

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

127. Public Realm Phase 3 Extension (3a)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director for Place, which set out proposals for potential extensions to the Public Realm Phase 3 programme following an opportunity to bid for further European Regional Development Funding.

A corresponding private report detailing commercially confidential aspects of the proposals was also submitted for consideration.

An opportunity had arisen to bid for further European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) to continue Coventry's extremely successful programme of public realm and infrastructure improvements.

A bid for a further £11.7m had been submitted and this, along with up to an additional £3m from the Growth Deal 2 grant (subject to formal approval) could take the total investment in public realm projects to over £40m with only £3.5m having been funded using the Council's own funds. The benefits of this investment were now being seen with the announcement of the conversion of Cathedral Lanes into a restaurant quarter, the expansion of Coventry University and growing interest in Friargate.

When considered with the investment in the Station Masterplan and Highways and Transport Capital Programme, the total additional investment in the City for 2015/16 was over £70m. This would further bolster the confidence evidenced in the recent report from the thinktank 'Centre for Cities' where Coventry was named as the most successful city in the West Midlands and a top 10 City in the Country in terms of economic and jobs growth. The public realm works would help bring forward future investment in the city centre, including the City Centre South development.

The report indicated that the additional public realm investment could see:

- An extension of the Belgrade Plaza scheme to include the provision of an alternative route to West Orchards car park to alleviate congestion.
- An enhancement of the Lidice Place proposals in front of St Johns church;
- A major initiative to promote tourism in the city including improvements to the links between the Cathedral and the revamped and expanded Motor Museum along with enhancements to the Hill Top conservation area;
- Re-paving of Far Gosford Street to complement the Gosford Street public realm scheme, the redevelopment of many historic buildings and Fargo Village;
- Partial de-culverting of the River Sherbourne and waterside landscaping at Palmer Lane to kickstart the regeneration of this area;
- Enhancement to Bishop Street to complete the link between existing public realm works and the canal basin scheme to help promote regeneration;

It was noted that the bid also included additional funding for the Friargate infrastructure and Whitley Bridge.

Although the Council had been invited to make the bid by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the actual amount available was going to depend on how much other authorities decide to hand-back and DCLG

interpretation of the bids being submitted as expansion to current schemes. All authorities in the ERDF programme had to report quarterly on progress and were expected to 'de-commit' funding if they thought they could not spend it by the deadline of December 2015. Therefore, the programme set out for Coventry would have to be flexible so that any money the City Council received could be spent efficiently as the deadline was non-negotiable.

To ensure that the capital programme as a whole could be managed within the available budget, the Cabinet noted a proposed priority order for the schemes. The first priority would be to ensure the Friargate (including Warwick Road Station Access) and Whitley projects were completed.

The bid was submitted on 16th January 2015 and the outcome was expected at the end of February 2015. It was also noted that there was the possibility of even further ERDF funding being available following the submission of the April returns.

The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Executive Director Place, in consultation with Cabinet Members for Public Services and for Business, Enterprise and Employment, to agree the detailed works for schemes in Coventry city centre Public Realm Phase 3a as set out in Appendix B of the report submitted and their prioritisation for implementation given the uncertainty on the available funding.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet recommends that the Council:

- 1. Authorise the new and additional programme of works, as set out in Appendix B of the report submitted, for Public Realm Phase 3a totalling £15.4m, to be added to the approved capital programme for 2015/16, utilising £11.7m ERDF, £3m Growth Deal grant, £0.7m LTP, subject to funds being made available and priority order set out in the report.**
- 2. Subject to funding agreement and conditions, authorise the accelerated expenditure of £3m Growth Deal grant from the 'Coventry City Centre' project from 2016/17 to 2015/16 to part-fund the public realm programme and cash-flowed by the capital programme;**
- 3. Authorise the updating of the Council's approved Capital programme, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Public Services, to reflect the revised detailed programme of works as can be afforded within funding available including any new ERDF and Growth Deal 2 monies**