

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COVENTRY

Held on 3rd December 2013, in the Council House, Coventry

PRESENT

Lord Mayor (Councillor Crookes)

Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Noonan)

Councillor Akhtar	Councillor Lancaster
Councillor Ali	Councillor Lepoidevin
Councillor Andrews	Councillor Mrs Lucas
Councillor Auluck	Councillor McNicholas
Councillor Bains	Councillor Maton
Councillor Mrs Bigham	Councillor Mrs Miks
Councillor Blundell	Councillor J. Mutton
Councillor Caan	Councillor Mrs M. Mutton
Councillor Chater	Councillor O'Boyle
Councillor Clifford	Councillor Ruane
Councillor Duggins	Councillor Sandy
Councillor Foster	Councillor Sawdon
Councillor Galliers	Councillor Sehmi
Councillor Gannon	Councillor Singh
Councillor Gingell	Councillor Skinner
Councillor Hammon	Councillor Skipper
Councillor Harvard	Councillor Mrs Sweet
Councillor Hetherton	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Howells	Councillor Thay
Councillor Innes	Councillor Thomas
Councillor Kelly	Councillor Townshend
Councillor A. Khan	Councillor Walsh
Councillor T. Khan	Councillor Welsh
Councillor Lakha	

Honorary Alderman

Present:

Mr J Gazey

Apologies: Councillor Abbott
Councillor Fletcher
Councillor Kershaw
Councillor Mulhall
Councillor Williams
Honorary Alderman Webb

Public Business

91. Minutes

The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 10th October and the Ordinary Meeting held on 10th October 2013 were signed as a true record.

92. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business indicated below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of information defined in the specified Paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the Act as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and that in all of the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Minute No.	Subject	Relevant Paragraphs(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
108	Regenerating City Centre Office Accommodation through the Development of Student Accommodation	3

93. Coventry Good Citizen Award – Ian Harrabin

On behalf of the Council, the Lord Mayor presented Mr Ian Harrabin with the Coventry Good Citizen Award. His citation read:

“Ian Harrabin is one of the country’s leading and most innovative urban renewal developers, carving out a remarkable reputation in urban regeneration over the past 25 years.

As Managing Director of Complex Development Projects Ltd (CDP), a privately owned urban renewal developer, he has specialised in a number of partnerships with the city of Coventry.

With an office in Coventry many of his projects have been highlighted in national awards including the Phoenix Initiative, shortlisted for the Stirling Prize and the innovative live/work village at Electric Wharf.

The Electric wharf project is widely regarded as a best practice project winning the Outstanding Place of the Decade award from RegenWM in 2010.

Many of the projects concentrate on mixed use schemes with an emphasis on design, area based renewal and historic buildings.

Ian has brought his particular influence on these projects that have helped shape Coventry.

The Far Gosford St regeneration project is one of the most recent schemes where Ian is leaving his mark.

As the city's most intact historic street although only part way through it has already won the Best Regeneration Project in the West Midlands.

Ian is Chairman of The Charterhouse Priory Trust, a charity formed to restore a Grade 1 former Carthusian monastery dating from 1381 for public access. He is also an active member of The Prince of Wales Developer's Forum providing support and advice to The Prince's Regeneration Trust.

His efforts reflect a major contribution to commercial life, enterprise employment and the development of the city. Together he should feel proud of these efforts and is very deserving of the Good Citizen Award."

94. Illuminated Address

The Lord Mayor presented Councillor Timothy Sawdon, Lord Mayor for 2012/13, with his Illuminated Address.

95. Councillor David Kershaw

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent ill health of Councillor Kershaw. Members noted that Councillor Kershaw was now making progress and conveyed their best wishes to him and his family.

96. Petitions

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the petitions (a) to (c) below be referred to the appropriate City Council body.**
- (2) That petition (d) below be referred to the appropriate officer.**
 - (a) Request to resurface pavement between 207-281 Stoney Stanton Road - 20 signatures – presented by Councillor Akhtar.**
 - (b) Objection to Planning Application S73/2013/2247 (McDonald's Restaurant, Willenhall Lane) – 7 signatures - presented by Councillor J Mutton.**
 - (c) Request to consider long term impact in respect of proposed cuts to Age UK Coventry – 763 signatures – presented by Councillor O'Boyle.**
 - (d) Request a Community Governance Review to establish a new Finham Parish Council – 711 signatures – presented by Councillor Sawdon.**

97. **Declarations of Interest**

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

Councillor Blundell – Minute 101 and 108 (Regenerating City Centre Office Accommodation through the Development of Student Accommodation)
Councillor Blundell left the meeting for consideration of this item.

