

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 9 September 2014**

PRESENT

Lord Mayor (Councillor Noonan)  
Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Hammon)

Councillor Abbott	Councillor T Khan
Councillor Akhtar	Councillor Lakha
Councillor Andrews	Councillor Lancaster
Councillor Auluck	Councillor Mrs Lucas
Councillor Bains	Councillor McNicholas
Councillor Mrs Bigham	Councillor Maton
Councillor Birdi	Councillor Mrs Miks
Councillor Blundell	Councillor Mulhall
Councillor Brown	Councillor J Mutton
Councillor Caan	Councillor M Mutton
Councillor Chater	Councillor O'Boyle
Councillor Clifford	Councillor Ruane
Councillor Crookes	Councillor Sandy
Councillor Duggins	Councillor Singh
Councillor Fletcher	Councillor Skinner
Councillor Galliers	Councillor Skipper
Councillor Gannon	Councillor Mrs Sweet
Councillor Harvard	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Hetheron	Councillor Thay
Councillor Howells	Councillor Thomas
Councillor Innes	Councillor Townshend
Councillor Kelly	Councillor Walsh
Councillor Kershaw	Councillor Welsh
Councillor A Khan	

Honorary Alderman

Present:

Mr J Gazey

Apologies: Councillor Ali  
Councillor Bailey  
Councillor Gingell  
Councillor Lepoidevin  
Councillor Sawdon

**Public Business**

**51. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th July 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014 were signed as a true record.

52. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED to exclude the press and public under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the private report in minute 67 headed 'City Centre Public Leisure Facility Development', on the grounds that the report involves the likely disclosure of information 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 that in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

53. **Coventry Good Citizen Award**

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

*Martin Prue has managed the charity, CITEE Ltd (the Churches Initiative in Training, Employment and Enterprise), for nearly 25 years, running programmes to support people experiencing unemployment, long term or short term mental health issues and other forms of disadvantage. He has consistently shown exceptional care for each person who comes to CITEE for help. He has a way of making all course members feel valued and an ability to offer hope for a better future.*

*In December 1989, Martin was employed to take on the challenge of launching the charity with just a feasibility study and a year's funding. He found an office and training base in Foleshill and within a month had recruited 10 long-term unemployed people for the first programme. He has continued to work with Coventry people from all walks of life, all ages and backgrounds, working with GPs, Probation, Mental Health Services, Job Centres and a range of voluntary sector organisations to meet the needs of Coventry people, providing hope and changing lives. He has successfully bid for virtually every funding pot available to the Voluntary Sector in order to keep CITEE going, while keeping the charity true to its original aims; he has battled against funding cuts and borne the brunt of constant uncertainty for the future.*

*Martin has helped people to turn their lives around, supported them back to work after a period of mental ill health and discover new direction for their future. He is well regarded by professional agencies in the city as a man who works with integrity, compassion and keeps the best interests of CITEE's participants at the heart of the work. His tenacity has shone through when times have been financially very tough and when new funding criteria have created huge challenges. Martin loves the work he does at CITEE, and never tires of being able to give people an opportunity to move forward, regardless of the hurdles they face.*

*Martin is undoubtedly a most worthy recipient of the Coventry Good Citizen Award.*

54. **Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor**

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of former Councillor Raj Malhotra, who represented Lower Stoke Ward between 1987 and 1992. During his time as a Councillor, Raj served on several committees including Public Works and

Protection, Social Services, Education, Personnel and Administration and was the Vice Chair of the Environmental Services Committee between 1991/92.

Members paid tribute to the work undertaken by Raj and noted that a letter expressing the Council's sincere condolences would be sent to his family.

