

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Education and Skills held at 4.00
pm on Tuesday, 11 February 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor K Sandhu (Cabinet Member)
Councillor J Birdi (Shadow Cabinet Member)

By Invitation Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor G Lewis

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executive's D Horton-Rayner, M McGinty, M Shakespeare

Childrens and Education S Sen (Director of Childrens and Education), S Heawood

Law and Governance J Newman (Director of Law and Governance), C Coulson-Haggins, L Knight

Public Business

6. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

7. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

8. Community and Voluntary Controlled School Admission Policies for 2026/27 and Co-ordinated School Admission Schemes for 2026/27

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills considered a report of the Director of Education and Children's Services which indicated that the Local Authority are required to determine the co-ordination schemes for school admissions in their areas and the admissions policies for community and voluntary controlled schools.

In April 2006, Cabinet agreed that consideration of reports on school admission arrangements would be delegated to the appropriate Cabinet Member in years where there were no significant changes to admission arrangements. (Cabinet Minute number 253/06 refers). For 2026 there have been no substantive changes to the admission arrangements.

For context, the School Admissions Code 2021 requires admissions authorities to consult on admission arrangements every 7 years or more frequently where any significant changes are proposed. No significant changes were proposed to the

co-ordinated admissions schemes or the admissions policies for community and voluntary controlled schools since the last consultation for September 2020 admission arrangements. Therefore, no consultation has been required for 2026.

Community and voluntary controlled schools were notified on 28th November 2024 that arrangements including published admission numbers (PAN) for community schools would remain the same. All schools were given until 11 December 2023 to raise any requests for change. No requests for changing admission numbers were received.

The Cabinet Member was advised that, following confirmation of West Midlands local authority data exchange deadlines on 6th February 2025, amendments were required to dates within the appendices as follows:

- Appendix 2 – Primary Co-ordination:
 - Paragraph 7.3 – from Monday 26th January 2026 to **Friday 30th January 2026**
 - Paragraph 7.6 – from Monday 9th March 2026 to **Friday 6th March 2026**
 - Paragraph 7.8 – from Tuesday 31st March 2026 to **Friday 27th March 2026**
 - Timetable at point 12 will be amended to reflect the dates in bold above.
- Appendix 3 – Secondary Co-ordination
 - Paragraph 7.8 – from Monday 19th January 2026 to **Friday 9th January 2026**
 - Paragraph 7.9 – from Monday 26th January 2026 to **Friday 23rd January 2026** and Monday 9th February 2026 to **Friday 6th February 2026**
 - Paragraph 7.10 – from Monday 23rd February 2026 to **Thursday 19th February 2026**
 - Timetable at point 12 will be amended to reflect the dates in bold above.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendments above, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- 1. Determines the Admissions Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary, Infant and Junior Schools for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.**
- 2. Determines the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Primary, Infant and Junior Schools in Coventry for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.**
- 3. Determines the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools in Coventry for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.**

9. **Petitions Relating to the One Coventry Services' Proposals 2024/25**

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skill considered a report of the Interim Director of Planning and Performance, which responded to two petitions objecting to proposals to move a number of libraries as set out within the One Coventry Services' Proposals.

One Coventry Services is an operational change programme within the Transformation Plan 2024/25. The programme aimed to deliver services differently by bringing them together in communities and builds on current approaches within family hubs, libraries and adult social care settings. The proposals set out within the Transformation Plan aimed to enable increased integration of a wider range of services and deliver financial efficiencies through reducing the number of service delivery locations and thereby the costs of operating these services in terms of both property and staffing.

A public consultation took place on a series of proposals between 9th September 2024 and 4th November 2024. These proposals were consulted on at an early stage of development to enable any subsequent decision to be informed by consultation feedback and to confirm the viability of delivery.

Two petitions objecting to specific proposals to move a number of libraries were received. The first petition, bearing 73 signatures, objected to the move of the Holbrooks Library from Holbrooks Community Care Association (HCCA) building on Holbrook Lane to the Dementia Partnership Hub at Everdon Road. The petition was sponsored by Councillor R Lancaster, a Holbrook Ward Councillor, who attended the meeting in support of the petition. The second petition, bearing 191 signatures, objected to the move of the Bell Green Library from Riley Square to Park Edge Family Hub at Roseberry Avenue; Coundon Library from Moseley Avenue to Coundon Family Centre at 82 Moseley Avenue; and Canley Library from Prior Deram Walk to the Xcel Leisure Centre at Mitchell Avenue. The petition was sponsored by Councillor G Lewis, a Westwood Ward Councillor, who attended the meeting in support of the petition. The full wording of both petitions was included within the report submitted.

