



Coventry City Council

### **Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board (6)**

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#### **Time and Date**

9.30 am on Wednesday, 30th January, 2013

#### **Place**

Committee Rooms - Council House

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1. **Apologies**
2. **Declaration of Interest**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)
  - a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012
  - b) Matters arising
4. **Bus Network Update** (Pages 7 - 10)

Briefing note of Network Coordination Manager, Centro
5. **Rail Story** (Pages 11 - 12)

Briefing Note of the Chief Executive and Presentation by Mike Waters, City Services and Development Directorate
6. **Work Programme 2012/13** (Pages 13 - 16)

To consider the Board's Work Programme 2012/13
7. **Outstanding Issues**

Outstanding issues have been picked up in the Work Programme
8. **Meeting Evaluation**

To discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting.
9. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

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Bev Messinger, Director of Customer and Workforce Services, Council House  
Coventry

Tuesday, 22 January 2013

- Notes: 1) The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Suzanne Bennett or Lara Knight Democratic Services, Council House, Coventry, telephone 7683 3072 or 7683 3237, alternatively Tel: 024 7683 3237
- 2) Council Members who are not able to attend the meeting should notify Suzanne Bennett or Lara Knight as soon as possible and no later than 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2013, giving their reasons for absence and the name of the Council Member (if any) who will be attending the meeting as their substitute.
- 3) Scrutiny Board Members who have an interest in any report referred to this meeting, but who are not Members of this Scrutiny Board, have been invited to notify the Chair by 12 noon on the day before the meeting that they wish to speak on a particular item. The Member must indicate to the Chair their reason for wishing to speak and the issue(s) they wish to raise.

Membership: Councillors M Hammon, D Howells (Chair), T Khan, R Lancaster, K Mulhall, H Noonan, R Sandy (Deputy Chair), B Singh and T Skipper

By invitation Councillors J McNicholas, L Kelly, A Khan, J Mutton and E Ruane

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting  
OR if you would like this information in another format or  
language please contact us.

**Lara Knight**

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## TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY BOARD (6)

28<sup>th</sup> November, 2012

Scrutiny Board (6) and  
Substitute Members

Present:- Councillor Clifford (Substitute for Councillor Lancaster)  
Councillor Hammon  
Councillor Howells (Chair)  
Councillor Mulhall  
Councillor Noonan  
Councillor Sandy (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor B Singh  
Councillor Skipper

Cabinet Member Present:- Councillor Ruane (Cabinet Member (Neighbourhood Action,  
Housing, Leisure and Culture)

Employees Present:- S. Bennett (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)  
C. Hickin (City Services and Development Directorate)  
G. Holmes (Chief Executive's Directorate)  
A. Maqsood (Community Services Directorate)

Apologies:- Councillor Lancaster

### 31. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

### 32. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2012, were agreed as true records.

Further to Minute 27/12, the Scrutiny Board noted that their recommendations in relation to the Coventry Tenancy Strategy Consultation had been incorporated into the report being considered by Cabinet.

### 33. **Private Sector Empty Homes**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Director of Community Services which provided an update on performance and initiatives with respect to private sector empty homes.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2012, Council tax records indicated that there were 134,181 dwellings (excluding student halls of residence) in Coventry of which 2,225 were private homes and 1361 had been empty for longer than 6 months. Officers had continued to progress work to bring empty properties back into effective use. This had included targeting resources at the highest profile and highest risk properties, whilst bringing as many others back into use as possible. A table contained in the briefing note detailed the Team's performance between 2010/11 and the first 6 months of 2012/13, during which a total of 488 empty homes had been brought back into use. The Scrutiny Board noted that the issue of empty

homes was also a key part of the Coventry Housing Strategy, which was currently open for consultation.

The briefing note indicated that the Government encouraged local authorities to create more homes, either by facilitating new builds or bringing long term properties back into use. The New Homes Bonus Scheme Grant Determination commenced in April 2011 and would match fund the additional Council Tax raised for new homes and empty properties brought back into use, with an additional amount for affordable homes for the following six years. To date, the empty homes element of the grant determination had resulted in £812,685 being allocated to the Council.

