

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 4 November 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)

Councillor L Bigham
Councillor K Caan
Councillor AS Khan
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor P Hetherton
Councillor R Brown
Councillor K Sandhu

Non-Voting Deputy
Cabinet Members: Councillor S Agboola
Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor B Christopher
Councillor S Nazir
Councillor D Toulson

Non-Voting Opposition
Members: Councillor J Gardiner
Councillor P Male
Councillor E M Reeves
Councillor G Ridley

Other Non-Voting
Members: Councillor R Lakha
Councillor G Lloyd

Employees (by Service
Area):

Chief Executive J Nugent (Chief Executive)

Children's and Education
Services S Sen (Director), A Whitrick

Communications N Hart

Finance and Resources B Hastie (Director)

Law and Governance J Newman (Director), O Aremu, S Bennett, G Holmes

Planning and
Performance C Boden-Hatton (Director)

Public Business

33. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

34. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

35. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees to exclude the press and public under Sections 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the private report in Minute 40 below headed 'West Midlands Safe Centre' on the grounds that the report involves the likely disclosure of information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

36. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee One Coventry Plan Deep Dive Recommendations

Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided an update on the outcome of Deep Dive Investigations into the One Coventry Plan.

Following consideration of a report presented to Cabinet on 28 August 2025 (Minutes 18/25 refers), the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee had undertaken Deep Dive Investigations into the performance reported against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the One Coventry Plan.

Five sessions were held in which Members of the Committee questioned in detail the Cabinet Members and officers responsible for those areas where performance had not met targets. The details of the deep dive sessions, including the KPIs discussed and recommendations for Cabinet on specific KPIs were set out in Appendix 1 of the report submitted. These included recommendations for relevant Scrutiny Body's in respect of the following areas:

- Hot-Streets Analysis
- Young Justice
- Child Poverty Systemic Approach
- Consider the number of jobs created by sector
- Collection agency performance data on third-party collection agencies, including their success rates

- Ensuring that each Scrutiny Board reviews performance on the relevant KPIs on an annual basis as part of the One Coventry Plan review process:

Cabinet welcomed the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and thanked the Chair of the Committee, Councillor G Lloyd, Members of the Committee and officers for their work in this regard.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve:-

- 1) That all One Coventry Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are reviewed as part of the reporting process by Cabinet and Scrutiny to ensure relevance as the Council goes through service re-design and change.
- 2) That KPI's are measurable and/or can demonstrate service improvements.
- 3) That KPI's reported in the One Coventry Plan are designated as either being national indicators or locally determined.
- 4) That where data isn't available on an annual basis, the frequency of the data is identified and reported accordingly.
- 5) That consideration be given to the potential discord between targets to protect green and blue spaces and targets to build houses, and whether there are any other targets that could potentially be contradictory.
- 6) That all Council Strategies and One Coventry Plan KPI's are cross-referenced and aligned.
- 7) That each Scrutiny body reviews performance on the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) related to their remit on an annual basis as part of the One Coventry Plan review process.
- 8) That recognition is given where performance targets have been achieved, and that this is celebrated.
- 9) That the specific KPI's identified in Sections 1-16 of the Appendix to the report are reviewed alongside Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee's comments and suggestions.

37. West Midlands Safe Centre

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children's and Education Services which set out the progress made so far and sought Cabinet approval to move forward with Coventry City Council being a party to the delivery of the West Midlands Safe Centre project (West Midlands Safe Centre).

A corresponding private report, detailing confidential financial matters, was also submitted for consideration (Minute 40 below refers).

The report indicated that secure children's homes care for some of the most vulnerable young people in society with the most complex needs. They are safe settings for children whose liberty is legally restricted, where they can be supported through trauma aware and psychologically informed integrated care, health and educational services.

Children are admitted to secure children's homes through one of two pathways: those subject to criminal proceedings for their offending behaviour, but who are usually managed within the youth justice secure estate; and those subject to public law welfare proceedings who are deemed to pose a significant risk to themselves and or others. The facility being planned here is for the latter, welfare cases only.

Children placed in secure children's homes are likely to have experienced a number of placements that have broken down, missed a lot of education, have unmet emotional and physical health needs and have suffered a great deal of trauma in their lives. There is a national shortage of secure placements for these vulnerable children. The West Midlands currently has no dedicated regional provision creating pressure on the existing secure estate.

