

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 8 October 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor A Khan (Deputy Chair)
Councillor K Caan
Councillor P Hetherton
Councillor T Khan
Councillor K Maton
Councillor J Mutton
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor P Seaman

Deputy Cabinet Members Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor B Gittins
Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor D Welsh

Non-Voting Opposition Members: Councillor A Andrews
Councillor G Ridley

Other Members: Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor R Brown
Councillor J Clifford
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor C Thomas

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executive's M Reeves (Chief Executive),

People G Quinton (Deputy Chief Executive (People)), D Ashmore,
A Errington, N Hart, P Ward

Place M Yardley (Deputy Chief Executive (Place)), B Hastie,
G Hood, P Jennings, L Knight, R Moon, J Newman, S Weir

Apologies: Councillor R Ali

Public Business

31. Declarations of Interest

As Directors of the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre Ltd, B Hastie and R Moon declared interests in the matter referred to in Minute 37 below, headed 'UK Battery

Industrialisation Centre – Loan from WMCA’. They withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of this matter.

32. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 27th August 2019, were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

33. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that the Cabinet agrees to exclude the press and public under Sections 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the private report in Minute 41 below headed “B&M Stores, Ansty Road, Walsgrave, Coventry - Investment Acquisition” on the grounds that the report involves the likely disclosure of information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as it contains information relating to the financial affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

34. **Adult Social Care Annual Report and Key Areas of Improvement 2018/19 (Local Account)**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People), which set out the Adult Social Care Annual Report and Key Areas of Improvement 2018/19 (Local Account).

The Adult Social Care Annual Report and Key Areas of Improvement 2018/19 (also referred to as Local Account) describes the performance of Adult Social Care and the progress made against the priorities for the year. It also provides specific examples of the operational activities to support service users and carers. As with the report for 2017/18 it is aligned around the Adult Social Care values and principles as a mechanism of demonstrating the actions the Council is taking to put what it signs up to strategically into practice.

Although there is not a statutory requirement to produce an annual report, it is considered good practice as it provides an opportunity to be open and transparent about the successes and challenges facing Adult Social Care and to show what is being done to improve outcomes for those that come into contact with the Council’s services. The production of an annual report is part of the Local Government Associations (LGA) approach to Sector Led Improvement. This approach was launched following the removal of national targets and assessments for Adult Social Care.

The production of the 2018/19 report has drawn on the pool of feedback and information that was gathered over the year from a range of sources including social care staff, Partnership Boards, Adult Social Care Stakeholder Reference Group, providers, partner organisations and people that have been in contact with Adult Social Care along with their families and carers.

The Local Account also looks forward to 2019/20 and includes summary details regarding key areas for improvement. These are improvements the service intends to progress in order to further improve service delivery and cost efficiencies. Although the improvements will deliver a contribution towards overall corporate budget savings targets this is not the main driver for change. The priority is to improve care and support services for adults and in doing so to create a stable provider market for the city, within the context of ongoing uncertainty for the future funding of adult social care.

The Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) at its meeting on 11th September 2019. The Board had welcomed the report and supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet:

- 1. Note comments from the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5)**
- 2. Approve the Adult Social Care Annual Report and Key Areas of Improvement 2018/19 (Local Account)**

35. ICT Strategy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People), which set out the Corporate ICT Strategy.

Over the past ten years there has been a significant shift in the digital technology the Council uses within the organisation. This technology is now a fundamental and essential part of the running of the Council. Recent technology initiatives culminated in the delivery of the Kickstart programme and the introduction of new digital tools and technologies to enable the Council to work in a more agile and modern way.

Building on the success of the previous ICT strategy the Council is now looking to further strengthen its approach by empowering services to really exploit the transformational opportunities that digital tools and technologies offer, directly supporting the One Coventry Council Plan by delivering the very best, easiest to use, efficient and innovative services to our citizens and customers.

In line with the Council's One Coventry approach it must look at how greater connectivity and collaboration with partners will help it to collectively address and tackle wider, whole system issues. The Corporate ICT Strategy attached to this report at Appendix 1 looks to underpin the organisations continued drive for efficiency and transformation through digitalisation. This will be supported by relaunching how the ICT and Digital service engages with the Council's services and how it will optimise the delivery of our technology services.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the Corporate ICT Strategy attached to this report at Appendix 1.**

2. **Note that the Corporate ICT Strategy and associated documents will be regularly reviewed and updated, following the present iteration, to reflect the needs of our customers, advances in technology and the ambitions of the Council.**

36. **Greenspace Strategy April 2019 - March 2024**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), which set out the Greenspace Strategy for 2019 to 2024.