55. **Petitions**

**RESOLVED that the following petitions be referred to the appropriate City Council bodies:**

- (1) Request to address concerns relating to the grass verge on Halford Lane – 44 signatures – presented by Councillor Birdi.**
- (2) Objection to change of parking provision at Dorchester Way – 58 signatures – presented by Councillor Sweet.**
- (3) Request for Road and Pavement Repairs at Dial House Lane and Chiel Close – 62 signatures – supported by Councillor Lepoidevin and presented by Councillor Blundell in her absence.**
- (4) Request for road safety measures at Hockley Lane – 8 signatures – presented by Councillor Thomas.**

56. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors J and M Mutton declared disclosable pecuniary interests in the matters referred to in the following:-

Minute 59, headed "City Centre Sports and Public Leisure Facility Development"

Minute 67, headed "Debate – 50m Pool"

Minute 68, headed "City Centre Sports and Public Leisure Facility Development"

They withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of these matters.

57. **Formal Consultation in Respect of Further Staffing Reductions**

Further to Minute 39/14 of the Cabinet, the Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which set out proposals for staff reductions through a further round of Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy (ER/VR).

Since 2010 the Council had undertaken a significant savings exercise across the organisation in response to on-going reductions in Government funding. Savings were initially mainly focused on back office and support services, through reducing senior management posts and merging directorates and by identifying more efficient ways of delivering services. More recently, as back office efficiencies had become harder to find, front line services were being affected.

By 2016 Coventry would have had its government funding cut by nearly a half since 2010 and further, significant savings would be needed across services. The current estimate was that additional savings of approximately £60million a year would be needed to be implemented by 2017/18. This meant that the Council would be a smaller organisation in the future. By introducing more efficient and flexible ways of working the Council aimed to deliver better value for residents with less bureaucracy and red tape – and fewer employees.

Since 2010 the Council had undertaken three rounds of ER/VR which had directly resulted in some 1,000 staff deciding they wanted to leave the organisation and ensuring the number of compulsory redundancies had been kept to a minimum. In order to minimise the risk of future compulsory redundancies it was proposed to consult with trade unions and staff on a further reduction in posts with a view to launching a further round of ER/VR, and to remove some aspects of the earlier rounds which may have reduced take up of the offer by staff.

The Council's human resources and financial strategies indicated that it needed to plan on the basis of losing a further 1,000 posts over the medium term. The report proposed that initial financial provision was made to fund up to 500 of these through ER/VR decisions over the course of the next year or so, at which point the impact of this initial phase would be reviewed.

**RESOLVED that the City Council approve the virement of additional resources of £7.2m as identified in section 5.1 of the report to add to existing budgets of £5.3m to fund redundancy and early retirement costs.**

#### 58. **Coventry Sports Strategy 2014 - 2024**

Further to Minute 40/14 of the Cabinet, the Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Place, which sought approval for a City-wide Partnership Sports Strategy, the 'Coventry Sports Strategy 2014-2024'. The report and its associated appendices detailed the outcomes of the public consultation and the identified impacts of its key proposals through consideration of the Equality and Consultation Analysis for the Strategy.

The proposed Strategy's stated mission was 'To develop a more active, inclusive and vibrant Coventry through positive experiences in sport' and was structured around 8 Vision Aims and 37 Strategic Objectives, which had been refined through an extensive period of stakeholder engagement and public consultation. Included within these were objectives concerned with increasing and widening participation in sport; increasing the number of people receiving sports coaching; increasing the number of people volunteering in sport; establishing and embedding a Coventry Institute of Sport that provided early specialist support services for talented athletes; developing City Centre sports facilities that were accessible, high quality, sustainable and of significance to the Midlands (proposed through closing the Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre and investing in a City Centre destination facility); attracting high profile sporting events to the City; establishing a Coventry Sports Network; and harnessing the power of sport to promote community cohesion and address public health inequalities in the City.

