

Council – 24th February 2015

**Recommendation from Cabinet
10th February 2015**

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm. on 10th February 2015

Present:

Cabinet Members:

Councillor Mrs Lucas (Chair)
Councillor Townshend (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Abbott
Councillor Gannon
Councillor Gingell
Councillor Kershaw
Councillor A. Khan
Councillor Lancaster
Councillor Maton
Councillor Ruane

Deputy Cabinet Members:

Councillor Caan
Councillor Chater
Councillor Fletcher
Councillor McNicholas

Non-voting Opposition Members:

Councillor Blundell
Councillor Lepoidevin (substitute for Councillor Andrews)

Other Members:

Councillor Bains
Councillor Birdi
Councillor Duggins
Councillor Thomas

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executive's:

M Reeves (Chief Executive), F Collingham, T Richardson

Place:

M Yardley (Executive Director), M Andrews

People:

S Roach (Deputy Director), L Ricketts

Resources:

C West (Executive Director), C Forde, B Hastie, G Holmes,
M Salmon

Apologies:

Councillor Andrews

Public business

RECOMMENDATION

107. **Coventry City Centre Action Plan (APP) - The Preferred Approach**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Place, that would also be considered at the meeting of the Council on 24th February 2015, that sought approval of the draft Coventry City Centre Action Plan. The report also sought authority to enter a period of public engagement on the Plan that provided the platform from which to regenerate the City Centre involving new retail provision, more new homes, employment space and leisure, social and community provisions and a strategic overview of accessibility issues including parking, pedestrian movement and associated infrastructure.

The City Centre was an essential component of promoting the growth and prosperity of Coventry. For many visitors, investors, business and local people the City Centre was a gateway to Coventry that represented their principal location for work, learning, leisure, retail and community provisions. It offered an opportunity to exploit the City's historic assets, rich 20th century heritage and showpiece innovative 21st century buildings and public realm, which together would create a unique City Centre environment.

At a time when Coventry's population was growing, its City Centre would continue to be a focal point, but needed to respond in order to stop a period of decline, primarily within its retail offer. This was placed in context through the Councils Shopping and Centres Study (2014), which identified Coventry as the country's 13th biggest City but with a retail centre ranked 58th, a clear disparity between the City's population and quality of its retail offer.

In recent years however, significant investment in City Centre public realm improvements had complemented substantial investments in job creation such as the new Severn Trent head offices and hi-tech business at the University Technology Park. Likewise, more people were now living in the City Centre following delivery of new homes over the last 10 years. Coventry University also continued to grow, not only in terms of its student numbers, but also its national and global reputation and the size and quality of its campus.

This Area Action Plan looked to build upon recent successes and provided a platform for the future to help guide and deliver new developments and investment and support the Councils City Centre First Strategy. It included well known and established proposals such as Friargate, City Centre South and the completion of Belgrade Plaza, but also introduced new ideas and aspirations such as, new residential led regeneration around the area north of Corporation Street and Fairfax Street, continued growth of the Technology Park, new approaches to City Centre parking provision and longer term aspirations for the regeneration of the northern half of the City's retail area.

In addition to new buildings, the Area Action Plan provided a fundamental focus on urban and landscape design, environmental quality, protection of historic assets, green infrastructure, water courses and new routes and linkages helping people move around the City Centre and its adjoining areas in an easier and more coherent way. These aspects would all be fundamental in continuing to improve the overall feel of the City Centre and the quality of its built environment.

The development of an Area Action Plan was therefore essential to help provide a clear overview of how all these different aspects could work together to improve the City Centre whilst shaping and directing future development. It was important to note that the Plan could not however define exactly how specific sites would be developed, but it could set clear markers and provide a firm steer as to how development could be brought forward. This provided a blueprint for the City Centre, allowing it to respond to the rapid change that it was expected to face in the coming years.

In this context, the Area Action Plan had been developed in two specific sections. The first would consider overarching policy guidance focused around four key areas: city centre heritage; the built environment; the natural environment; and parking. The second section would provide a more detailed overview of: 9 quarters that had been identified around specific characteristics – The Business Quarter – Friargate; Cathedrals and Cultural Quarter; The Civic Quarter; Far Gosford Street Quarter; Health and Learning Quarter – Swanswell; Leisure and Entertainment Quarter – Sky Dome and Belgrade Plaza; Primary Shopping Quarter – the retail core; Technology Park Quarter – Parkside; and University and Enterprise Quarter; 2 regeneration areas to the north of the City Centre, focused around Bishop Street and Fairfax Street; and an area of planned stability with small infill opportunities to the south of the City, focused around Warwick Row.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet recommends that the Council approves the "City Centre Area Action Plan – The Preferred Approach (2014-2031)" document and authorises a period of seven weeks public engagement beginning on Friday 27th February 2015 and ending on Friday 17th April 2015.

(Meeting finished at 2.50 p.m.)