other places like schools. By starting the process early, the chosen supplier can buy energy over time instead of all at once, which helps avoid sudden price increases in the market.

Since 2016, the Council has been using the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) framework to buy electricity. ESPO acts as an intermediary, allowing the Council to access wholesale markets typically only available to large buyers. While this framework has helped manage market volatility to some extent, it's not very flexible and historically has not taken full advantage of renewable energy and new market opportunities.

By partnering with E.ON as the new Strategic Energy Partner, the Council can access a customized supply arrangement that opens up opportunities to save costs and generate revenue from new energy market mechanisms. This partnership allows the Council to tap into E.ON's expertise and resources in ways that weren't possible before.

The recommended option presents the best available opportunity for the Council to minimise the costs associated with the supply of electricity. Besides potential cost savings and flexibility, this new approach also aims to deliver more social value directly related to the Council's electricity needs.

A corresponding private report detailing commercially sensitive confidential matters was also submitted for consideration (Minute 98 below refers).

The report sought approval to enter contracts with E.ON UK PLC and its subsidiaries Npower and E.ON Next, as part of the Strategic Energy Partnership contract procured via competitive dialogue in compliance with Procurement Regulations 2015, signed on September 12, 2023.

In accordance with the Constitution, the report also informed Council of the decision undertaken by the Chief Executive on 19th December 2023 to exercise emergency functions to secure an immediate hedging of energy using an interim 12 month standard flex contract which will be superseded by the supply contract in the report should the recommendations be approved.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends that Council:-

- 1) Approves the proposal to enter into an electricity supply contracts pursuant to the Strategic Energy Partnership for the supply of electricity up to 31st March 2030.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Economy and the Director of Law and Governance, to finalise the terms and conditions of the supply contract and any other legal agreements required to facilitate delivery of the electricity supply and its ancillary services.**
- 3) Delegates authority to the Head of Energy Services, following consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Economy, to oversee the ongoing management of the wholesale purchasing strategy during the term of the contract.**
- 4) Notes the exercise of the emergency functions by the Chief Executive on 19th December 2023 pursuant to Paragraph 3.8 (a) of Part 2M of the Constitution to secure an immediate hedging of energy using an interim 12 month standard flex contract.**

94. **Coventry and Warwickshire Religion and Worldviews Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2024-2029**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Partnerships and Performance which sought approval to the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for use in Coventry schools over the next five years (2024-2029).

The report indicated that Local Authorities have a statutory duty to set up and maintain a 'Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education' (SACRE) whose duties include giving advice to the LA on the Religious Education (RE) given under the Agreed Syllabus, and to monitor the provision and quality of Religious Education provided by the Agreed RE syllabus in the Local Authority's Community Schools (LA maintained schools that do not have a religious character).

The LA also has a statutory duty to set up and appoint members to an occasional body that is required to review the locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education every five years known as the Agreed Syllabus Conference. All Community, foundation and voluntary aided or voluntary controlled schools in Coventry without

a religious character must teach RE according to the locally agreed syllabus adopted by the LA. Academies and schools which do have a religious character may also use the locally agreed syllabus.

The previous Agreed Syllabus for Coventry and Warwickshire was due to run until 2022. However, due to the impact of the pandemic it was agreed to extend the existing license until the end of the 23/24 academic year to provide stability for schools. It was also agreed that working with Warwickshire had been beneficial for both Local Authorities, and that this would continue for the next Agreed Syllabus.

In 2018 the Commission on RE published its final report which recommended a new approach to RE based on worldviews, rather than the existing world religions paradigm. Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus Conference agreed that the new Agreed Syllabus should reflect this shift and also include more of a local flavour, both of which could be achieved by commissioning a fully bespoke syllabus.

The proposed Agreed Syllabus has been funded by Coventry and Warwickshire Local Authorities as well as Farmington Institute. In addition, the syllabus structure forms part of a national project for the Religious Education Council. All schools (academies and LA maintained schools without a religious character) will be given access to the Agreed Syllabus through a password-protected website, which was also the arrangement for the 2017 – 2022 Agreed Syllabus. The Agreed Syllabus Conference on 30 November 2023 agreed to recommend the final draft of the new Agreed Syllabus to Cabinet.

A corresponding private report detailing confidential financial and business matters was also submitted for consideration (Minute 99 below refers).

RESOLVED that Cabinet approves the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for use in Coventry schools over the next five years (2024 – 2029) as appended to the corresponding private report.

95. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

96. **Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

Private Business

97. **City Centre Cultural Gateway Project Update**

Further to Minute 92 above, the Cabinet considered a private report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy, that would also be considered at the meeting of Council on 19 March, 2024, which set out the commercially sensitive confidential matters relating to the City Centre Cultural Gateway Project Update.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends that Council:

- 1) Approves capital expenditure of a further sum in the amount set out in the private report to be financed from prudential borrowing to fund the construction and professional fees for delivery of the City Centre Cultural Gateway Project.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Economy, the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to approve capital expenditure of a further sum in the amount set out in the private report to be financed from prudential borrowing to fund the construction and professional fees to be utilised towards the delivery of further works to Floors 1 and 2, only once there has been a developed and approved business case for future tenancies.**
- 3) Notes that the Agreement for Lease between Coventry City Council and Arts Council England, British Council and Culture Coventry in respect of the Collection Centre Development will include a mechanism that facilitates the ability for a request to be made to the City Council to deliver Partner Variations (including fit-out works) on their behalf with the cost being repaid to the City Council.**
- 4) Delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Economy, the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to undertake the necessary due diligence including approving any incidental and ancillary actions required to bring into legal effect the recommendation set out in Recommendation (3) above.**

98. Procurement of a New Contract for the Supply of Electricity and Ancillary Services

Further to Minute 93 above, the Cabinet considered a private report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy, that would also be considered at the meeting of Council on 19 March, 2024, which set out the commercially sensitive confidential matters relating to the procurement of a new contract for the supply of electricity and ancillary services.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends that Council:

- 1) Approves the proposal to enter into an electricity supply contracts pursuant to the Strategic Energy Partnership up to the value as identified in the private report for the supply of electricity up to 31st March 2030.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Economy and the Director of Law and Governance, to finalise the terms and**

conditions of the supply contract and any other legal agreements required to facilitate delivery of the electricity supply and its ancillary services.

3) Delegates authority to the Head of Energy Services, following consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Economy, to oversee the ongoing management of the wholesale purchasing strategy during the term of the contract.

4) Notes the exercise of the emergency functions by the Chief Executive on 19th December 2023 pursuant to Paragraph 3.8 (a) of Part 2M of the Constitution to secure an immediate hedging of energy using an interim 12-month standard flex contract.

99. Coventry and Warwickshire Religion and Worldviews Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2024-2029

Further to Minute 94 above, the Cabinet considered a private report of the Director of Partnerships and Performance which set out the commercially sensitive confidential matters relating to the proposed Coventry and Warwickshire Religion and Worldviews Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2024-2029, a copy of which was appended to the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for use in Coventry Schools over the next five years (2025-2029).

100. Any Other Items of Urgent Private Business

There were no other items of urgent private business.

(Meeting closed at 3.05pm)