The Council noted that, at a Joint Meeting of Cabinet Members (Business, Enterprise and Employment) and (Culture, Leisure, Sports and Parks) on 23rd July

2014 (their minutes 3/14 and 4/14 refers) three petitions were considered relating to proposals within the draft Sports Strategy 2014-2024 linked to public sports and leisure provision, as follows:

- an e-petition regarding a campaign to keep a 50m swimming pool in Coventry (containing 3,966 signatures at 23rd July 2014)
- a written petition requesting that the Council retain a 50m swimming pool in Coventry (containing 7,333 signatures at 23rd July 2014)
- an e-petition regarding a campaign to help develop competitive gymnastics sports in Coventry (containing 29 signatures at 23rd July 2014)

The Cabinet Members approved reviews of specific considerations, including expressed concerns regarding obesity associated with health and fitness issues, Olympic legacy and the reputation of the City, in the Sports Strategy 2014-2024 Report and in the City Centre Sports and Public Leisure Facility Development Report.

**RESOLVED that the Council endorse the Coventry Sports Strategy 2014-2024 and the mission, vision, aims and strategic objectives contained therein.**

#### 59. **City Centre Sports and Public Leisure Facility Development**

Further to Minute 41/14 of the Cabinet, the Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Place, which sought approval for the Coventry Indoor Facilities Strategy 2014 - 2024, the development of a new City Centre destination facility, the subsequent closure of Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre and for the Coventry Aquatics Strategy 2014 - 2024.

A private report detailing the confidential financial matters of the proposals was also submitted to this meeting for consideration,

The new City Centre facility was proposed to be built on the existing Christchurch House and Spire House site, resulting in the subsequent closure of the ageing Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre in Fairfax Street. The aim of these proposals was to provide high quality, sustainable sports and leisure facilities in the City Centre and create a destination facility that would complement other developments in the south side of the City Centre, such as Friargate and the proposed City Centre South development. It was anticipated that the provision of the new facility would contribute to widening and increasing participation in sport and active recreation, thereby also contributing to health and wellbeing outcomes for local people, particularly younger people and families.

The proposals further contributed to the delivery of a more coherent, consistent and sustainable public leisure offer for the people of Coventry, including the use of an investment model that recycled existing finances into both the proposed City Centre development and any future public leisure developments. The recycled savings would be realised from the closure and withdrawal of public leisure service provision from the existing Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre.

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The Council further noted that, at the Cabinet meeting, the City of Coventry Swimming Club were invited to consider an asset transfer, whereby the Club would take over the running of the Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre and associated 50m pool without on-going subsidy from the Council. Cabinet had requested that officers work with the Club to explore this opportunity and assist with securing any available grant funding to support this invitation.

**RESOLVED that the Council approve the addition of £36.7m, to the Capital Programme for 2014/15 onwards for the development of a City Centre destination facility on the existing Christchurch House and Spire House site.**

**60. Audit and Procurement Committee Annual Report to Council 2013-14**

The Council considered the Annual Audit Committee Report 2013-14. The report provided an overview of the Committee's activity during the municipal year 2013-14 and outlined the breadth of coverage by the Committee.

**RESOLVED that the Council receive the Audit Committee Annual Report 2013-14.**

**61. New Coventry Local Plan - Delivering Sustainable Growth (2011-2031) and the Updated Local Development Scheme (2014)**

Further to Minute 49/14 of the Cabinet, the Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Place, which set out the New Coventry Local Plan – Delivering Sustainable Growth (2011-2031) and the Updated Local Development Scheme 2014.

In April 2013, as a result of Planning Inspectorate recommendations, the Council withdrew a previous version of its Core Strategy from examination. This was due to issues with the Duty to Cooperate, which required the Council to work constructively with neighbouring councils. The Inspectorate recommended an

independent assessment of housing need for Coventry's wider strategic housing market area (HMA).

In November 2013 independent consultants completed work on the joint strategic housing market assessment (SHMA), which responded to the Inspectorate's recommendations and identified the objectively assessed housing need (OAN) for all six authorities within the Coventry and Warwickshire strategic housing market area.