The importance of Local Authorities developing a strategy for greenspaces is well recognised and key to ensuring that parks and greenspaces continue to meet transforming needs and demands placed on them, such as social and economic changes and that they keep providing value and benefit to diverse communities into the future.

The City Council's second Greenspace Strategy terminated on the 31st March 2018 after a period of ten years during which it delivered a number of significant achievements. A new greenspace strategy had now been developed, building on the foundations set by the previous strategy and its successes, setting the scene for the management and development of the City's parks and open spaces for the next 5 years.

The strategy had been developed through a number of defined stages which included a review of national and local policies influencing green provision, an assessment of greenspace quality, quantity and accessibility within the City, stakeholder consultation of the review of findings, analysis and evaluation.

A number of recommendations were presented which sought to improve the safety, use and access of greenspace, addressed deficiencies in both the quantity and the quality of greenspace, developed partner engagement and income regeneration and contribute positively to increased biodiversity.

From these recommendations, a five-year action plan had been produced which would enable the identification of priorities and progress on the implementation and delivery of the strategy to be monitored and tracked.

The report indicated that the draft strategy had been considered by the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) and it had made a number of recommendations. The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities had reviewed and accepted these recommendations and they had had been incorporated into the strategy that was now submitted for adoption.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet recommend to Council to:-

1. **Note that the draft Greenspace Strategy has been considered by the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) and the Board's recommendations have been approved by the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities and incorporated into the draft strategy document.**

- 2. Approve the adoption of Coventry Greenspace Strategy 2019-2024.**
- 3. Approve the Coventry Greenspace Strategy 5-year Action Plan**
- 4. Delegate authority to the Head of Streetpride and Greenspaces to deliver the actions identified in the strategy.**

37. UK Battery Industrialisation Centre - Loan from WMCA

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), which detailed a loan from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) in relation to the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre (UKBIC).

The report indicated that more and more car manufacturers are announcing their intention to move towards building electric cars, and the demand for batteries will increase sharply over the next ten to twenty years. Currently, expertise in battery development is concentrated in Asia, Germany and the United States, and the UK is lagging behind.

The UK Government announced the Faraday Challenge, part of the Industrial Strategy Fund, during the summer 2017. It aims to fund battery research and development work to ensure that the demand for batteries leads to the creation of jobs here in the UK rather than overseas in battery manufacturing. One of the strands of the Faraday Challenge aims to bridge the gap between battery research in universities and large-scale battery production by car manufacturers.

In November 2017, as part of a national competition £80m of Faraday Challenge funding was awarded to the consortium of Coventry City Council, Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) and Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG), University of Warwick to develop a manufacturing scale-up facility in the West Midlands region. The funding was awarded through an open competition run by the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC) and Innovate UK.

This funding award was approved by Cabinet and Council in November 2017 with the authorisation to accept £80m of Faraday Challenge funding and up to £40m of local match funding, which at the time formed part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Devolution Deal 2 bid to central Government. Since then the Devolution Deal 2 has not materialised the project has been looking to secure other sources of local match funding.

Earlier this year the project scope was enhanced in response to industry demand and the full cost rose to £126m. In response, Innovate UK awarded an additional £28m through the Faraday Challenge on the condition that a newly revised local contribution of £18m was found to match the Faraday Challenge grant investment.

The UKBIC Partnership (CWLEP, WMG and Coventry City Council) has managed to secure the £18m from the WMCA in the form of a repayable grant. This funding will be secured against UKBIC assets and repaid using UKBIC Ltd surpluses over time. The funding will be of no cost to the Council.

The Cabinet were advised that the UKBIC programme is part-way through development and progressing well. The programme is due for completion in March

2020 when the UKBIC facility will open for business. Construction work is well underway on the site on the outskirts of Coventry alongside the procurement of machinery and a team of 50 has been recruited to date.