In recognition of the national shortage the DfE opened up bids to LA's in 2019 to provide funding to develop this resource across the country. 14 West Midlands Local Authorities, including Coventry City Council, came together to enter a bid to develop a West Midlands resource formally called "The Safe Centre". The proposed West Midlands Safe Centre will be the first regionally owned secure children's home in the country, providing 20 secure welfare beds and high-quality care, health and education to local children.

The report indicated that the risks involved in running and investing in the West Midlands Safe Centre were deemed too great for any one local authority to bear individually. Subject to approval through each local authority's governance processes and the proposed Partnership Agreement, a separate legal entity in the form of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) will be created for the West Midlands Safe Centre to operate and manage the secure welfare provision on behalf of the 14 local authorities/Children's Trusts.

The key benefits of the West Midlands Safe Centre project were set out in the private element of this report, and include:

- Ensuring the most vulnerable children are able to access secure care within the West Midlands and reducing delays in this care being available when they need it
- Significant investment in the West Midlands region, including a range of job opportunities
- Reduced risks of high-cost unregulated provision
- Reduce significant oncosts linked to travel and professionals' time
- Support families to engage in reunification and maintain relationships through family time
- Enable a planned transition back to Coventry through 'mobility' and ongoing outreach support once the child has moved on.

Further details on design and build, the project governance arrangements and how the Safe Centre will operate were contained in a Business Case attached as an appendix to the private report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet, (subject to the completion of all necessary due diligence work and following consideration of the additional confidential information contained in the corresponding private report):

- 1) Endorse the development of the West Midlands Safe Centre as set out in the business case that has been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) and appended at Appendix 1 of the corresponding private report.**
- 2) Endorse the proposed legal formation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) as set out in this report.**
- 3) Approve the arrangements for Coventry City Council to join the SPV and be part of a formal partnership for governance of the West Midlands Safe Centre with other West Midlands local authorities.**
- 4) Agree that further Cabinet approval would be required for Coventry City Council to continue to participate in the Partnership Agreement at a revised risk / reward share if insufficient local authority members sign up and the share tolerance as set out in the corresponding private report was exceeded.**
- 5) Approve in principle the proposed procurement and property arrangements for the operation of the West Midlands Safe Centre.**
- 6) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's and Education Services, following consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law & Governance, to undertake the following:**
 - a) Complete the necessary due diligence required including but not limited to legal and tax due diligence arrangements; and**
 - b) Thereafter to complete all necessary documents to give effect to the above recommendations. The delegation shall also include the power to do anything necessary, incidental or ancillary for the carrying into effect the recommendations set out in this report.**

38. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

39. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

40. **West Midlands Safe Centre**

Further to Minute 37 above, Cabinet considered a private report of the Director of Children's and Education Services which set out the commercially confidential matters relating to the West Midlands Safe Centre.

RESOLVED that (subject to the completion of all necessary due diligence work and following consideration of the corresponding public report) Cabinet:-

- 1) Endorse the development of the West Midlands Safe Centre as set out in the business case that has been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) and appended at Appendix 1 of this report.**
- 2) Endorse the proposed legal formation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) as set out at paragraphs 1.15 to 1.21 of this report.**
- 3) Approve the arrangements for Coventry City Council to join the SPV on an equal share basis and be part of a formal partnership for governance of the West Midlands Safe Centre with other West Midlands local authorities.**
- 4) Agree that further Cabinet approval would be required for Coventry City Council to continue to participate in the Partnership Agreement at a revised share if insufficient local authority members signed up and the share tolerance as indicated in the report was exceeded, as set out in Annex 8 of Appendix 3 of this report.**
- 5) Approve in principle the proposed procurement and property arrangement set out at paragraphs 1.22 to 1.44 of this report for the operation of the West Midlands Safe Centre.**
- 6) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's and Education Services, following consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law & Governance, to undertake the following:**
 - a) Complete the necessary due diligence required including but not limited to legal and tax due diligence arrangements; and**
 - b) Thereafter to complete all necessary documents to give effect to the above recommendations. The delegation shall also include the power to do anything necessary, incidental or ancillary for the carrying into effect the recommendations set out in this report.**

41. **Any Other Items of Urgent Private Business**

There were no other items of urgent private business.

(Meeting finished at 2.30pm)