The Joint SHMA recommended that 23,600 homes needed to be built in Coventry between 2011 and 2031 (1,180 a year). This was referred to as the 'objectively assessed need for housing' (OAN) and was an essential requirement of producing a local plan.

Since the joint SHMA was completed the Office of National Statistics (ONS) issued new population projections (May 2014). In order to understand the impact of this new data, the six Coventry and Warwickshire authorities jointly commissioned the same independent consultants to produce an Annex to the joint SHMA. This report was completed and identified a significant increase in Coventry's housing need, coupled with a significant reduction in the housing needs of Warwickshire.

The Annex recommended a revised need of 36,220 new homes in Coventry between 2011 and 2031 (1,811 a year). The overall total remained broadly consistent with an increase of around 200 homes a year for the whole of Coventry and Warwickshire compared to the original projection in the joint SHMA (2013). The study also considered housing pressures as they may arise from jobs growth anticipated by the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), which would place an upward pressure on the housing needs of Coventry and Warwickshire as a whole.

As part of the study's conclusions, and in line with national guidance greater emphasis was placed on the overall needs of Coventry and Warwickshire as a whole. From the Coventry perspective it is reasonable to expect that the OAN identified in the joint SHMA would reflect a minimum requirement for Coventry up to 2031, and that the Duty to Cooperate, would form an integral part of meeting and delivering the city's housing need.

With this in mind, the Local Plan would commit the Council to continue to work alongside its Warwickshire neighbours to secure the most appropriate and sustainable locations for housing growth across the housing market area. Where need could realistically be considered to originate from the City and where appropriate, sustainable and deliverable the Council would support its Warwickshire neighbours in bringing forward land for housing and employment that sat adjacent to the city's existing boundaries. This would ensure infrastructure needs were met in full across administrative boundaries (where and as appropriate). It would also help to ensure that the planning for the areas housing needs gave consideration to the distribution issues associated with the new ONS based projections and the economic needs of Coventry and Warwickshire.

For a period of time Coventry had lost jobs and employment opportunities to other parts of the country. This was a trend that needed to be reversed to help return Coventry to the status of a 'top 10 city'. As a result of focused action and delivery by the Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership the City's decline has, in

recent years, been challenged and was now being reversed. The housing pressures outlined in the report were testimony to the growing demand from people who want to live and work in the City, and who were increasingly attracted to the area as a result of the resurgence of manufacturing industries in the sub-region, the success of the City's two world class universities and the growth in jobs across many sectors.

Appendix 1 of the report sought views and opinions on the level of housing need in Coventry, whilst setting it in the context of the City's growth aspirations and the needs of the HMA. It also placed the level of housing need in some further context in terms of the step change in housing need, the deliverability of such figures and the impact on the Duty to Cooperate. In addition to the level of housing need, the paper drew on previous rounds of consultation on the Local Plan (or Core Strategy as it was previously known) to present three scenarios relating to how housing needs could be delivered.

Scenarios 1 and 2 were presented as extreme positions, with Scenario 1 based on protecting the Green Belt and exporting a proportion of Coventry's need beyond the Green Belt into Warwickshire. Scenario 2 looked to accommodate all of the City's need within its own boundary (regardless of quantum), including on Green Belt land. Scenario 3 proposed a balanced approach based on the most sustainable options, but including some Green Belt development. This was presented as the Council's preferred approach and was considered a sustainable, deliverable and justified approach to meeting Coventry's housing needs.

Furthermore two specific policies were proposed in respect of sustainable development and the Duty to Cooperate, whilst thirteen summary chapters were also presented covering a range of other policy areas including, but not limited to, health and wellbeing, design, economic growth and infrastructure.

Accompanying this stage of the new Local Plan was an update of the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS was a mandatory requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and set out what the Council would produce to set its new planning policies and when they would be produced. The previous LDS was published in 2012 in relation to the now withdrawn Core Strategy.