The Scrutiny Board noted that the aim of the newly created Environment and Housing Enforcement Team was to train and equip all officers with skills to deal with empty properties, which would ultimately provide greater resources to deal with empty properties.

The briefing note detailed the ways in which properties are brought back into use by a combination of persuasion, advice and enforcement under a range of statutory Acts. The Environment and Housing Enforcement Team work closely with colleagues in Planning and Legal Services to collectively utilise their enforcement power to achieve this aim. The Scrutiny Board noted that new software had recently been purchased which would “risk rate” empty homes and identify those for priority action by the enforcement team. It was hoped that this software could be used in conjunction with other City Council software to give a “city wide” picture of all empty properties, the types of house, their geographical spread and the reasons they were empty. Discussions were taking place with Information Governance regarding the sharing of this information between Directorates.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on aspects of the briefing note, including:-

- The powers available to Local Authorities to compulsory purchase empty properties
- The reasons why properties may be empty for a period of time
- Government funded schemes which enabled Registered Social Landlords (RSL) to repair empty properties and then lease them.
- Recent changes to legislation which would enable Local Authorities to penalise owners of empty properties by charging them a higher rate of Council Tax and new rules regarding empty properties that will give RSL two weeks to bring properties back into use once tenants have vacated.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1) That the contents of the briefing note and progress to date on this issue be noted.**
- 2) That the Scrutiny Board be provided with information in relation to the changes to Council Tax charges on empty properties and that a report back on this issue be submitted once the changes have been implemented.**

- 3) **That the Cabinet Member (Neighbourhood Action, Housing, Leisure and Culture) be requested to give further consideration to enforcement powers available to the City Council in relation to empty properties.**

#### 34. **Coventry Housing and Homelessness Strategy - Consultation**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note and presentation by the Director of Community Services on the development of the draft Coventry Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

The draft Strategy had been produced which identified the following four main themes that the Council would concentrate on addressing:-

- Theme 1 – Increase the supply, choice and quality of new housing
- Theme 2 – Prevent and tackle homelessness
- Theme 3 – Strive for a healthier and more sustainable City by improving the quality and use of existing housing
- Theme 4 – Support balanced, stable and sustainable communities

The draft Strategy had been developed by taking into account the national, regional and local housing contexts and also the results of previous consultation and had been published on the Council website along with a consultation survey. Details of the consultation questions were contained in the briefing note. The consultation period would run for 12 weeks until 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2013, after which the comments received would be used to develop the final Housing and Homelessness Strategy and a comprehensive Action Plan. The final Strategy would be considered by both Cabinet and Council in March, 2013, with implementation from April, 2013.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on aspects of the draft Strategy including:-

- Providing cohesive communities and linking the Strategy to the Coventry Local Development Plan
- Providing aspirational housing in the City
- The provision for gypsies/travellers in the City
- Discussions with developers with a view to try and encourage them to build new homes

The Scrutiny Board welcomed the Cabinet Member (Neighbourhood Action, Housing, Leisure and Culture), Councillor Ruane's commitment at the meeting that there would be a greater emphasis on aspirational housing in the final Strategy.

The Scrutiny Board discussed the benefits of inviting developers to a future meeting to discuss future housing development in the City and also the possibility of visiting a purpose built facility for the homeless.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1) That the content of the draft Coventry Housing and Homeless Strategy be noted and that all Members of the Scrutiny Board be encouraged to participate in the consultation.
- 2) That arrangements be made for developers to be invited to attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board to discuss housing development in the City and for the Scrutiny Board to visit a purpose built facility for the homeless.

**35. Work Programme 2012/13**

The Scrutiny Board noted the current Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2012/13 and gave consideration to further items for inclusion.

It was noted that the meeting of the Scrutiny Board scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 would have a “transport” theme.