(b) Personal Interest

Councillor Sawdon – Minute 98 (The Coventry Award of Merit). Councillor Sawdon left the meeting for consideration of this item.

97. **The Coventry Award of Merit**

Further to Minute 30 of the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities), the City Council, considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources, in respect of proposals for the Coventry Awards of Merit in 2014, having received recommendations from the Coventry Award of Merit Advisory Panel (their Minute 03/13 refers).

The Cabinet Member had agreed that:

- (1) The Award of Merit should be made to the recipients proposed by the Advisory Panel.
- (2) The awards should be made in January 2014.
- (3) The awards and the presentation ceremony would be funded from the Lord Mayor's hospitality budget 2013/14.
- (4) The presentation ceremony should be held in St. Mary's Guildhall.
- (5) The guest list, the medals and other details of the ceremony could be based on the 2011 format.
- (6) After consulting the proposed recipients, the Cabinet Member would make recommendations to the Council meeting on 3rd December 2013 that the Council approves the nominations made by him and grants the Coventry Award of Merit to the recipients.
- (7) He would consult the Lord Mayor and submit financial proposals associated with the Ceremony and the Awards to the City Council at its meeting on 3rd December 2013.

The City Council also considered a Briefing Note which was circulated at the meeting and which gave further information on the details of the Award, including associated costs.

RESOLVED that the City Council approves the nominations and grants the Coventry Award of Merit to the following recipients:

Right Honourable Bob Ainsworth MP

For outstanding public service to the City of Coventry and its citizens as former Deputy Leader of Coventry City Council from 1989 to 1992, as Member of Parliament for Coventry North East for 22 years and as a Minister of the Crown for 13 years in Her Majesty's Government serving as Secretary of State for Defence.

Professor Madeleine Atkins CBE DL

For outstanding achievement in academic life, and her contribution to the

development of Coventry University during her years as Vice Chancellor including enhancing the University's reputation as a place of national and international learning.

Professor Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya KB CBE

For outstanding personal achievement as the founder of Warwick Manufacturing Group raising the status of engineering and manufacturing in the UK and for his service to the promotion of the University of Warwick and the City of Coventry.

Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre

For the provision of a specialist high quality rape and sexual violence counselling support service to the citizens of Coventry undertaken with compassion and dignity to almost 5,000 women, men and children every year.

Mr Courtenay Griffiths QC

For outstanding achievement in the legal profession including appearing as a defence advocate in the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

Councillor Tim Sawdon

For outstanding contribution to the City of Coventry during 40 years on the City Council, including his year as Lord Mayor in 2012, the year the Olympics came to Coventry, serving as a former Chair of the Housing Committee, as Leader of the Conservative Group and Leader of the Opposition and as Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Libraries).

Dr Abdullah Shehu

For outstanding personal achievement in the field of medical research including outstanding care for patients with profound neurological illness and injuries and representing the Muslim community of the city and his contribution towards community cohesion.

99. Medium Term Financial Strategy

Further to Minute 77/13 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which set out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2014-2017, for adoption by the Council.

The report had previously been considered by the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) at their meeting held on 7th October 2013. The Board had recommended that the risk register attached to the Strategy be updated to reflect the current situation regarding risk and the Council report had been updated to reflect this.

The MTFS underpinned the medium term policy and financial planning process that was fundamental to setting the Council's revenue and capital budgets. It was noted that, following the Strategy's consideration by Council, the subsequent Cabinet meeting would consider the Pre-Budget report that would set out the work undertaken in preparation for the 2014/15 and future years' revenue budget and capital programme.

Notwithstanding the emergence in recent months of some early signs of national economic recovery, the Government's June Spending Round announcement confirmed continuing large cuts to local government resources. Therefore, the fundamental factor shaping the Council's MTFs continued to be one of unprecedented financial pressure leading to significant reductions in spending levels that were likely to continue in the period up to 2020, and possibly beyond. Indeed, if the current pattern of local government funding continued, this indicated that in real terms for every £10 of net budget the Council had available in 2010/11, it had less than £9 now and would have nearer £6 in 2024/25.

The report provided a summary of the national and local context that framed the strategy, which represented a combination of reducing resources, challenging underlying economic conditions, increased demand in some areas, a heightened need to improve the quality of service in others and new challenges represented by government reform. In these circumstances, it was crucial that the Council's financial strategy was both robust and flexible. This would provide the financial foundations to support work to ensure that the Council services were fit for purpose to protect the most vulnerable, as well as providing decent core services for every citizen in the City.

