

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 7 September 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor J McNicholas (Chair)

Councillor N Akhtar	Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor P Akhtar	Councillor M Lapsa
Councillor M Ali	Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor R Bailey	Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor L Bigham	Councillor A Lucas
Councillor J Birdi	Councillor P Male
Councillor J Blundell	Councillor A Masih
Councillor R Brown	Councillor K Maton
Councillor K Caan	Councillor B Mosterman
Councillor J Clifford	Councillor J Mutton
Councillor G Duggins	Councillor M Mutton
Councillor B Gittins	Councillor S Nazir
Councillor L Harvard	Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor M Heaven	Councillor G Ridley
Councillor P Hetherton	Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor A Hopkins	Councillor P Seaman
Councillor J Innes	Councillor R Simpson
Councillor T Jandu	Councillor R Singh
Councillor S Keough	Councillor R Thay
Councillor T Khan	Councillor C Thomas
Councillor AS Khan	Councillor A Tucker
Councillor R Lakha	Councillor D Welsh

Honorary Alderman: K Taylor

Apologies: Councillor F Abbott, R Auluck, G Hayre, C Miks, E Ruane,
T Sawdon, B Singh, D Skinner and S Walsh
Honorary Alderman D Batten, H Fitzpatrick and T Skipper

Public Business

20. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 May and 22 June 2021

The minutes of the Meetings held on 20 May and 22 June 2021 were agreed as a true record.

21. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the City Council 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 36 below headed 'Coventry City Council Subsidiaries' 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.

22. **Coventry Good Citizen Award**

On behalf of the City Council, the Lord Mayor and Judge Lockhart, Honorary Recorder, presented Chelsie Giles with the Good Citizen Award. Her citation read:

“Chelsie started her sporting life as a keen swimmer, dancer and gymnast, but after watching her brother take part in judo classes, decided to try the sport when she was aged just eight - and never looked back.

She quickly rose through the ranks at Coventry Judo Club and at 13 had to decide between judo and gymnastics before opting for the sport that was to bring her Olympic glory at the age of 24.

Chelsie made her senior international Judo debut in 2017 and her success in the 52kg category has included a silver medal at the 2018 Antalya Grand Prix as well as bronze in the 2018 Budapest Grand Prix and the Abu Dhabi Grand Slam.

She is also a 2019 European Games bronze medallist and headed to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics in good form, having won gold at the Tel Aviv Grand Slam earlier in the year. Chelsie made the most of that form on the mat, taking home Team GB's first medal of the Games by winning bronze in her discipline.

She is an excellent ambassador for her home city and her success is helping to inspire other young athletes – from judo and other sports – as she has shown what can be achieved through hard work and dedication.

Chelsie has helped to raise the city's profile as a sporting city and as a judo city as Coventry prepares to host the sport as part of the 2022 Commonwealth Games. Chelsie carries herself in a manner which defies her age. She is a true inspiration and role model for all.

Her dedication and love for her sport justly reflect her character and she is well deserving of this Good Citizen Award.”

23. **Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor**

(a) Death of Former Lady Mayoress Hazel Gazey

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of former Lady Mayoress Hazel Gazey who passed away on 7th August 2021.

Hazel was Lady Mayoress in 2004/05 alongside former Councillor and now Honorary Alderman, John Gazey.

The City Council noted that a letter of condolence had been sent to John and his family from the Lord Mayor and the Leader on behalf of the City Council.

(b) Team GB – Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics

The Lord Mayor congratulated Team GB for their fantastic achievements at the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics with a special mention to Kare Adenegan, a former Good Citizen Award recipient, on achieving two Silver Medals at the Paralympics.

(c) New Zealand

On behalf of the City of Coventry, the Lord Mayor offered support to the people of New Zealand and wished a speedy recovery to those who had been injured in the terror attack on Friday 3 September 2021 in New Lynn, West Auckland. Thoughts were with the victims, their families and those who had witnessed this senseless attack on innocent people.

