

Council – 17th March 2015

**Recommendation from Cabinet
3rd March 2015**

Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 3 March 2015

Present:

Members: Councillor Mrs Lucas (Chair)
Councillor Townshend (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Abbott
Councillor Gannon
Councillor Gingell
Councillor Kershaw
Councillor Lancaster
Councillor Ruane

Deputy Cabinet Members: Councillor Chater
Councillor McNicholas

Non-Voting Opposition Members: Councillor Andrews
Councillor Blundell

Other Members: Councillor Bains
Councillor Thomas

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executive's: M Reeves (Chief Executive), F Collingham, J Moore

People B Walsh (Executive Director), M Godfrey

Place M Yardley (Executive Director), M Andrews, C Knight,
M Waters, A Williams

Resources E Dewar, C Forde, B Hastie, L Knight, N Sutaria

Apologies: Councillors Brown, Fletcher and Maton

RECOMMENDATION

124. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Open Call for Extension to Projects

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director for Place, which set out proposals for the extension of existing projects funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) following an opportunity to bid for additional funds.

Coventry and Warwickshire had been very successful in the current round of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in attracting external funding to the area. Under the ERDF Sustainable Urban Development Programme Coventry & Warwickshire (C&W) had a notional allocation of £12.5m to spend on urban projects between 2006-2015 and over the course of the programme, through the City and Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) demonstrating a clear understanding of ERDF priorities and an ability to deliver on time, to budget and profile, the original allocation was tripled to over £38m. When averaging this grant across the population, Coventry City Council had secured an average of over £116 per resident – the best across the West Midlands. This compared to £32 in Birmingham, £36 in Solihull, £58 in Stoke-on-Trent, £27 in Dudley £27 and £12 in Sandwell.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had given current ERDF programmes the opportunity to bid for more funds to extend delivery. Coventry put forward a number of schemes for additional funds and would be likely to find out at the end of February whether it had been successful or not. This presented a good opportunity for the City to look at its capital programme and future schemes, and to start to develop proposals for future projects. As always the Council had positioned Coventry & Warwickshire with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as a place that they can invest ERDF in and it will successfully deliver.

If any projects were successful, the spend and delivery would need to have been made by 31st December 2015 as that was the fixed end of the programme and DCLG are not in a position to extend this.

Early indications from DCLG are that there is little additional funding available at this stage, and priority will be given to projects 'bridging the gap' between the current European Funding programme and the new European Programme, such as business support type projects, rather than capital projects. However, the Council is clear on its priorities and submitted a bid which, if given the opportunity, could spend any further ERDF underspend in the future as it becomes available.

The Cabinet noted that the was submitted in advance of knowing the outcome of the Council's bids and was seeking approval that if the Council were successful in securing ERDF, it could quickly move to become the accountable body for any additional ERDF it is allocated, contract and mobilise the workforce accordingly to ensure delivery by 31 December 2015. Any delay in the decision making process would jeopardise the Council's ability to deliver the schemes within the timeframes set.

In summary, the bids submitted related to Public Realm works; Friargate Bridge / Whitley; Enterprise and Business Growth; Fargo Village; Coventry International Transport Museum and CWLEP Small Business Loans.

It was further noted that a separate report was submitted detailing submissions in relation to Public Realm Phase 3 extension (3a) which covered Friargate Bridge / Whitley and Public Realm projects in more detail.

The Cabinet agreed to:

1. Recognise the opportunity to bid for further ERDF as a significant part of the Regeneration of the City, and retrospectively confirm, its support to bid for further of ERDF for the projects listed in the report.
2. Receive a further report at a subsequent meeting of Cabinet confirming what projects, if any, have been successful in securing additional ERDF.
3. Authorise the City Council to act as guarantor and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Executive Director for Resources to enter into grant aid agreements with DCLG on ERDF terms and conditions projects if they are successful in securing ERDF for the following projects: Enterprise & Business Growth, Fargo Village and Coventry International Transport Museum

RESOLVED that, subject to being notified that it has been successful in securing additional ERDF, the Cabinet recommend that the Council authorise the City Council to act as guarantor and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Executive Director for Resources to enter into grant aid agreements with DCLG on ERDF terms and conditions projects if they are successful in securing ERDF for the following projects: Public Realm and Friargate Bridge/ Whitley.