Based on initial estimates of both future funding settlements and known or expected future spending pressures, the Council's indicative financial position moving into 2014/15 budget setting showed a major funding gap increasing to £58m in 2016/17. This picture would be refined as the Council moved into Budget Setting, but gave a clear indication of the massive financial challenges. The position would become yet more acute in the period beyond this MTFs based on ministerial announcements about continued spending cuts.

RESOLVED that the City Council approves the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

100. Growing Business Rates Through Creating the Coventry Investment Fund

Further to Minute 80 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a joint report of the Executive Director, Place and Executive Director, Resources, which set out proposals for growing business rates through creating the Coventry Investment Fund.

The need for economic growth was greater than it had been at any time in recent years. At a national level growth was required to help reduce sovereign debt and to ensure the UK remained competitive. Locally, the retention of a share of Business Rates from 2013/14, in part through the operation of multi local authority pooling agreements, had significantly increased the importance of driving growth locally. From 2013/14, authorities would benefit where there was growth in business rates, but would suffer where there was contraction, with changes impacting at a local level more directly than they would have in the past. With this change, the vibrancy of the local economy would become ever more important. There was a real need for the Council to play a leading role in attracting inward investment, using its powers to achieve strategic regeneration and business rate growth more than ever before.

The pursuit of economic growth in the City and region was central to the Council's abc Transformation Programme and the emerging City Deal, including how the Council could use its assets and powers to ensure an economically vibrant future for the City and its people. In addition, the Council would consider how best it could use its cash balances and

reserves to help stimulate growth, through for example, taking advantage of current low short term interest rates. The Council, as part of its financial planning, was actively assessing business cases for providing pump priming investment through Prudential Borrowing.

In this context, the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2013-2016 included funding of a £50m Coventry Investment Fund. Growth in the local economy, the creation of jobs and the growth in business rates could be stimulated and accelerated by public sector investment. By creating a local investment fund, on scale, the Council was seeking to invest in the City's financial future over the coming years and create a sustainable and prosperous City. This was at a time of significant funding reductions within local government and public policy change. However, the Council recognised the importance of taking steps now to generate local growth. This was in order to support the reduction in demand for public services and funding of residual services to local people in the future.

The Coventry Investment Fund would build on the success of recently externally funded programmes such as the Regional Growth Fund, Growing Places and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), complementing existing funding streams and meeting the gap these funds were not able to address. It would be used to invest in real business opportunities right the way through from manufacturing to retail and leisure services, road improvements and include the development of the Council's commercial property portfolio, with a view to getting the best return possible from its assets.

It was proposed that an Investment Board be established to make investment decisions from the Coventry Investment Fund on behalf of the Council, under delegated powers, chaired by the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment). The proposed membership of the Board and its terms of reference were detailed within the report.

The demand for small industrial units within the City had remained relatively steady despite the recession, leading to continued and reasonable demand. However, the effects of the recession, the lack of bank funding and the imposition of void rates on vacant industrial properties had halted all speculative industrial development in the City.

As landlord, the Council had the opportunity to step into the void created by the failure of the market and produce a positive contribution to its commercial portfolio. Approximately 2.5 acres of land on a traditional small industrial estate at Lythalls Lane remained undeveloped. It was therefore proposed that the Council could undertake the development of speculative industrial units to be held long term as part of the Corporate Property Portfolio. It was further proposed that the Council undertakes the development directly as it had all the necessary in-house skills, engaging a professional team and placing a commercial building contract with an appropriate building contractor.

The Council would then seek to let the units, on commercial terms, using commercial agents and then manage the units via Corporate Property Management.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- (a) Receives an annual report on the Coventry Investment Fund.**

- (b) Approves the consequential changes needed to the Constitution to include the Coventry Investment Fund Board's terms of reference and membership and gives delegated authority to the Council Solicitor to make the necessary changes.**

101. Regenerating City Centre Office Accommodation through the Development of Student Accommodation

Further to Minute 83 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Place, which set out proposals for regenerating city centre accommodation through the development of student accommodation.

Coventry's two universities were major drivers of Coventry's economy. Both universities continued to gain national and international recognition for the quality of their teaching and both attract students from across the world.