The LDS contained three separate documents planned for development. These include the Local Plan, the City Centre Area Action Plan and the Community Infrastructure Levy. All were projected to be adopted by summer 2016.

Councillor Blundell proposed an amendment to Recommendation 1, which was seconded by Councillor Birdi. The amendment proposed that Recommendation 1 should read "That the Council Note the New Local Plan – Delivering Sustainable Growth (2011-2031)" document and authorise a period of seven weeks public engagement beginning on Friday 12th September 2014 and ending on Friday 31st October 2014, after which it be brought back to Council for further consideration. The proposed amendment was lost.



**RESOLVED that the Council:**

1. **Approve the “New Local Plan – Delivering Sustainable Growth (2011-2031)” document and authorise a period of seven weeks public engagement beginning on Friday 12th September 2014 and ending on Friday 31st October 2014.**
2. **Endorse the updated Local Development Scheme (2014) as the timetable by which Coventry’s new Local Plan and supporting documents will be prepared.**

**62. The Coventry and Warwickshire First Wave Growth Deal**

Further to Minute 52/14 of the Cabinet, the Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Place, which sought approval for the Council to act as the Accountable Body for the Coventry and Warwickshire First Wave Growth Deal.

Coventry and Warwickshire had been successful in negotiating and securing a Growth Deal with central Government of £74.6m to support economic growth within the area. By 2021 at least 1,000 jobs will be created and 1,000 homes built.

The deal was focussed on four key areas of new infrastructure that would improve connections and tackle congestion and support housing and employment sites; driving innovation in Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering; supporting businesses to flourish; and growing local skills and talent.

The Growth Deal would be due to start in April 2014 and the current process was about mobilisation and pre-delivery activity.

As part of the process of developing the Strategic Economic Plan, the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, in discussions with the local authorities, identified Coventry City Council as the local authority with the demonstrable track record and expertise in managing external funding. Therefore, the Council was being asked to take on the role of Accountable Body for the Growth Deal.

**RESOLVED that authority be given for the City Council to act as the Accountable Body and guarantor for the Coventry and Warwickshire First Wave Growth Deal.**

**63. Appointments of the City Council - Membership of the Corporate Parenting Board**

The Council considered a report of the Executive Director, Resources, which sought approval to amend the appointments made at the Annual meeting of the Council in June 2014 to the membership of the Corporate Parenting Board (which acts as the Cabinet Advisory Panel for Looked After Children).

It was proposed that Councillor Chater (Deputy Cabinet Member (Education)) be appointed to the Board with immediate effect.

**RESOLVED that the Council appoints Councillor Chater (Deputy Cabinet Member (Education)) to the Corporate Parenting Board (which acts as the Cabinet Advisory Panel for Looked After Children).**

**64. 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:

<b>No</b>	<b>Question Asked By</b>	<b>Question Put To</b>	<b>Subject Matter</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Councillor Birdi</b>	<b>Councillor Kershaw</b>	<b>Hollyfast Primary School Expansion and Use of Hollyfast Lane.</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Councillor Hammon</b>	<b>Councillor Lancaster</b>	<b>Skateboarders in the City Centre.</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Councillor Skinner</b>	<b>Councillor Townshend</b>	<b>Travellers in Wainbody Ward and current position at Siskin Drive Travellers Site.</b>

**65. Statement**

The Cabinet Member (Children and Young People), Councillor Ruane, made a statement in respect of the “Children’s Services Improvement Plan”.

Councillor Blundell responded to the statement.

**66. Debate – City of Sanctuary**

Councillor A Khan moved the following amended motion, which was seconded by Councillor Chater:

“Since 2010, Coventry has been known as a City of Sanctuary and with that, the City acknowledges that it recognises the plight of asylum seekers forced to flee their home countries.