In relation to question regarding the changes to Housing Benefit, the Scrutiny Board noted that this issue was being picked up by the Task and Finish Group – Homefinder Review, a meeting of which was being held on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2012.

**36. Outstanding Issues**

The Scrutiny Board noted that all outstanding issues had been incorporated into their work programme for the Municipal Year (Minute 35 above refers).

**37. Meeting Evaluation**

The Scrutiny Board welcomed the quality of the speakers at the meeting and asked that consideration be given to introducing a time limit for presentations at future meetings.

(The meeting concluded at 11.30 a.m.)



Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To:**

**Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board (6)**

**Date:**

**30<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

**Subject: Bus Network Update**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 The purpose of this note is to provide information to members of the Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board with some information on the current work, projects and priorities of Centro

### **2 Recommendations**

- 1) The Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board are recommended to consider the content of this note and any further discussion at the meeting
- 2) Identify any comments or recommendations for Members or officers to support the development of this work further

### **3 Information/Background**

#### **3.1 Voluntary Multi-operator Agreement (VMA)**

The City Council is a signatory to the Coventry VMA, the instrument to draw operators, Centro and the City Council into a partnership to improve and develop the local bus network and how it is delivered and presented. Attached to the VMA is an Agreement Delivery Plan with 40 items. Monitoring of progress on delivery of these items indicates there has been useful progress on a number of fronts.

- i. Passenger satisfaction surveys on 18 different attributes indicates no change on 3 items, and significant improvement in 15 items over the last 12 months;
- ii. Reliability, at 98.3%, has improved marginally but remains significantly better than the rest of the West Midlands;
- iii. Punctuality, at 82.3% on time, has improved over the last 12 months from 80.1%, and remains significantly better than the rest of the West Midlands;
- iv. Progress has been made on establishing a Coventry area multi-operator ticket. It is hoped to launch a Coventry n-bus ticket from 1 April 2013;
- v. A pilot initiative to carry out in-bus cleaning at Pool Meadow bus station was launched in December and, so far, appears to be working well and to be appreciated by passengers;

- vi. The operators committed to continuing investment in their vehicles. Significant numbers of new vehicles were delivered last year. The next influx of new vehicles is expected to be placed on the services 8 and 9 over the next three months;
- vii. As well as working to further driving up both usage and customer satisfaction on the bus network the VMA has commitments from the bus operators to improve the engine emission standards so as to contribute to addressing air quality issues within Coventry.

### 3.2 Pool Meadow

The additional entrance/exit from Hales Street direct into the bus station is due to open on-time on 27<sup>th</sup> January. Also due to open at the same time is the contra-flow bus and cycle lane under the ring road from White Street to Hales Street.

A substantial number of additional services will start to use Pool Meadow from 11<sup>th</sup> February including all those services currently using the Fairfax Street stop 'Stand V'. On-going discussion with operators is expected to result in some additional services using Pool Meadow from 10 March, and yet more from 28 April.

### 3.3 Trinity Street

It is recognised the current arrangements on Trinity Street are not satisfactory for bus passengers, bus operators, or other highway users. The City Council is undertaking some feasibility work jointly with Centro to establish what solutions might be available. It is hoped a report will be delivered by the end of March. It should then be possible to agree a way forward to establish a convenient and attractive bus stopping facility. The level of funding required to achieve this improvement is not yet known, and no Centro or City Council funding has yet been allocated.

### 3.4 City Centre Wayfinding

Centro is interested in the scope for utilising its experience in Birmingham in creating a connected city and a walkable city through wayfinding information and guidance. Centro has secured some EU funding that will permit an overall approach and strategy to be worked up, and an initial phase of work to be implemented in the City Centre, possibly focussing on the cluster of bus stops in Corporation Street and adjacent to IKEA.