However, the credit crunch and subsequent recession had made financing the development of student accommodation extremely challenging. This resulted in a shortage of good quality student accommodation, particularly for foreign students. In turn, this led to an increase in demand for houses in multiple occupation in suburban areas with resulting issues for local residents.

Coventry city centre included a number of obsolete office blocks. There was an opportunity to regenerate these sites which, in turn, would improve the city centre and drive footfall into the retail and leisure area.

It is proposed to respond to a request to provide mortgage funding, by effectively acting in a banking capacity, to facilitate the development of 3 student housing blocks in the city centre. This would ensure additional student housing, physical and economic regeneration in the city centre and create financial benefits for the Council and the wider local economy and would achieve the administrations aims of securing regeneration of the city centre within a 12-month period.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- (1) Approves the use of its powers under the Local Government Act 2003 to prudentially borrow.**
- (2) Approves the use of its powers under the Localism Act 2011 to provide a loan to Study Inn over a term of 5 years, at a commercial rate of interest, as detailed in section 1.8.6 of the report, to be met from prudential borrowing as an addition to the existing approved capital programme.**
- (3) Delegates authority to the Executive Director, Resources and the Council Solicitor to agree detailed terms of the transaction, including the detailed approach to achieve the transaction in the most tax efficient manner for the Council and Study Inn.**
- (4) Delegates authority to the Executive Director, Resources and the Council Solicitor as appropriate, in consultation with the Cabinet**

Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) and Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) to make variations or new requirements to give effect to the proposals at are deemed necessary.

- (5) Delegates authority to the Executive Director, Resources and the Council Solicitor as appropriate, in consultation with the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment), Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) and the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) to complete the funding agreements and such other ancillary documentation as is necessary to complete the refinancing transaction, based on the principles detailed in the report.**

102. Report of the Leader on Changes to Cabinet Membership

The City Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources which set out details of a decision of the Leader of the Council to appoint an Acting Cabinet Member (Education) on a temporary basis. The report also sought approval of Council to make a payment to the Cabinet Member presently relieved of his duties due to illness.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- (1) Notes the report of the Leader of Council on the appointment of Councillor Dave Chater as the Acting Cabinet Member (Education).**
- (2) Approves that Councillor Dave Chater receives a pro rata Special Responsibility Allowance as Acting Cabinet Member (Education) until Councillor Kershaw is able to resume his duties or until the end of the 2013/14 Municipal Year whichever occurs first.**
- (3) Approves that Councillor David Kershaw receives a sum equivalent to a Cabinet Members Special Responsibility Allowance until such time as Councillor Kershaw returns to office or until the end of the 2013/14 Municipal Year whichever occurs first.**
- (4) Agrees that should Councillor David Kershaw's absence extend beyond a period of four months, then the Leader is required to consider approving any continued payment of the sum under Recommendations (2) and (3) in consultation with the Chair of Audit and Procurement Committee to ensure they remain appropriate but not to extend beyond the 2014 Annual General Meeting.**
- (5) Agrees that should Councillor Kershaw fail throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority or the executive due to his ill health or subsequent recuperation, he shall continue to be a member of the authority.**

103. Amendments to Appointments of the City Council

The City Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which sought approval to amend appointments to City Council bodies and outside bodies resulting

from the Leader's recent decision to appoint Councillor Dave Chater as Acting Cabinet Member (Education). (Minute 102 above also refers).

RESOLVED that the City Council approves the following amendments to appointments made at the Annual Meeting on 16th May, 2013 for as long as Councillor Chater is Acting Cabinet Member (Education):

- (a) That Councillor Walsh be appointed to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee in place of Councillor Chater
- (b) That Councillor Thomas be appointed to the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) in place of Councillor Chater
- (c) That Councillor Chater, as Acting Cabinet Member (Education) be appointed to the following in place of Councillor Kershaw:

**Corporate Parenting Board (which acts as the Cabinet Advisory Panel for Looked After Children)
Cabinet Advisory Panel – Sports Vision and Strategy, Tourism and City Wide Events
ACL Shareholders Panel
Coventry School Admissions Forum**

- (d) That Councillor Mrs Sweet be appointed as the Labour Group representative on the Corporate Parenting Board (which acts as the Cabinet Advisory Panel for Looked After Children) in place of Councillor Chater, who is now appointed to that body by virtue of his position as Acting Cabinet Member (Education)

104. Question Time

The following Members answered oral questions put to them by other Members as set out below, together with supplementary questions on the same matters:

