

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Monday, 18 October 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor J McNicholas

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

Honorary Alderman T Skipper

Apologies: Councillor F Abbott, K Maton and S Walsh
Honorary Alderman D Chater, H Fitzpatrick and M Hammon

Public Business

37. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2021

The minutes of the Meeting held on 7 September 2021 were agreed as a true record.

38. Exclusion of 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 51 below headed 'SEND Proposal for the use of the Woodlands Site' 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.

39. Coventry Good Citizen Award

On behalf of the City Council, the Lord Mayor and Judge Lockhart, Honorary Recorder, presented Matthew Ellison with the Good Citizen Award. His citation read:

“From an early age Matthew experienced the devastating impact the effects of Huntington’s Disease had on his family. As Matthew grew older, he wanted to use his own experience of growing up with a parent who had the disease to change the landscape for other children and young people.

While attending the Huntington’s Disease Congress in 2009 Matthew connected with many other young people who were going through similar experiences. During this event an idea would transpire and after years of fundraising, writing, research and lobbying the idea turned into reality. Matthew was able to bring HDYO.org into fruition in 2012, an organization dedicated to filling the gap in support and education for young people impacted by Huntington’s around the world.

Since 2009 Matt has helped support 4000 young people from over 90 countries. The educational content he developed is now available in 14 different languages and the videos have been viewed more than 2 million times.

Matt does all of this whilst living with the knowledge that he too will develop Huntington's Disease after testing positive at 18. Matthew is an advocate for young people, Huntington's Disease, Rare Diseases and Genetic Conditions. He has invested his time, efforts and resources to help better the lives of young people, his actions truly reflect his character and he is a worthy recipient of this Coventry Good Citizen Award”.

40. Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor

(a) Sir David Amess MP

The Lord Mayor referred to the tragic death of Sir David Amess MP who died on Friday 15 October 2021. Sir Amess served as a Member of Parliament since 1983.

Tributes were paid to Sir Amess during the meeting and Members noted that a letter of condolence has been sent from the Lord Mayor and the Leader to his family.

Tributes were also paid to former Minister. James Brokenshire MP, who passed away earlier in the month of cancer aged 53.

A minute’s silence was held as a mark of respect.

(b) Black History Month

The Lord Mayor referred to the Black History Month which was being celebrated throughout October.

Black History Month has been observed in the UK for over 30 years and provided an opportunity to recognise the achievements and contributions of Black communities in the UK. This year's theme was 'Proud to Be' which was perfect for the City.

(c) Master of the Freeman's Guild

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent appointment of Matt Johnson to the role of Master of the City of Coventry Freeman's Guild for the coming year and wished him well in his role.

41. **Petitions**

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

- (a) Request for Council to provide a tarmac path around the outside edge of the Ponderosa in Tile Hill – 324 signatures presented by Councillor P Male.**
- (b) Petition objecting to the proposed Highway in Spon End to help the preservation of this community, its safety, conservation and environmental impact – 504 signatures presented by Councillor R Simpson**
- (c) Request for traffic calming measures in Wendiburgh Street, John Rous Avenue, Shariff Avenue and Mayors Croft – 47 signatures presented by Councillor M Lapsa**
- (d) Request for double yellow lines in Locke Close – 10 signatures presented by Councillor S Keough**

42. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor L Bigham and Councillor P Akhtar declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the matter referred to in Minute 45, headed 'Coventry Very Light Rail'. They withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of this item.

43. **Annual Report of Ethics Committee 2020/21**

Further to Minute 5 of the Ethics Committee, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which set out the work of the Committee over the last municipal year. In particular, the report detailed:-

- Work that the Committee has carried out on developing a new Code of Conduct for Elected and Co-opted Members which was approved by full Council
- A new Travel and Conference Policy produced by the Committee
- Consideration of complaints made under the Code of Conduct

As well as receiving regular reports on ethical standards cases across the country, the Committee has also considered reports on:-

- The result of a rapid non-statutory review into serious governance and risk management issues at Nottingham City Council;
- Steps taken by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government in the wake of arrests in connection with accusations of bribery and witness intimidation at Liverpool City Council.
- The Committee on Standards in Public Life's short report on its review of progress by local authorities against its 15 Best Practice Recommendations for ethical standards.