Many asylum seekers, in exercising their human right of free speech in their own countries, have received death threats, suffered beatings and threats to their family members, forcing them to abandon their homes, their country and all their possessions. Here in Britain, if their asylum cases are refused by the Home Office, they lose all financial support and accommodation. Current laws also prevent them from working. This leaves them in a cycle of deprivation and poverty that is currently impossible to break. Many are forced into homelessness on the street. The destitution of the refused asylum seekers places increased pressure on the charities and communities that meet their most basic human needs.

The recent Children’s Society report into support for asylum seekers found widespread evidence of destitution, its negative impact on children and of the need

to reform the asylum support system if it is to have regard to the safety and well-being of children.

The Council welcomes the initiatives of the 11 City Councils that have passed a motion on destitution in the UK, highlighting the concerns for refused asylum seekers and the lack of support and facilities. Coventry, as the City of Peace and Reconciliation is complemented by the assertion that we are a City of Sanctuary but for this proud declaration to be meaningful and worthy of its fine words, we must act to improve this situation with the following actions:

1. The Leader to write, on behalf of the City Council, to the Secretary of State for Home Affairs expressing concern about the Government policy that forces refused asylum seekers into destitution while they continue to fight for a safe haven from persecution.
2. The City Council should work closely with the voluntary sector through a designated Officer to provide help, support and advice to applicants and enable a co-ordinated response to be easily available to those in need at this vulnerable time of their lives.
3. The Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Home Affairs seeking a change of policy allowing local authorities to assist refused asylum seekers in danger of destitution and to provide equal emergency provision to refused asylum seekers as they would to any other homeless person.
4. The City Council should request the Home Office to ensure that it continues to provide financial support and accommodation until a safe return is negotiated or an individual leaves the UK or leave to remain is granted, and to provide good quality legal advice at all stages of the asylum process.
5. The City Council should write to the Secretary of State for Home Affairs making clear its concern about the plight of refused asylum seekers who may have to leave the UK while they continue to state their case for a safe haven from persecution.
6. The City Council agrees to produce a report highlighting all existing support available in Coventry, including housing, training, education and legal advice open to vulnerable asylum applicants.
7. The Leader of the City Council calls on all Coventry MPs to support the content of this Motion, to raise the matter in the House of Commons and support a change in current laws regarding asylum applications by removing restrictions on local authorities in the support they can provide to destitute asylum seekers.
8. The City Council to join the national campaign “Still Human, Still Here” (a coalition of about 70 organisations, including several City Councils, Church of England and Catholic Archbishop Conferences, Amnesty International and the Red Cross, who are proposing practical solutions to end the destitution of refused asylum seekers in the UK).

9. The City Council agrees to seek further support for this Motion and actions via the Local Government Association and to encourage other Councils in the UK to follow suit.”

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

67. **Debate – 50m Pool**

Councillor Taylor moved the following amended Motion which was seconded by Councillor Skinner:

“We, the City Council, acknowledge the petition of 11,213 people to retain a nationally renowned facility, that being our 50m pool, and notwithstanding the decision to go ahead and build a new destination facility, will still continue to work actively with the City of Coventry Swimming Club amongst others, and in doing so this will have a positive impact on Coventry’s status and not prejudice our Olympic legacy.

The Council will continue to work, to explore all opportunities to enable Coventry to keep its 50m pool if technically possibly and within the current financial envelop available by exploring opportunities with other stakeholders in and around the city”

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

68. **City Centre Sports and Public Leisure Facility Development**

Further to Minute 44/14 of the Cabinet and Minute 59 above, the Council considered a private report of the Executive Director, Place, which contained the confidential financial aspects of the proposals for the Coventry Indoor Facilities Strategy 2014 - 2024, the development of a new City Centre destination facility, the subsequent closure of Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre and for the Coventry Aquatics Strategy 2014 - 2024.

**RESOLVED that the Council approve the addition of £36.7m, to the Capital Programme for 2014/15 onwards for the development of a City Centre destination facility on the existing Christchurch House and Spire House site.**

(Meeting closed at 5.30 pm)