No	Question Asked By	Question Put To	Subject Matter
1	Councillor Hammon	Councillor Lancaster	Fines for driving in bus lanes and parking fines
2	Councillor Blundell	Councillor Gannon	Spending against Hardship Fund
3	Councillor Kelly	Councillor Lucas	Update on City Deal
4	Councillor Skinner	Councillor Ruane	Warwickshire Bears name change
5	Councillor Sawdon	Councillor Lucas	RICOH ownership
6	Councillor Sawdon	Councillor Lancaster	Right hand turns on A45

7 Councillor Blundell Councillor Lucas Additional payments to refuse collectors

105. **Statements**

(a) Statement by the Leader

The Leader, Councillor Mrs Lucas, made a statement in respect of “Domestic Violence and the grant from the West Midlands Police Commissioner’s Innovation Fund”

The Leader of the Opposition Group, Councillor Blundell, responded to the Leader’s Statement.

(b) Statement by Cabinet Member

The Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) Councillor Townshend, made a statement in respect of the “West Midlands Police Special Constabulary and the grant from the West Midlands Police Commissioner’s Innovation Fund”

The Leader of the Opposition Group, Councillor Blundell, responded to the Cabinet Member’s Statement.

106. **Debate – To Support Principle of Coventry Week**

Councillor Sawdon moved the following Motion which was seconded by Councillor Kelly:

“This Council, noting the resolution of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee of August 8th 2012 which ‘Supported the principle of a Coventry Week linking the Godiva Festival with the Coventry Inspiration Book Awards, the Positive Images Festival, Armed Forces Day and an international food festival’ calls for further action to be taken to pursue this issue.”

In moving the Motion, in accordance with the Constitution, Councillor Sawdon also moved the following additional wording to be added at the end of the Motion.

“and undertake a scoping exercise to set out plans for Coventry to make a UK City of Culture Bid in 2021 and a European Capital of Culture Bid in 2023.”

The amended Motion now to read:

“This Council, noting the resolution of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee of August 8th 2012 which ‘Supported the principle of a Coventry Week linking the Godiva Festival with the Coventry Inspiration Book Awards, the Positive Images Festival, Armed Forces Day and an international food festival’ calls for further action to be taken to pursue this issue and undertake a scoping exercise to set out plans for Coventry to make a UK City of Culture Bid in 2021 and a European Capital of Culture Bid in 2023.”

RESOLVED that the amended Motion, as set out above, be unanimously adopted.

107. Debate – Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Councillor Gingell moved the following Motion which was seconded by Councillor Caan.

“This Council condemns the hideous practise of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and supports the national campaigns including that of the British Arab Federation (BAF) in its campaign to ensure its eradication.

We support

1. Enforcement of the law so that British girls and girls resident in Britain are protected from being taken to different legal jurisdictions with the intention of carrying out FGM.
2. Better enforcement of the law including against parents and guardians who organise FGM and practitioners who conduct FGM procedures
3. Better education to support young girls in resisting FGM, to educate boys to oppose it and to empower communities to confront it

We call upon all relevant authorities, including those involved in law enforcement, the justice system and public health, to do everything in their power to protect young girls from this life endangering, health threatening crime”

RESOLVED that the Motion, as set out above, be unanimously adopted.

Private Business

108. Regenerating City Centre Office Accommodation through the Development of Student Accommodation

Further to Minute 83 above, the City Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Place, which detailed confidential financial matters in relation to proposals for regenerating city centre office accommodation through the development of student accommodation.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- (1) **Approves the use of its powers under the Local Government Act 2003 to prudentially borrow the sum indicated in the report.**
- (2) **Approves the use of its powers under the Localism Act 2011 to provide a maximum loan at any point to the sum indicated in the report to Study Inn over a term of 5 years, at a commercial rate of interest as detailed in section 1.8.6 of the report, to be met from prudential borrowing as an addition to the existing approved Capital Programme.**

- (3) Delegates authority to the Executive Director, Resources and the Council Solicitor to agree detailed terms of the transaction, including the detailed approach to achieve the transaction in the most tax efficient manner for the Council and Study Inn.**
- (4) Delegates authority to the Executive Director, Resources and the Council Solicitor as appropriate, in consultation with the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) and Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) to make variations or new requirements to give effect to the proposals at are deemed necessary.**
- (5) Delegates authority to the Executive Director, Resources and the Council Solicitor as appropriate, in consultation with the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment), Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) and the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) to complete the funding agreements and such other ancillary documentation as is necessary to complete the refinancing transaction, based on the principles detailed in the report.**

(Meeting closed at 4.50 pm)