

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 9 July 2025

Present:

Members:

Councillor R Singh (Chair)
Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor T Jandu
Councillor A Kaur
Councillor R Lakha (Substitute for Councillor F Abbott)
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor B Singh
Councillor CE Thomas

Other Members

(by invitation):

Councillor G Duggins
Councillor G Lloyd – Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
Councillor J O'Boyle – Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change

Employees (by Directorate):

Law and Governance G Holmes, M Salmon

Apologies: Councillor F Abbott

Public Business

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

In respect of minute 4/25 below headed 'Development of Coventry's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan', Members noted that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities - Disability Equality Advisory Panel had been part of Coventry's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Consultation, and as Councillor Thomas was Chair of the Panel, she asked that the Board be made aware of their participation.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record with an amendment to those in attendance at that meeting, that Councillor A Jobbar be recorded as Substitute Member for Councillor S Jobbar.

Further to minute 26/24 headed 'Rail Update', Members noted that Formation of Great British Railways had been added to the Board's Work Programme for 2025/26. The matters referenced in d), e) and f) had been circulated to the Board

and a response was awaited from Network Rail in respect of the matters referenced in a), b) and c). The information relating to points d), e) and f) would be circulated to those Councillors not previously on the Board.

Further to minute 27/24 headed 'Green Power Park and West Midlands Investment Zone', Members were informed that the information to share with the Board relating to the number of apprentices, were still awaited.

Further to minute 28/24 headed 'Work Programme 2024/25' Members noted that 'Destination Coventry' and the proposed 'Visit to UK BIC', had been added to the Board's Work Programme for 2025/26.

3. **Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change - Key Priorities for 2025/26**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received and noted a briefing from the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change outlining the priorities for his portfolio for 2025/26. The following areas were highlighted:

Very Light Rail (VLR) – Further work to be undertaken on the track and vehicle testing. Consideration of priority routes to include routes to Ansty Park, University Hospital, Investment Zone, University of Warwick, the urban extension to Eastern Green out towards Meriden.

City Centre South – Progression of the Scheme - the Hill Group currently undertaking demolition of the site. Redesigned Scheme to include a greater percentage of housing, due to changed use of City Centre and shopping habits.

Investment Zone (Giga Factory/Green Power Park) – Rational behind proposals continues - employment opportunities, green power investment, supporting a carbon free economy.

Former Ikea Building – Building now Council owned. Future utilisation of the building to include a collection centre and art space.

City Centre North - Consideration of potential re-development in the north of the city centre.

Members discussed the priorities highlighted by the Cabinet Member, and made comments, asked questions and received answers in respect of the priorities and other issues including: 'irregular builds' across the city; ensuring inclusivity for using VLR; public transport to serve Green Power Park/Investment Zone; retrofitting of new builds; security at the Coventry Sports Centre building; development proposals at Friargate; electric buses; job growth opportunities including apprenticeships at Small and Medium Enterprises; and opportunities for the installation/connection of Heatline.

4. Development of Coventry's Local Cycling and Walking Innovation Plan

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator on the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to support the development of Coventry's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. A scoping document for the Group was attached as an Appendix to the briefing note.

On the 5th of February 2025, the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a briefing note of the former Director of City Services and Commercial, which provided an update on progress on the development of Coventry City Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (minute 15/24 referred).

The Development of Coventry's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was a strategic initiative by Coventry City Council aimed at enhancing the city's infrastructure for active travel. The LCWIP served as a planning tool for local authorities to develop networks of walking and cycling routes, providing a policy framework that supported the implementation of the Coventry Transport Strategy, which was adopted by the Council in December 2022 (Council's minute 83/22 referred).

The plan focused on both existing and potential travel demand, aiming to create a comprehensive network that encouraged mode shift and adapted to new developments. For walking, the emphasis was on maintaining and improving the existing network, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all users, including those with mobility aids. This involved addressing barriers such as pavement parking, street furniture, and lack of dropped kerb crossings. For cycling, the plan aimed to connect sporadic routes into a cohesive city-wide network. This included identifying corridors for new cycle routes and making both point and area-based interventions. The LCWIP was designed to be a live document, updated as priorities evolved, and it strengthened the council's position to obtain funding from various sources. Overall, the LCWIP was a crucial component of Coventry's efforts to promote sustainable and active travel, improving the quality of life for its residents and contributing to environmental goals.

The focus of the Task and Finish Group was to aid greater understanding of issues, options, and scheme development of the LCWIP. The Group would consider several factors, including national legislation, guidance, current policy, data, local comparators, costs and anything else which would come within the scope of the investigation. The Task and Finish Group would report back to the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3), including recommendations to the Cabinet Member this Municipal Year.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Agrees to the establishment of a Task and Finish Group on the Development of Coventry's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, as detailed in the Appendix 1 to the briefing note.**

- 2) **Agrees that the following Scrutiny Members take part in the Task and Finish Group:**
Councillor R Singh (Chair of Group)
Councillor E Reeves
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor C E Thomas

5. **Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) Work Programme 2025/26**

The Business, Economy, and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that provided a schedule of items for meetings of the Board over the coming Municipal Year. The draft Work Programme for 2025-26 was attached as an Appendix to the report.

Scrutiny Work Programmes were working documents that would adapt and change over the year to react to Members' requirements. Any items agreed at this meeting did not preclude any future amendments to the Work Programme.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy, and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) **Notes the schedule of items for meetings of the Board over the Municipal Year 2025/26, that already included a number of items relating to the Cabinet Member's key priorities.**
- 2) **Agrees that the Work Programme be updated to include the following items:**
 - **Employment and Apprenticeships in Coventry – private sector**
 - **City Centre North**

6. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.00 pm)