

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 11.00 am on
Wednesday, 20 November 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor G Lloyd (Chair)
Councillor L Kelly (Deputy Chair)
Councillor M Ali
Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor L Kelly
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor C Miks
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor R Singh
Councillor CE Thomas

Other Members: Councillor G Duggins
Councillor S Gray
Councillor J O'Boyle

Others Present: P Wallace, E.ON

Employees
(by Service Area):

Chief Executive J Nugent (Chief Executive)

City Services and
Commercial A Walster (Director of City Services and Commercial),
G McKelvie

Finance and Resources B Hastie (Director of Finance and Resources) P Mudhar,
M Phillips

Innovation C Knight (Director of Innovation)

Law and Governance G Holmes, M Salmon, A Veness

Regeneration and Climate
Change A Williams (Director of Regeneration and Climate Change),
A Livesey, R Palmer, P Singh, S Weir

Property Services and
Development R Moon (Director of Property Services and Development)

Apologies: There were no apologies

Public Business

48. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

49. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

50. **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
57	UKBIC 6-Month Performance Report 2024/25	3
58	Coventry Municipal Holdings Limited Annual Performance Report Year Ended 31st March 2024	3

(Note: The Committee resolved to consider the above items in private however, Councillor J Lepoidevin and Councillor G Ridley opposed this resolution and requested that this be recorded.)

51. **Strategic Energy Partnership Performance Update - November 2024**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy and the Director of Innovation, that would also be considered at the meeting of the Coventry Shareholder Committee on 21st November 2024, which provided a performance update on the Strategic Energy Partnership. A report on the Strategic Energy Partnership Activity to date for 2024/25 was attached as an Appendix to the report.

The information was being submitted to the Coventry Shareholder Committee to enable the Council's interest in the Strategic Energy Partnership to be monitored comply the agreed governance process. The report provided an update on Strategic Energy Partnership activity since the approval of the Strategic Business Plan and Annual Business Plan at the meeting of the Shareholders Committee on 23rd April 2024.

The fifteen-year Strategic Energy Partnership between the Council and E.ON was the first of its kind in the UK and had the potential to put Coventry at the forefront of the net zero transition. The Council's relationship with E.ON would help support the development of ground-breaking projects, with potential funding from E.ON as well as other sources.

There had been a significant amount of activity over the last six months. Projects underway include a five-year energy supply contract, development of solar/heat pump projects in schools and four council-owned or run buildings, installation of EV charging points and a home energy efficiency programme. A key milestone that had been achieved was the production of the Coventry energy plan, which provided a detailed baseline of energy infrastructure challenges and opportunities to help prioritisation of future projects the partnership develops going forwards to maximise impact. In addition, there were currently nine social value projects that generated benefits to local communities either delivered or underway which include school education programmes, work placements, a community growing programme and tree planting.

In considering the report, the Board asked questions and received responses on the matters in the following areas:

- The importance of decarbonisation, but also the need to ensure that there is sufficient supply of energy to be affordable.
- That this model was unique within Europe and other local authorities were enquiring to see how Coventry's model works.
- That the benefits of the way the partnership was set up in Coventry was that it meant projects could be procured more quickly than if there was separate procurement processes for each individual project. Other benefits include legitimacy schemes supported by the Council have with residents.
- Steps being taken to ensure a range of alternative energy is considered including hydrogen, ground solar, thermal energy from mine water, district heating for new developments,
- That there will be 2200 jobs created annually through the Energy Plan. The SEP was working with schools and colleges to promote apprenticeships within the sector, with a target of at least 25 in the first 5 years.
- The work being done with social landlords in the city to decarbonise properties, including ways to make use of economies of scale where privately owned properties are interspersed within social housing.

Members requested that officers consider how to increase the Electric Vehicle Charging points that were accessible to disabled drivers and also that they be provided with details of the contribution that the 2.5 Council funded posts made towards the Strategy Energy Partnership.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommends that the Coventry Shareholder Committee approves the recommendations in the report.

52. **Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub Half-Year Report (Financial Year 2024/25)**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance and Resources, that would also be considered at the meeting of the Coventry Shareholder Committee on 21st November 2024, which provided the half-year performance of the Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub.

Further to Minute 50 above, the Committee were satisfied that the information contained in both the public and private reports could be considered as public business.

The Committee were requested to consider the performance report, subject to the consideration of the additional confidential information contained in the corresponding private report and the Appendix to that report, and to forward any comments or recommendations to the Coventry Shareholder Committee.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub (CWGH) had been established since 2014 and was firmly integrated as part of a successful Coventry and Warwickshire economic area – providing a ‘one stop’ centre for local businesses, with advice and guidance on the most appropriate support for their needs.

The CWGH Business Plan was approved by the Shareholder Committee on 23rd April 2024. The CWGH half-year report outlined the performance based on the Business Plan during the Financial Year 2024/25, detailing income and operating costs for the ‘core’ Growth Hub. There were limited risks with the company balance sheet and CWGH had sufficient resources to meet liabilities as they fell due. The Council was not responsible for meeting liabilities in its role as shareholder, as CWGH was a private limited company.

Primary objectives and priorities for the period of the Business Plan remained unchanged with the CWGH focussing on accessing and supporting sub-regional small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), plugging them in to relevant and available support partners and their programmes - such as those funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

In considering the report, the Board asked questions and received responses on the matters in the following areas:

- Although there were no plans to close the Growth Hub, there would be no impact on Council resources as a consequence of any liabilities resulting from closure.
- The Board was made up of 4 public sector Directors, including the Director of Regeneration and Economy, and four private sector Directors. The Board was responsible for the development of the Growth Hub Plan and the submission of reports to the Shareholders Committee on a 6-monthly basis.
- Further information could be provided on the income analysis for 2023/24, as well as more detail on the outcomes from initial contacts.