Councillor R Lancaster and the Petition Organiser spoke in support of the first petition, highlighting the following points:

- The HCCA manage the whole building, including the library, at a minimal cost of £15k to the Council.
- Time should have been taken to visit the site to see how the library and HCCA currently operate.
- The Dementia Partnership Hub do not want the library on their site.
- The footfall at the proposed site would be different.
- Concerns regarding access to the library if an attendee of the Dementia Partnership Hub has difficulties and being advised to go to a different library in such circumstances.
- There are a wealth of activities taking place at the HCCA, some which operate as a direct consequence of the Library being on site and that these would potentially be lost with the proposed move.

- The Holbrooks Library has already been moved twice as it was originally located in Briscoe Road, was then moved to the Arena Park and finally to its current location at HCCA.
- The Dementia Partnership Hub has been told if the Library is not located there, there will be no Library in the Holbrooks area.
- It would cost more to have the library relocated than it costs at the current location.
- There are 6 members of the HCCA Management Committee, including a former councillor and Honorary Alderman.
- There has been no contact with the Management Committee, they had no prior knowledge of the proposals and the response submitted as part of the consultation has not been responded to.
- The HCCA have worked with the Council in respect of the Library being located within their building.
- For every £1 the centre receives, it raises a minimum of £12 to the local area.
- The HCCA mimics library services such as child reading groups, at no additional cost to the Council.
- The HCCA is well respected and valued within the local area.
- The HCCA have just received a £50k grant from the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- It makes sense to leave the Library within the HCCA, where it forms the foundation and base for everything else on offer.

Councillor G Lewis and the Petition Organiser spoke in support of the second petition, highlighting the following points:

- Petition Spokesperson is one of the founding members and campaigner for 'Save Coventry Libraries' which was founded in 2017.
- Libraries offer so much more than books, including a wealth of support, services and groups to the local communities.
- Everything is available online, but if you are unable to afford a computer, you can go to the Library.
- Libraries are safe spaces where you are able to learn to read and write.
- Visits were made to all 4 of the affected Libraries.
- It would be more effective to improve the buildings where existing Libraries are located than to move them.
- There are concerns about the loss of staff, access to computers and the services that Libraries are currently able to provide.
- Coundon Library is very busy and there are concerns about the loss of services, books and staff.
- Bell Green is one of the 'core Libraries'. When establishing the core libraries, there was a life-time guarantee that the Libraries would remain in their existing buildings and be fully staffed by professionals.
- Bell Green Library is currently located in Riley Square and it is always busy. It is unlikely that people will want to go to the proposed new location.
- Canley Library is very busy and is currently used by vulnerable children as their safe space.
- If the Canley Library is moved, users would be subjected to organised crime.

- There is a requirement to keep children safe.
- The Library must be kept in the current location.
- Canley is a particularly deprived area and consideration must be given to social value.
- There is likely to be a loss of footfall, services, computers and services for all if the Canley Library is moved.
- Relocation to the Xcel Leisure Centre raises accessibility concerns.
- Moving the Holbrooks Library to the Dementia Partnership Hub causes significant safeguarding concerns.
- The HCCA runs so many things and saves the Council significant amounts of money by hosting the Library.
- The Holbrooks Library already provides exactly what the proposals say is needed.

A question was also raised about how many consultation responses had been received in relation to the proposals within One Coventry Services.

Officers responded to confirm that there will be a report submitted to a meeting of the Cabinet in respect of the proposals and this will include a very detailed appendix setting out all of the responses received. It was also confirmed that there had been a lot of discussion regarding the impact of the proposals, including detailed work in respect of walking distances to the proposed locations. The Cabinet Member was further advised that, following the consultation, the Equality Impact Assessments would be updated to reflect the issues raised.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- 1. Noted the petitions received and considered the comments and issues raised at the meeting.**
- 2. Agreed that the petitions and issues raised at the meeting be considered as part of the consultation process for One Coventry Services' proposals 2024/25.**

10. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

11. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.35 pm)