

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 11 June 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor R Brown
Councillor K Caan
Councillor P Hetherton
Councillor AS Khan
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor P Seaman
Councillor D Welsh

Non-Voting Deputy
Cabinet Members:

Councillor S Agboola
Councillor G Hayre
Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor S Nazir

Non-Voting Opposition
Members:

Councillor G Ridley
Councillor S Gray

Other Non-Voting
Members:

Councillor R Lakha

Employees
(by Service area):

Finance:

E Dewar

Law and Governance:

J Newman (Director), S Bennett

Transformation:

M McGinty

Apologies:

Councillor F Abbott
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor L Harvard
Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor P Male
Councillor R Singh
Councillor C Thomas

Public Business

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

3. Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge 2024 - Outcome of Peer Challenge

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive which outlined the outcome of the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge held in Coventry in January 2024.

The report indicated that that the Local Government Association (LGA) is the national voice of local government, working with Councils to support, promote, and improve local government. The LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge offer is effective and well regarded by the sector and provides robust, strategic and credible challenge and support to Councils.

It is expected that all Councils receive a Corporate Peer Challenge at least every five years covering core areas and any specific areas requested by the Council. Coventry City Council's first Corporate Peer Challenge took place in October 2018. In 2023, it had been agreed that Coventry City Council would again host a Corporate Peer Challenge as this was now timely.

The Peer Challenge took place from 15th to 18th January 2024. The visit focused on five core themes (local priorities and outcomes, organisational and place leadership, governance and culture, financial planning and management, and capacity for improvement). These areas are critical to Councils' performance and improvement.

The Peer Team was also asked to provide feedback on Transformation: the organisation's corporate capacity and plans for service Transformation. Transformation was specifically chosen on the basis that it would benefit from some external challenge and feedback on future delivery plans.

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge feedback report was provided as an Appendix to the report (Appendix A). This report provided a detailed response on findings, including a number of observations and suggestions within the main section of the report.

In summary, during the course of the Peer Challenge week, the Peer Team found that:

- Coventry is an ambitious place that is on the up, with examples of innovation and a willingness to embrace change, whilst not forgetting its heritage
- Coventry is a well-run Council, with strong officer and political leadership
- Employees and elected members are passionate and proud about what they do
- The Council should take further steps to improve diversity across the organisation at all levels
- There is recognition that tough times are still ahead, but people are up for the challenge

- There is a need to ensure that the transformation programme is adequately resourced to enable delivery at pace
- The Council should use the established performance framework to drive improvement and bring greater prioritisation and visibility to areas that require improvement
- Partners and residents are eager to step up and become more involved at an earlier and more strategic level
- There is a need to review our external and internal communications and engagement strategy

There are some areas where further work is suggested by the Peer Team. These areas are described in the 'Key recommendations' section of the LGA's feedback report.

Following the Peer Challenge in January, the Council has reflected on the Peer Team's findings in order to determine its response to the recommendations that have been made. The Council response was provided as a further appendix to the report (Appendix B). The report indicated that the Council are embracing the opportunity to reflect on this feedback and are committed to making improvements where it can through organisational ownership.

The report had also been considered by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at their meeting on 10th June 2024 (their Minute 4/24 refers). A Briefing Note was circulated that set out the Committee's consideration of the report and a Recommendation to Cabinet that the Recommendations in the report be supported, which the Cabinet accepted. Cabinet noted that as a result of their consideration of the report, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee had added the following items to their Work Programme for consideration during 2024/25:

- Major Cultural Events
- Recruitment and Retention
- CCC Transformation Programme

The Cabinet also noted that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee had been provided with useful information at their meeting in relation to work being done by HR, particularly in relation to recruitment, to ensure a more diverse workforce. The Chair, Councillor Duggins, requested that a Seminar for all Members be held to consider this information further.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the contents of the report and supports the work to deliver the actions outlined in Appendix B to the report in response to recommendations made by the Peer Team**
- 2) Notes Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee's consideration of this matter and accepts their recommendations.**
- 3) Notes that a Seminar will be held for all Members to consider the work being undertaken to ensure a more diverse workforce.**

4) Recommends that Council considers the contents of the report and the Council response document and supports the work to deliver the actions outlined in Appendix B to the report in response to Recommendations made by the Peer Team.

4. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

5. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 2.20pm)