

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and
Employment held at 12.00 pm on Monday, 20 July 2015

Present:

Members: Councillor K Maton (Cabinet Member)
Councillor R Brown (Deputy Cabinet Member)
Councillor G Crookes (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Other Members: Councillor Lakha
Councillor Lapsa
Councillor Skinner

Employees (by Directorate):

Place: M. Andrews, N. Clews, C. Patrick, R. Young

Resources: C. Sinclair, J. Sprayson

Others Present: Petitioner Organiser for Minute 6 below

Apologies: Councillor J McNicholas

Public Business

1. **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2015 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

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

RESOLVED that approval be given to exclude the press and public under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for consideration of the private report indicated in Minute 9 below relating to “Development of Land, Blackberry Lane” on the grounds that that item involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as it contains information relating to the identity, financial or business affairs of an organisation (including the authority holding that information) and the amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Council under a particular contract for the supply of goods or services; and that in all circumstances of the cases, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

4. **Council Response to a Petition to Make Earlsdon and Hearsall a Conservation Area**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place in response to an e-petition requesting the Council to make parts of Earlsdon and Hearsall a conservation area.

The petition, bearing 124 signatures, had been sponsored by Councillor Allan Andrews and Councillor Bally Singh.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 69 requires that a local planning authority; *'shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and shall designate those areas as conservation areas'*.

Appended to the report was the January 2008 area character statement and design guidelines document.

The report proposed that the Council should commence an assessment of Earlsdon and Hearsall to assess whether all of the areas or some of the areas are of sufficient architectural and historic interest to merit the conservation area designation. Consideration would also be given as to whether it would be more appropriate for certain areas to be included in an expansion of the existing Kenilworth Road Conservation Area which adjoins Earlsdon to the east.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment notes the petition and approves the commencement of an assessment of the suitability of the areas for designation as a conservation area.

5. **Petition - Stop the Building on Cov Tech Sport Pitch**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which responded to a petition bearing 935 signatures, which was organised and sponsored by Councillor Marcus Lapsa. The petition requested that the existing Cov Tech sports field at Mitchell Avenue no longer be considered for the provision of new homes as part of the Council's Local Plan. Councillors Lapsa and Skinner attended the meeting and spoke in support of the petition.

The Site was first highlighted as part of the draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which was published as part of the wider consultation on the Council's draft Local Plan in September 2014. The Local Plan and SHLAA were subject to extensive public engagement between September and December 2014. As part of this process, it was expressed that all sites were only at draft stage and that further evidence was being undertaken and would feed into any final proposals. It was also expressed that no final decision had been made on any site and that the Council remained committed to protecting the most sensitive and highest quality green spaces.

A key part of this evidence review included assessment of the city's green belt, as the site currently sits within the green belt to the south west of the city. National

Guidance dictates that changes to green belt boundaries could only be made through a Local Plan. It is for this reason that the Site required full consideration through the Local Plan as, should it be deemed suitable for development, then it will need to be allocated and see a change in green belt boundaries. Likewise, should it be considered inappropriate for development then it would need to be considered within the context of on-going green belt protection.

The development of supporting evidence documents remained on-going at this stage. To support this assessment work, consideration would also be given to the Council's playing pitch strategy (in consultation with the national governing body the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and Coventry Sports Strategy 2014 – 2024. This could potentially involve a relocation and re-provision of the sports pitch within the surrounding area.

In speaking in support of the petition, Councillors Lapsa and Skinner referred to their concerns regarding suitability of a re-located sports pitch and the length of the current lease in terms of the Club's future operation.

The site's current lease between the Council and the Rugby Club would expire in December 2016. The future renewal of this Lease and the terms of such renewal would depend, in part at least, on the future decisions made through the Local Plan and it was expressed that the club had been offered an extension on the lease until summer 2018 to give them short term security whilst the Local Plan goes through due process. It was re-iterated that the outcome of the viability assessment would indicate whether or not the site would be suitable for development.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment agrees that, in consultation with the Head of Planning, full regard will be given to the requests of the petition alongside other appropriate evidence when developing the Council's new Local Plan. This was with a view to presenting the new Local Plan to Cabinet and Council in October 2015, where final proposals for the Site will be considered.

6. **Save the Employment Support Service E -Petition**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place in response to a petition, bearing 2,533 signatures, which asked for the Council to reconsider its proposal to close The Employment Support Service (TESS).

The Council-run TESS service assisted people to prepare for, access and retain paid employment. It was targeted at people who have learning disabilities, autism, severe and enduring mental health difficulties and people who had a physical or sensory impairment. The service was for people who would not be able to access or retain employment through other local employment provision. Currently in order to access the service individuals must meet Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) criteria and be in receipt of or eligible to receive support from Adult Social Care or Secondary Mental Health Services in Coventry. The service was available to people who live in Coventry.

Given the significant financial pressures the Council was under as a result of Government funding reductions, the future of the TESS service was currently

being considered. The Council was exploring whether alternative models of delivery and funding for supported employment provision were viable options for the future.

On behalf of petitioners, the Petition Organiser, explained the role of TESS staff in supporting adults accessing and retaining employment and spoke in support of retaining the service.

The presenting officer outlined the intensive work being undertaken to identify funding from a range of potential sources including options for externalising the service, working with local organisations and looking at UK models of service in order to find efficiencies, economies of scale and funding opportunities.

Following consideration of the report and representations made at the meeting it was agreed that a report on the service review and options be presented to a meeting in September, to which the petition organisers would be invited.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment notes the petition and requests a further report on options at a meeting to be arranged in September 2015.

7. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

8. **Any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

There were no other items of public business.

9. **Development Land, Blackberry Lane**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place in respect of development land in Blackberry Lane.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment approves the recommendations as set out in the report.

10. **Any other items of private business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

There were no other items of private business.

(Meeting closed at 1.50 pm)