The Committee has also maintained a watching brief of work being undertaken by the Local Government Association on Civility in Public Life and also on work being done locally on supporting Members in dealing with challenges associated with public life, particularly in relation to intimidation and abuse.

The report also detailed the Work Programme for 2021/22.

The Ethics Committee had approved the Annual Report for 2020/21.

RESOLVED that the City Council notes the Annual Report of the Ethics Committee for 2020/21

44. **Coventry City Council's Youth Justice Strategy and Plan 2021-23 (Youth Justice Plan)**

Further to Minute 32 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Children's Services, which sought Council endorsement of the Coventry Youth Offending Service (CYOS) Youth Justice Plan for 2021-23, which was appended to the report.

The report indicated that Youth Offending Teams were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The functions assigned to the Youth Offending Service include the duty upon the local authority, under the Children Act 1989, to take all reasonable steps to encourage children not to commit offences. The Crime and Disorder Act imposed a duty on each local authority, acting in cooperation with its Statutory Partners (Police, Health and Probation), to ensure that all Youth Justice services are available in their area to such an extent as is appropriate for the area. The key tasks of the service were set out in the report.

The Crime and Disorder Act also imposed a duty to complete and submit a Youth Justice Plan each year, which provides an overview of CYOS achievements against key indicators, plans and target and identifies the key strategic priorities for the next 12-24 months. The plan also demonstrates, in line with the Youth Justice Board grant requirements, the continued delivery of statutory responsibilities as described in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The CYOS has submitted its plan which demonstrates the delivery of the statutory functions and the methods for achieving this to the Youth Justice Board. The Plan outlined specific areas including:

- Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

- Resources and Services
- Performances and Priorities
- Responding to the Pandemic and Recovery from Covid 19
- Challenges, risks and opportunities
- Improvement and Business Plan.

RESOLVED that the City Council endorses the Youth Justice Strategy and Plan 2021/2023.

45. **Coventry Very Light Rail**

Further to Minute 35 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Transportation and Highways, which provided a progress update on Coventry Very Light Rail, a flagship project for the Council.

The Coventry Strategic Transport Investment Strategy ‘Connecting Coventry’, approved by Council in January 2017, aims to maximise the economic potential of the city through investment in transport infrastructure to support growth and jobs. It set out an ambitious £620m programme over the next ten years to improve the resilience of the road network, ensuring connectivity to job opportunities, expansion of railway capacity, including Coventry Very Light Rail (CVLR) and linking key development opportunities and employment sites.

A progress report in March 2018 provided an update on how the strategy had progressed and sought further approvals to take forward the schemes in the Strategy to delivery.

The report now submitted provided a further update on Coventry’s Transport Strategy and outlined the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement submission recently approved by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) for submission to Government. This made provision for securing funding for the CVLR project for the 2022-27 period, subject to Government approval.

The CVLR project is supported by Transport for West Midlands and has gained national and global interest. Appendix 1 of the report outlined the VLR vision, progress to date, next steps and evidence of progress. It was proposed that delivery of a City Centre CVLR Demonstrator be brought forward to showcase the City’s position as a world class centre for innovation. The CVLR team will explore the viability of delivering the infrastructure required to operate a city demonstrator between the Railway Station and Pool Meadow. The report also outlined capital investment by the Council of up to £3.2m required to deliver the first route, the funding opportunities currently identified, together with the project’s funding requirements for the 2021/22 financial year. This investment is essential in 2021/22 to deliver the following activities:

- Enable progression of the business and commercial case for the first route.
- Enable the procurement of the Outline Design Concept and Operations and Maintenance input for the first route.
- Progression of the track workstream to enable Test Track facilities of the new track design to be procured and constructed.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- 1. Approves the allocation of up to £3.2m corporate reserves to the CVLR programme activities to maintain programme which is working towards a delivery of a first route for Coventry at the earliest opportunity.**
- 2. Delegates authority to the Director of Finance, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to determine the final allocation from corporate resources once the outcome of funding bids are known.**
- 3. Delegates authority to the Director of Transportation and Highways, following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to finalise and negotiate the terms of, and enter into, the relevant legal agreements as well as any associated documents deemed necessary pursuant to the procurements in relation to the CVLR activities.**

46. SEND Proposal for use of the Woodlands Site

Further to Minute 37 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Education and Skills, which set out the next steps in the SEND proposal for the use of the Woodlands school site.