24. **Petitions**

RESOLVED that the following petitions be referred to the appropriate City Council bodies:

- (a) **Opposing waiting restrictions at junction of Beresford Avenue, Dunbar Avenue and Churchill Avenue - 21 signatures presented by Cllr AS Khan**
- (b) **Request for parking permit zone from 673 to 695 Stoney Stanton Road Avenue - 10 signatures presented by Cllr AS Khan**
- (c) **Request for parking permits for residents of Crabmill Lane- 13 signatures presented by Cllr AS Khan**
- (d) **Request the Council to close alleyway between 8 and 9 Rocken End to stop anti-social behaviour - 65 signatures presented by Cllr AS Khan**
- (e) **Request the Council to sort the problem of vermin infestation and fly tipping 14-15 Cawthorne Close - 19 signatures presented by Cllr D Welsh**
- (f) **Insufficient Parking in Peel Street - 14 signatures presented by Cllr S Nazir**
- (g) **Request that the Council investigate the state of pavements and road surface of the entire St Helen's Way – 67 Signatures presented by Councillor Birdi.**
- (h) **Request to ban the licencing of any HMOs in the Moreall Meadows estates which covers Moreall Meadows, The Arboretum, Russet Grove, Cassandra Close, Poppyfield Court and Heritage Court - 136 signatures presented by Cllr M Heaven**
- (i) **Stop the Binley Cycleway, Biggin Hall Crescent being made exit only – 160 signatures presented by Cllr R Singh**
- (j) **Objection to the planning permission for nine flats at 14 Spindle Street ref: FUL/2021/1838 – 34 signatures presented by Cllr T Khan**
- (k) **Request that the grass verge on Park Avenue to be tarmacked due to inadequate repairs to the verges and outstanding problems not being resolved – 43 signatures presented by Cllr R Lancaster**

- (l) **Request to save the tree at the corner of Beanfield Avenue and Medland Avenue - 79 signatures presented by Cllr M Heaven**
- (m) **Objection to Planning Application FUL/2020/0987 (22 Rowleys Green Lane) - 53 signatures presented by Cllr L Bigham**

25. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

26. **Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21**

Further to Minute 4 of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, the City Council considered the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21 be noted.

27. **Revenue and Capital Outturn 2020/21**

Further to Minute 9 of Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Finance which outlined the final revenue and capital outturn position for 2020/21 and reviewed treasury management activity and 2020/21 Prudential Indicators reported under the Prudential Code for Capital Finance. Appendices to the report provided: a detailed breakdown of Directorate Revenue Variations; Capital Programme Changes and Analysis of Rescheduling; and Prudential Indicators.

The 2020/21 financial year had been one like no other, with organisational and financial impacts exceeding anything experienced previously during peacetime. Some of these impacts were unseen in consideration of the Council's outturn position – for instance Business Rates reliefs provided and business grants paid out through the year – but their scale had been staggering, nonetheless. The purpose of this report was not to catalogue the changes to society and Council services through the year, although where these had had a financial effect on the Council this would be outlined.

The overall financial position included the following headline items:

- A balanced revenue position after a recommended £9.2m was set aside in reserves to enable the city's recovery from Covid, invested in the Council's key priorities and strengthening the Council's financial sustainability.
- Capital Programme expenditure of £194.2m which represented the second largest programme in the modern era.
- An increase in the level of available Council revenue reserves from £90m to £123m including Covid funding and the net underspend contribution.

Further detail included:

- A net underspend of £8.5m within central budgets after adjusting for the impact of Covid resulting overwhelmingly from one-off circumstances and the application of resources to fund previously approved decisions.
- A revenue underspend of £3.4m within Housing and Homelessness due in large part to the number of households living in temporary accommodation being lower than anticipated.

- Identified income loss and expenditure related to COVID-19 of £31m funded in-part by in-year Government emergency funding and sales fees and charges compensation grants provided for this purpose.
- A shortfall in this in-year Covid funding of £2.2m.

The recommended proposals put forward by the Director of Finance - the Council's Section 151 officer - were explained in section 5.1 of the report.

RESOLVED that the City Council approve reserve contributions of £9.2m available from the year-end revenue bottom line for the purposes described in Section 5.1 of the report.

28. **Audit and Procurement Committee Annual Report 2020-21**

Further to Minute 15 of the Audit and Procurement Committee, the City Council considered their Annual Report which provided an overview of its activity during 2020-2021.

The report included an introduction by the Chair, Councillor Lakha. During the previous municipal year, the Committee had met on four occasions and considered a range routine reports based on clearly defined expectations of services / functions such as internal / external audit and financial management, along with ad-hoc reports which focused on either a specific concern or developments which impacted directly on the Committee.

The report provided further details of the reports considered during this time which included, under Governance: The Council's Draft Annual Governance Statement. Financial Management and Accounting reports were: The Statement of Accounts; The Revenue and Capital Outturn Position for 2019-20; Quarterly Monitoring Reports of performance against revenue and capital budgets 2020-21; and a Treasury Management Activity Update.

