

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and
Employment held at 10.00 am on Tuesday, 8 December 2015

Present:

Members: Councillor K Maton (Cabinet Member)

Councillor R Brown (Deputy Cabinet Member)
Councillor J McNicholas (Deputy Cabinet Member)
Councillor G Crookes (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Other Member Present Councillor R Lakha

Employees (by Directorate):

Place: N. Clews, P Singh, R Young

Resources: S. Bennett, G. Curtis-Wheeler, J. Sprayson

Public Business

43. Declaration of Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

44. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October, 2015, were signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

45. 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 relating to “ Freehold Acquisition of 261 London Road” 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 financial of business affairs of any 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.

46. Delivering the Jobs and Growth Strategy - Half Year Progress (April 2015 - September 2015)

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which indicated that the Jobs and Growth Strategy, which supports the vision and

priorities of the Council's Plan – Coventry Open for Business: Globally connected and locally committed - is in its second year of delivery. The report summarised the progress made to deliver the strategy in the past six months from April to September, 2015 and indicated that the news is very positive, with performance measures on track to meet the targets set for the year.

The following key achievements were highlighted:-

- The Economy and Jobs service, part of the City Centre and Development Division, has directly contributed to creating 1,670 new jobs opportunities within Coventry against a target of 1,000 set for the year.
- £322 million pounds of business investment has also been secured for the benefit of the City. The Council's services have already supported 205 businesses to grow and develop.
- The number of people engaging with the Council's Employment Team is far exceeding target set. In the past 6 months over 3,500 people have accessed employment support 827 people who have engaged with the services provided have progressed into work. This is a significant achievement. The majority of these individuals are engaging through the Council's city centre Job Shop located in Bull Yard.

The Cabinet Member referred to a number of changes that would impact on the Jobs and Growth Strategy, including changes to the Business Growth Service and implications of the West Midlands Combined Authority. The Cabinet Member also noted success in attracting foreign investment and securing grants. Officers were questioned on a number of issues in the report including:-

- Superfast Broadband connectivity and coverage in the City
- Transport connectivity

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment:-

- (1) Endorses the progress made by the Jobs and Growth Strategy for Coventry between April-September 2015**
- (2) Requests that officers arrange an informal meeting with key Councillors to consider a number of issues, including implications of changes to the Business Growth Service and the West Midlands Combined Authority and to set an agenda to establish what Coventry needs to secure future growth and development.**
- (3) Requests that future reports include details of transport and broadband links (connectivity)**
- (4) Requests that officers provide an up to date Briefing Note for all Members in relation to the current situation regarding Superfast Broadband coverage in the City.**

47. **Freehold Acquisition of 261 London Road**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which indicated that an opportunity has arisen to make a strategic acquisition of land adjoining the Council's depot at Whitley. The owners of the freehold interest in 261 London Road, a three bedroomed two story end terraced house with garden have approached the Council to establish if there would be interest in acquiring their freehold interest. Accessed from the rear garden, there is an additional area of unused land extending to approximately 0.35 acres, which is adjacent to the Whitley depot.

A corresponding private report, detailing confidential financial matters was also submitted for consideration (Minute 50 below refers)

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment authorises the acquisition of 261 London Road and adjoining land on the terms contained in the private report relating to this matter.

48. **Outstanding Issues**

The Cabinet Member noted a report of the Executive Director of Resources that identified those items which the Cabinet Member had requested further reports on.

49. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business

50. **Freehold Acquisition of 261 London Road, Coventry**

Further to Minute 47 above, the Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which detailed confidential financial matters in relation to the freehold acquisition of 261 London Road.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment:-

- (1) Authorises the acquisition of 261 London Road and adjoining land for the purchase price detailed in the report submitted.**
- (2) Authorises the disposal of the house of 261 London Road by open competitive process.**
- (3) Delegates authority to the Assistant Director for Property Management following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment for any subsequent variation in terms of acquisition.**

- (4) **Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Resources, and in particular officers within Legal Services, to complete the necessary legal documentation in this matter.**
- (5) **Delegates authority to the Assistant Director for Property Management to approve the terms of disposal of the house of 261 London Road.**

51. **Any Other Items of Private Business**

There were no other items of urgent private business.

(Meeting closed at 11.00 a.m.)