A corresponding private report detailing confidential financial matters was also submitted for consideration (Minute 51 below refers).

The report indicated that Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a statutory duty on councils to ensure that there are sufficient school places and fair, appropriate access to education for all. It is the Council's role to plan, commission and organise school places in a way that raises standards, manages supply and demand and creates a diverse infrastructure.

This meant that local authorities have to provide a continuum of provision to meet a continuum of need. Whilst Coventry has relatively few specialist provisions delivered in the form of resourced centres / units in mainstream schools, it does have a good range of special school provision. Consequently, very few Coventry children have to attend schools outside of the City, which is a position that needs to be maintained.

However, the recent evidenced growth in need, specifically in the area of complex communication (autism spectrum conditions) and social emotional and mental health (SEMH), has placed a level of demand on the special school system that exceeds supply. School age Education, Health and Care Plans have increased from 2,145 in January 2020 to 2,344 in January 2021, demonstrating a 26% growth across a 5-year period.

On 30th October 2018, the Cabinet approved in principle the refurbishing of the existing Woodlands School site to provide a new home for the existing Woodfield Primary and Secondary schools and the potential subsequent relocation of the

Woodfields schools to the Woodlands site. It was agreed that a further report be submitted containing a full detailed feasibility study. Approval of this feasibility study would enable education to proceed with a more detailed examination of the costings and look at the funding sources available.

Following an Ofsted inspection at Woodfield School in March 2020, which resulted in a grading of 'Inadequate', Woodfield School is required to academise. The Governing Body of the school has made a successful application to the Secretary of State for an Academy Order under the Academies Act 2010. Following the West Midlands Headteacher Board in October 2020, it was agreed that Woodfield School will join the Sidney Stringer Multi-Academy Trust (Sidney Stringer MAT) as a convertor academy and thereafter will cease to be maintained by the Local Authority. The Council, in conjunction with the Department for Education, Woodfield School and Sidney Stringer MAT are working towards a target conversion date of 1st April 2022, subject to leases being agreed and all other agreements in place. The conversion is also dependent upon significant progress being made on this project.

The move to the Woodlands site would allow both Woodfield primary and secondary phases to benefit from shared working practices, provision of more efficient and improved facilities and a purpose designed building. It would also allow Woodfield School to increase the number of pupils. In addition, the refurbishment of the Woodlands site would potentially allow a continuation and expansion of the community sporting provision that has been successfully provided at the site for many years.

The existing Woodlands buildings are of 1950's vintage and are Grade II listed. As such, significant investment was required to allow them to be used as a modern SEND school. The DfE transferred the building across to the Council in September 2017. The condition report highlighted a sum required for the upkeep and maintenance costs and many of the buildings have remained vacant since the Woodlands Academy closure.

The Cabinet at their meeting agreed to:

1. Note the outcome of the feasibility study report (as identified in the corresponding private report) and the consultation set out in Appendices 3 and 4.
2. Approve the commencement of a competitive procurement process to appoint the design team and the building contractor to enable the delivery of the capital refurbishment works required on the Woodlands Site to facilitate the relocation of the existing Woodfield Primary and Secondary Schools.
3. Subject to acting within approved budgets, delegate authority to the Director of Education and Skills and the Director of Finance, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, to undertake the necessary due diligence including but not limited to the award of contracts to successful tenderers and entry into all necessary legal agreements.
4. Note that where the costs of delivering the relocation of the existing Woodfield Primary and Secondary schools to the Woodlands Site exceeds

the approved budget limit (“the Shortfall Gap”) a further report will be presented to Cabinet and Council for the approval of the Shortfall Gap prior to award of the contract to the successful building contractor.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- 1. Approves the capital budget for the delivery of the capital refurbishment works on the Woodlands Site to facilitate the relocation of the existing Woodfield Primary and Secondary schools in the sum identified in the corresponding private report.**
- 2. Approves that the Council capital programme is adjusted to facilitate the recommendation set out in 1. Above.**
- 3. Delegates authority to the Director of Education and Skills and the Director of Finance to refine and manage the financial projections within the capital budget associated with the delivery of capital refurbishment works on the Woodlands site to facilitate the relocation of the existing Woodfield Primary and Secondary Schools.**