RESOLVED that the City Council note the Audit and Procurement Committee Annual Report 2020-2021.

29. **Restructuring Coventry City Council Subsidiaries**

Further to Minute 24 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance, which had also been considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at their meeting on 26th August 2021 (their minute 16/21 referred) on proposals for restructuring Coventry City Council subsidiaries. An Appendix to the report provided the Terms of Reference for the Shareholder Committee.

A corresponding private report detailing confidential financial matters was also submitted for consideration (Minute 36 below refers).

The City Council's portfolio of wholly owned company investments and joint ventures companies had grown in both volume and complexity over a number of years. A full list of the City Council's company investments was detailed in the report.

Each of these investments had been considered separately by the City Council at the point of purchase and / or investment through detailed due diligence, along with reports to the Cabinet and Council to recommend the appropriate course of action. Equally each investment had its own governance structure which regulated how the company or joint venture operated and performed. However, there was currently no single internal process to allow the City Council to consider the performance of its investments, including the mix of commercial investments and suitable apportionment of risk across different sectors.

In response to the City Council's auditors (Grant Thornton) advocating improvements in the overarching arrangements for the Council's commercial investments, the report sought approval of a revised governance structure for the City Council's commercial investments through the establishment of new sub-committee of Cabinet, the Coventry City Council Shareholder Committee. Along with the grouping of all wholly owned investments under a single parent Company, HoldCo. The proposed governance structure for the City Council's commercial investments was set out in the report.

To facilitate the structure and following independent advice from Pinsent Mason LLP and Deloitte LLP, the report also sought:

- the transfer of shares in all wholly owned companies to HoldCo, and the assignment to the City Council of new shares in HoldCo.
- The adoption of all relevant terms of reference and policies for the Shareholder Committee and HoldCo.
- The financial restructuring of North Coventry Holdings (NCH), in order to release funds back to the City Council.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- 1) Delegates authority to the Director of Finance, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, the ability to carry out of the necessary legal and financial transactions to facilitate a reduction in the share capital in North Coventry Holdings. The authority under this delegation shall also include the power to determine how any payments released as a consequence of the reduction in share capital in North Coventry Holdings is to be treated.**
- 2) Authorise the Director of Law and Governance to make the necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution arising from this report.**

30. Schools National Funding Formula Consultation Response

The City Council considered a report of the Director of Education and Skills which set out a response to the Department for Education consultation on further reforms to the National Funding Formula (NFF) which determines funding allocations for Local Authorities (LAs) and for all schools.

The report stated that the proposals and the direction of travel set out in the consultation were likely to result in reduced funding and reduced flexibilities for central LA education services, which will reduce the LA's ability work strategically with the Education Partnership and deliver the kind of whole system approach that has been so successful in Coventry. Whilst not specifically consulted on, the

consultation document also set out the long-term ambition for a fully academised system and a significant reduction in LAs' roles in school improvement. It also suggested a weakening of school funding protection levels may be necessary as part of the transition towards a "hard" NFF model where the DfE deliver all funding directly to schools without LA involvement.

The report sought approval to submit a Local Authority response to the consultation which outlined the City Council's disagreement with many of the proposals. Where appropriate, the response also outlined areas that needed further consideration and made suggestions that could improve proposals. The proposed response was appended to the report.

RESOLVED that proposed Local Authority response to the schools National Funding Formula consultation as detailed in the Appendix to the report be approved.

31. **Annual Report from the Leader to the Council on Key Decisions made under Special Urgency Provisions 2020/2021**

The City Council noted a report of the Director of Law and Governance which reported on key decisions made under the Special Urgency Provisions in 2020/21.

The Leader was required to submit to the Council at the first ordinary meeting after the Annual Meeting, a report of Key Decisions made in the previous year where the Special Urgency provisions were used. This applied where it was not practicable to give notice at least 5 clear days in advance of a Key Decision being made.

The Leader reported that there were no such cases during the 2020/21 municipal year where the Council did not give at least 5 clear days' notice before making a Key decision.

32. **Exercise of Emergency Functions**

The City Council noted a report of the Chief Executive which informed the City Council of decisions undertaken by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Constitution and following consultation with the Leader of the Council, Councillor G Duggins, to exercise emergency functions to secure additional funding made available by the Government in response to the current Covid-19 pandemic.