RESOLVED that, subject to agreement with Innovate UK, Cabinet recommend that Council:

- 1) Authorise the Council to act as Accountable Body and accept the £18m contribution from the WMCA as a repayable grant and to make the necessary adjustment to the Capital Programme.**
- 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Business Investment and Culture, the Finance Manager (Corporate Resources) and the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to undertake the necessary due diligence, negotiate the terms and conditions of the funding agreement with the WMCA and also enter into the necessary agreement.**
- 3) Delegate authority to the Director of Business Investment and Culture and the Finance Manager (Corporate Resources) following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources (in the event that the legal documentation are not completed before the end of October) to commit the necessary agreed funding in recommendation 1 above up to a value of £5m for the delivery of the Project.**
- 4) Delegate authority to the Director of Business Investment and Culture, the Finance Manager (Corporate Resources) and the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to finalise the terms of the transfer of the funding to UKBIC and the repayment mechanism back to the Council.**

38. B&M Stores, Ansty Road, Walsgrave, Coventry - Investment Acquisition

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), which set out proposals for the investment acquisition of Band M Stores, Ansty Road, Walsgrave, Coventry.

A corresponding private report was also submitted to the meeting setting out the commercially confidential matters of the proposals. (Minute 41 below refers.)

The Council is committed to investing capital receipts in order to increase revenue income, supporting services it seeks to deliver. An opportunity has been presented to the Council to acquire property to create income.

The property comprises a purpose built A1 (non-food) stand alone, first generation former Focus DIY / Homebase Store retail warehouse unit. The building is constructed with a steel portal frame and clad with a combination of materials but predominantly cavity brick and blockwork / profile metal cladding to the elevations. There is a customer car park to the front access directly from Ansty Road, with a concrete service yard to the rear. Customer car parking extends to approximately 160 spaces, providing a parking ratio of 1:18 sqm (1:195 sqft) and a separately accessed service yard and staff parking area to the rear.

The property provides approximately 2907 sqm (31,300 sqft) of internal accommodation, much of the accommodation being on the ground floor providing the trading space, with a small area of accommodation at first floor. The total site extends to 2.28 acres

The property is currently let to B&M Retail Limited for a term of 15 years from 8th December 2014, expiring on 7th December 2029 leaving an unexpired term of just over 10 years.

The report indicated that the Council already owns just under 50% of the site which is let out on two ground leases generating a total of six pence per annum. The opportunity is to acquire the Freehold land adjacent and benefit from the income generated from the occupational lease to B&M Stores.

RESOLVED that, subject to the consideration of the corresponding private report, the Cabinet:

- 1. Approve in principle the acquisition of the freehold interest subject to a leasehold tenancy, in land at Ansty Road, Coventry as shown on the attached plan 1 for a sum identified in the private report.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) following consultation with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and the City Solicitor to undertake the necessary due diligence, negotiate and finalise the terms of the acquisition of the properties and to complete all necessary legal documentation to facilitate the completion of the purchases.**
- 3. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) following consultation with the Cabinet Members for Jobs and Regeneration and Cabinet Member Strategic Finance and Resources for any subsequent variation in terms.**
- 4. Recommend to Council to approve the necessary adjustment to the Capital programme to reflect the capital expenditure incurred in the acquisition of the Ansty Road interest.**

39. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

40. Authority for Attendance at Conference

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet give authority for the attendance of the Lord Mayor (Councillor L Bigham) and the Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor AS Khan) at the “International People’s Diplomacy Forum – Dialogue on the Volga: Peace and Mutual Understanding in the 21st Century”, to be held in Volgograd, Russia from 28th October to 2nd November 2019.

NOTE: This matter was considered as urgent public business, the reason for urgency being for approval to be sought at the earliest opportunity, as the next scheduled meeting would be after the date of the conference.

Private business

41. B&M Stores, Ansty Road, Walsgrave, Coventry - Investment Acquisitions

Further to Minute 38 above, the Cabinet considered a private report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), setting out the commercially confidential matters relating to the investment acquisition of B&M Stores, Ansty Road, Walsgrave, Coventry.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet:

- 1. Approve in principle the acquisition of the freehold interest subject to a leasehold tenancy, in land at Ansty Road, Coventry as shown on the attached plan 1 for a maximum gross expenditure of the sum indicated within the report.**
 - 2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) following consultation with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and the City Solicitor to undertake the necessary due diligence, negotiate and finalise the terms of the acquisition of the properties and to complete all necessary legal documentation to facilitate the completion of the purchases.**
 - 3. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) following consultation with the Cabinet Members for Jobs and Regeneration and Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources for any subsequent variation in terms.**
 - 4. Recommend to Council to approve the necessary adjustment to the Capital programme to reflect the capital expenditure incurred in the acquisition of the Ansty Road interest.**
- 42. Any other items of private business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

There were no other items of private business.

(Meeting closed at 2.55 pm)