47. Question Time

Councillor O’ Boyle provided a written answer to the question set out in the Questions Booklet together with oral responses to supplementary questions put to him 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 P Seaman	Councillor C Thomas	Disability Equality Advisory Panel
2	Councillor R Simpson	Councillor P Akhtar	Reinstatement of the bus route to Blue Coat School
3	Councillor R Simpson	Councillor K Caan	Progress on the provision of the indoor bowls facility in Coundon
4	Councillor M Heaven	Councillor P Hetherington	Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council’s contracts with the City Council for elements of the refuse collection services

5	Councillor C Thomas	Councillor P Seaman	Coventry Fostering Service
6	Councillor P Male	Councillor AS Khan	Recent visit by the Russian delegation and human rights
7	Councillor T Jandu	Councillor P Hetherington	Increase in fly-tipping

48. **Statements**

There were no statements.

49. **Debate - Increase in National Insurance Contributions**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor J Mutton and seconded by Councillor K Caan:

“This Council calls upon the Government to rescind its decision to increase National Insurance Contributions for both employees and employer. These increases will adversely affect the lower paid in particular and put a tax on jobs.

The decision to implement this increase, which will be called a Health and Social Care Levy, will not reform social care, but will once again favour the wealthier members of society”.

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

50. **Debate - New Headquarters for Great British Railways**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor R Simpson and seconded by Councillor R Bailey:

“This Council supports Coventry hosting the new headquarters for Great British Railways”.

The following amendment was moved by Councillor G Duggins and seconded by Councillor J O’Boyle and, in accordance with the Constitution, accepted by Councillor R Simpson:

“This Council supports Coventry” delete the word “hosting” and insert the following: - “in submitting a bid to host”

The amended Motion to now read: -

“This Council supports Coventry in submitting a bid to host the new headquarters for Great British Railways”.

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

51. **SEND Proposal for the use of the Woodlands Site**

Further to Minute 46 above, and Minute 41 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a private report of the Director of Education and Skills, which set out commercially confidential matters relating to the next steps in the SEND proposal for the use of the Woodlands school site.

The Cabinet agreed to:

1. Note the outcome of the feasibility study report in Appendix 1 and the consultation in Appendices 4 and 5 of the report.
2. Approve the commencement of a competitive procurement process to appoint the design team and the building contractor to enable the delivery of the capital refurbishment works required on the Woodlands Site to facilitate the relocation of the existing Woodfield Primary and Secondary Schools.
3. Subject to acting within approved budgets, delegate authority to the Director of Education and Skills and the Director of Finance, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, to undertake the necessary due diligence including, but not limited to, the award of contracts to successful tenderers and entry into all necessary legal agreements.
4. Note that where the cost of delivery the relocation of the existing Woodfield Primary and Secondary schools to the Woodlands Site exceeds the approved budget limit ("the Shortfall Gap"), a further report will be presented to Cabinet and / or Council for the approval of the Shortfall Gap prior to the award of the contract to the successful building contractor.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

1. **Approves a capital budget for the delivery of the capital refurbishment works on the Woodlands Site to facilitate the relocation of the existing Woodfield Primary and Secondary schools in the sum set out in the report.**
2. **Approves that the Council capital programme is adjusted to facilitate the recommendation set out in 1. above**
3. **Delegates authority to the Director of Education and Skills and the Director of Finance to refine and manage the financial projections within the capital budget associated with the delivery of capital refurbishment works on the Woodlands site to facilitate the relocation of the existing Woodfield Primary and Secondary schools.**

(Meeting closed at 5.55 pm)