### 3.5 University Hospital Coventry

The UHCW NHS Trust has prepared an Access Strategy, and at the time of drafting were preparing to submit a planning application for the identified measures. Centro and the City Council were extensively consulted in the drawing up of the strategy. Key outputs are a circulation system for buses that will be largely segregated from cars, and a new larger bus interchange. The key outcome should be the elimination of the current erratic but frequently severe delays that occur at the site. In turn this will encourage more staff, visitors and patients to use bus, and encourage operators to improve links to the Hospital.

### 3.6 Network Development

The Bus Network Review was implemented in February 2012. There has, however, been further development of the network since that date to help address outstanding issues, including:



- i. Service 1. From 21 October this service has been extended and now embraces Tile Hill North (Jardine Crescent) through to the Hospital and Brade Drive via Chapelfields, Earlsdon, Binley Road and Hipswell Highway;
- ii. City Circle. Following De Courcey's successful tender for the 801 service they are finalising their plans to develop this into a full Circle service to be launched on 28 April. This should help address a number of issues regarding orbital access and will, for example, increase choice regarding direct links between the Hospital and Tile Hill; and
- iii. Service 20A. National Express confirm it is their intention to extend the service 20A from Bell Green to the University Hospital at Walsgrave via Henley Road. This will help address concerns regarding links between Henley Road and Henley College and the City Centre. It will operate via Windmill Road and Foleshill Road.

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## Briefing note

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**To: Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board**      **Date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

**Subject: Rail Story**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To provide background to a presentation that will be delivered to members of the Transport and Infrastructure Scrutiny Board at their meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2013

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board are recommended that:
- 1) Whilst noting the Council's current position on HS2, they recognise the need to plan for the future development of the rail network which serves Coventry and the local area.

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 There are currently several evolving areas of interest which will have a bearing on the development for rail network serving Coventry and will be contributing to the overall transport outcomes for the city and the region.
- 3.2 At the meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> January there will be a presentation by officers from the City Services and Development Directorate which will provide an overview of the issues and work being done to inform transport strategy in this area.
- 3.3 Elected Members will have an opportunity to discuss the current and longer term plans and the objectives of the work being undertaken with officers of the Council and to ask any further questions.

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**Scrutiny Co-ordinator**  
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## Transport and Infrastructure Development Work Programme 2012/13

*For more details on items, please see pages 2 onwards*

### 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Cycling Coventry  
Coventry Homefinder

### 5<sup>th</sup> Sept 2012

Update on the Green Deal and subsidies and offers available  
Brownfield site development and Core Strategy

### 25<sup>th</sup> Sep 2012

Coventry Homefinder immediate policy changes  
Coventry Homefinder Policy

### 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2012

Low Carbon FSR  
Tenancy Strategy Consultation

### 28<sup>th</sup> Nov 2012

Empty and Neglected Properties  
Coventry Housing and Homelessness Strategy - consultation

### 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2012

Rail Story  
Bus network review

### 13<sup>th</sup> Mar 2013

Support to first time buyers  
Housing options with housing providers  
Report back from Homefinder Task and Finish Group

### 9<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Climate Change Strategy

### Date to be decided

Future housing provision for older people  
Aerial Thermal Survey  
Re-commissioning of homelessness services  
Site for Gypsy/Traveller Families  
Collective purchasing for energy