33. **Question Time**

Councillors P Hetherton and AS Khan provided written answers to the questions set out in the Questions Booklet together with oral responses to supplementary questions put to them at the meeting.

The following Members answered oral questions put to them by other Members as set out below, together with supplementary questions on the same matters:

No	Questions asked by	Question put to	Subject matter
1	Councillor C Thomas	Councillor AS Khan	Godiva Festival

2	Councillor M Heaven	Councillor D Welsh	Article 4
3	Councillor R Simpson	Councillor J O'Boyle	Air quality - Holyhead Road/Spon End

34. **Statements**

The Leader, Councillor G Duggins, made a Statement in respect of Afghanistan and Refugees/Asylum Seekers

Councillor G Ridley responded to the statement.

35. **Debate - Food Poverty**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor C Thomas and seconded by Councillor P Hetherington:

“This Council notes the increase in poverty across our City, in particular the rise in food poverty.

The DWP data reports that households in the City claiming Universal Credit has risen by 25% and yet this Government is still intent on reducing this benefit by £20 a week.

As we enter the colder months, many families will face the stark choice – Heat or Eat. This is totally unacceptable when we are one of the richest countries in the world.

We believe that the Right to Food is a basic human right and welcome the independent Nation Food Strategy Review. We believe that the Right to Food must be incorporated in any strategy going forward and a letter should be sent to Henry Dimbleby, who is heading that review, stating our position.”

RESOLVED that the Motion, as set out above, be adopted.

Note: A recorded vote was taken, in accordance with the Constitution, in respect of the debate.

The Councillors voting for and against the Recommendations were as follows:

<u>For</u>		<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Councillors:	Councillors:	Councillors:	Total: 0
N Akhtar	G Lloyd	R Bailey	
P Akhtar	A Lucas	J Birdi	
M Ali	K Maton	J Blundell	
L Bigham	J Mutton	M Heaven	
R Brown	M Mutton	T Jandu	
K Caan	R Nazir	S Keough	
J Clifford	J O'Boyle	M Lapsa	
G Duggins	K Sandhu	J Lepoidevin	
B Gittins	P Seaman	P Male	
L Harvard	R Singh	A Masih	

P Hetherton	R Thay	B Mosterman
A Hopkins	C Thomas	G Ridley
J Innes	A Tucker	R Simpson
AS Khan	D Welsh	Total: 13
T Khan	Lord Mayor	
R Lakha	Total: 32	
R Lancaster		

Result: Carried

For: 32
Against: 13
Abstain: 0

35.1 Debate - Refuse Collection Service

The following Motion was moved by Councillor M Heaven and seconded by Councillor J Lepoidevin:

“This Council instructs the Cabinet to set in motion the process of market testing our refuse collection service”

RESOLVED that the amended Motion, as set out above, be not adopted.

Note: A recorded vote was taken, in accordance with the Constitution, in respect of the debate.

The Councillors voting for and against the Recommendations were as follows:

<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Councillors:	Councillors:	Councillors:
R Bailey	N Akhtar	G Lloyd
J Birdi	P Akhtar	A Lucas
J Blundell	M Ali	K Maton
M Heaven	L Bigham	J Mutton
T Jandu	R Brown	M Mutton
S Keough	J Clifford	R Nazir
M Lapsa	G Duggins	J O’Boyle
J Lepoidevin	B Gittins	K Sandhu
P Male	L Harvard	P Seaman
B Mosterman	P Hetherton	R Singh
G Ridley	A Hopkins	C Thomas
R Simpson	J Innes	A Tucker
12	AS Khan	D Welsh
	T Khan	Lord Mayor
	R Lakha	30
	R Lancaster	

Result: Lost

For: 12
Against: 30

Abstain: 0

36. **Restructuring Coventry City Council Subsidiaries**

Further to Minute 29 above, the City Council considered a private report of the Director of Law and Governance, setting out the commercially confidential matters relating to the restructuring of Coventry City Council subsidiaries.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- 1) **Delegates authority to the Director of Finance, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, the ability to carry out of the necessary legal and financial transactions to facilitate a reduction in the share capital in North Coventry Holdings. The authority under this delegation shall also include the power to determine how any payments released as a consequence of the reduction in share capital in North Coventry Holdings is to be treated.**
- 2) **Authorises the Director of Law and Governance to make the necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution arising from this report.**

(Meeting closed at 6.25 pm)