Members requested that details of the outcome rates for referrals to the Growth Hub be sent to them.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommends that the Coventry Shareholder Committee agrees the recommendations in the reports, and that future reports be considered as public items of business.

53. UKBIC 6-Month Performance Report 2024/25

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance and Resources, that would also be considered at the meeting of the Coventry Shareholder Committee on 21st November 2024, which provided the 6-month performance of the UKBIC.

A corresponding private report detailing confidential financial matters was also submitted for consideration (Minute 57 below referred).

The Committee were requested to consider the performance report, subject to the consideration of the additional confidential information contained in the corresponding private report and the Appendix to that report, and to forward any comments or recommendations to the Coventry Shareholder Committee.

UKBIC was a state-of-the-art battery manufacturing research and development facility, funded by £114m from the UK Government (through Innovate UK, part of UK Research & Innovation) and £18m from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). The facility was operated by UKBIC Ltd which was owned by Coventry City Council (CCC). The Council was also accountable body for the grant funding used to establish the facility.

In considering the report, the Board asked questions and received a response on the matter in the following area:

- Details on the registered name with Companies House and the closure of a dormant company

Members requested that clarification on different company names registered with Companies House be provided to them.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, subject to the consideration of the additional confidential information contained in the corresponding private report and the Appendix to that report (Minute 57 below refers), recommends that the Coventry Shareholder Committee approves the recommendations in the report.

54. Coventry Municipal Holdings Limited Annual Performance Report Year Ended 31st March 2024

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance and Resources, that would also be considered at the meeting of the Coventry Shareholder Committee on 21st November 2024, which provided the annual performance for the year ended 31st March 2024 of Coventry Municipal Holdings Ltd.

A corresponding private report detailing confidential financial matters was also submitted for consideration (Minute 58 below referred).

The Committee were requested to consider the performance report, subject to the consideration of the additional confidential information contained in the corresponding private report and the Appendix to that report, and to forward any comments or recommendations to the Coventry Shareholder Committee.

The Annual Performance Report was focused on a backward look over the 12 months of operation from April 2023 to March 2024 for Coventry Municipal Holdings (CMH) and its subsidiaries which included the following entities.

- Coombe Abbey Park Ltd (CAP), including two subsidiaries:
 - No Ordinary Hospitality Management Ltd (NOHM)
 - Coombe Abbey Park (LACo) Ltd (CAP LACo)

- Tom White Waste Ltd (TWW), including two subsidiaries:
 - A&M Metals & Waste Ltd (A&M)
 - Tom White Waste (LACo) Ltd (TWW LACo)

- Coventry Regeneration Ltd (CR)
- Coventry Technical Resources Ltd (CTR)
- No Ordinary Hotels Ltd (NOH)

The Group Governance Agreement (GGA) required CMH to produce an Annual Performance Report looking back at the operation of the Group to the year-end 31st March 2024.

In considering the report, the Board asked questions and received responses on the matters in the following areas:

- The availability of the public accounts in January and that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee could consider that information in public at that point.
- That the purchase of both Coombe Abbey and Tom Whites was completed based on an independent valuation at the time and there was no reason to believe that the assets were over-valued.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, subject to the consideration of the additional confidential information contained in the corresponding private report and the Appendix to that report (Minute 58 below refers),:

- 1) Notes the annual performance report for the Coventry Municipal Holdings Group for the year ended 31st March 2024.**
- 2) Recommends that the Coventry Shareholder Committee approves the recommendations in the report.**
- 3) Requests that a further report be considered by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee when the accounts for 2023/24 have been published in early 2025.**

4) Recommends that Coventry Shareholder Committee requests that future reports provide cash flow details for the businesses.

55. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2024/25

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that detailed issues on the Board's Work Programme for meetings of the Committee for 2024/25.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee notes the issues on the Committee's Work Programme for 2024/25.

56. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

57. UKBIC 6-Month Performance Report 2024/25

Further to Minute 53 above, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a private report of the Director of Finance and Resources, that would also be considered by Coventry Shareholder Panel at their meeting on 21st November 2024, which set out the commercially confidential matters relating to UKBIC 6-Month Performance Report 2024/25.

In considering the report, the Committee asked questions and received responses on the matters raised.

RESOLVED that further to Minute 53 above relating to the public aspects of this report, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommends that the Coventry Shareholder Committee agrees the recommendations in the report.

58. Coventry Municipal Holdings Limited Annual Performance Report Year Ended 31st March 2024

Further to Minute 54 above, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a private report of the Director of Finance and Resources, that would also be considered by Coventry Shareholder Panel at their meeting on 21st November 2024, which set out the commercially confidential matters relating to Coventry Municipal Holdings Ltd Annual Performance Report year ended 31st March 2024.

In considering the report, the Committee asked questions and received responses on the matters raised.

RESOLVED that further to Minute 54 above relating to the public aspects of this report, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1) Notes the annual performance report for the Coventry Municipal Holdings Group for the year ended 31st March 2024.**
- 2) Recommends that the Coventry Shareholder Committee approves the recommendations in the report.**

59. **Any Other Items of Private Business**

There were no other items of private business.

(Meeting closed at 1.40 pm)