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
4 <sup>th</sup> July 2012	Cycling Coventry		To look at the £3.5 million Cycling Coventry project grant in more detail to enable the Board to identify further areas of work on this item.	First meeting 30 <sup>th</sup> May 12
	Coventry Homefinder	Ayaz Maqsood	To review the service and identify trends following the changes made in November 2011	First meeting 30 <sup>th</sup> May 12
5 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2012	Update on the Green Deal and subsidies and offers available	David Shiner	Following a briefing note at the Board on 18th January, the Board requested a further update on progress and detail on the Green Deal and other offers. Focussing on publicity of the offers, uptake and any potential barriers to why people may not be making use of the offers. Also to include Green investment bank information	SB4 Meeting 18/1/12
	Brownfield site development and Core Strategy	Mark Andrews	To look at the availability of brownfield (council and privately owned) land in the city (in advance of the housing FSR coming to scrutiny). Also to contribute to the consultation on the housing aspect of the Core Strategy.	Chair
25 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2012	Coventry Homefinder immediate policy changes	Ayaz Maqsood	A review the immediate changes to the Homefinder Service due to welfare reform	Officer
	Coventry Homefinder Policy	Ayaz Maqsood	This will cover a full in-depth review of the Homefinder Policy regarding changes due to Welfare Reform and also looking at relationships with Housing Associations. A request will be made to create a task and finish group to look at this in detail.	
17 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2012	Low Carbon FSR	Michael Checkley	An update on progress on the Low Carbon FSR and also to look at what low carbon measures are being taken to increase the Council's energy efficiency, including Directorate level information. Also to look at what Coventry is learning from best practice from other areas and organisations.	First meeting 30 <sup>th</sup> May 12

Transport and Infrastructure Development Work Programme 2012/13

Meeting Date	Work programme item	Lead officer	Brief Summary of the issue	Source
	Tenancy Strategy Consultation	Ayaz Maqsood	The Council requires a Tenancy Strategy by January 2013. This will state the Councils policy to tenancy agreements which Housing Associations need to consider when implementing their own policies. SB6 will be involved as consultees	Officer
28 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2012	Empty and Neglected Properties	Craig Hicken	To provide information on what steps are being taken to reduce the number of empty and neglected properties in the city.	
	Coventry Housing and Homelessness Strategy - consultation	Ayaz Maqsood	This is a large piece of work and the Board will want to look at the development of the strategy in detail. It is likely that there will be further items related to this on the work programme.	
30 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2012	Rail Story	Mike Waters Colin Knight	The local developments with the rail network, to include NUCKLE and HS2 interchange and interconnectivity	
	Bus network review	Cllr McNicholas	An overview of the bus review, to include process and implementation of service changes. Members would like to know the rationale behind the most significant changes and any recent developments/ changes following the review, as well as lessons learned. Representatives from Centro, National Express Coventry and De Courcey will be invited to attend.	
13 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2013	Support to first time buyers	Chris West	To look as possible options available to support first time buyers in the city.	Chair 15/11/12
	Housing options with housing providers		To hear from local housing developers and housing associations how they can contribute to delivering the Housing Strategy in the city.	Meeting 28/11/12
	Report back from Homefinder Task and Finish Group	Gennie Holmes	To present the findings and recommendation of the Task and Finish group looking at options for Homefinder so they can be presented to the Cabinet Member on 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	T&F meeting 1/11/12

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Work programme item</b>	<b>Lead officer</b>	<b>Brief Summary of the issue</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> April 2012</b>	Climate Change Strategy	Michael Checkley	The annual report on progress against the actions and outcomes of the Climate Change Strategy brought to the Board in January 2012. Members are particularly interested in finding out how the city is adapting to climate change as well as reducing our carbon footprint.	SB4 Meeting 7/12/11
<b>Date to be decided</b>	Future housing provision for older people	Ayaz Maqsood	The Board wish to discuss how the housing needs of older people could be met in future.	SB3 22/2/12 meeting
	Aerial Thermal Survey	David Shiner	Following the report to the Board in December 2011 the Board were supportive of the survey being repeated in 2012/13.	SB4 Meeting 7/12/11
	Re-commissioning of homelessness services	Ayaz Maqsood	To look in more detail at support and services to homeless people, and to look at tools to tackle homelessness linked to Welfare Reform. The Board plan to visit a homeless facility as part of this item.	
	Site for Gypsy/Traveller Families	Ayaz Maqsood	Un update on progress in terms of planning policy H6 and ensuring Siskin Drive it is suitable and usable for the needs of this community.	Meeting 5/9/12
	Collective purchasing for energy	Michael Checkley	Members of the Board requested information on the exploration into the possibility of the local authority using its purchasing power for the benefit of local residents.	Meeting 5/9/12