

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 12 April 2022**

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)  
Councillor AS Khan (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor R Brown  
Councillor K Caan  
Councillor P Hetherton  
Councillor J O'Boyle  
Councillor K Sandhu  
Councillor P Seaman  
Councillor D Welsh

Non-Voting Deputy  
Cabinet Members:

Councillor P Akhtar  
Councillor G Hayre  
Councillor G Lloyd

Non-Voting Opposition  
Member:

Councillor G Ridley

Other Non-Voting  
Members:

Councillor N Akhtar  
Councillor J Innes  
Councillor R Singh

Employees (by Service):

Chief Executive

M Reeves (Chief Executive)

Business, Investment  
and Culture

D Nuttall

Finance

P Jennings

Law and Governance

J Newman (Director of Law and Governance), V Castree,  
M Salmon

Streetscene and  
Regulatory Services

C Hickin, L Nagle

Others Present:

Police Inspector S Finney, West Midlands Police

Apologies:

Councillor J Clifford  
Councillor B Gittins  
Councillor R Lakha  
Councillor P Male  
Councillor M Mutton  
Councillor Thomas

## **Public Business**

### **98. Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

### **99. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

### **100. Report of the Scrutiny Autism Task and Finish Group**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance on the work and outcomes of the Scrutiny Autism Task and Finish Group and sought consideration of their recommendations. An Appendix to the report provided the Report back of the Autism Task and Finish Group to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) at their meeting on 23rd March 2022.

At the start of the Municipal Year 2021/22, the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) agreed to set up a task and finish group to look at support for autistic children and young people. This work was prompted by concerns raised regarding the wait times for assessments and diagnosis. The Task and Finish group wanted to understand the reason for the waits and what support was available during the waiting time without a diagnosis, particularly for Children and Young People.

At their meeting on 11 March 2020 the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) considered an item on the Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) Pathway and Support to Children and Young People in Coventry (their minute 33/20 referred). The Chair identified that more in-depth consideration needed to be made of some of the issues and invited Members to join a Task and Finish Group. Members of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) were invited to join the Group due to the cross over in the remit of the two Boards regarding autism.

The report sought Cabinet's consideration of the recommendations identified by the Task and Finish Group to address issues around the assessment process and support for children and young people who were referred for an autism assessment, and their families, as well as transition into adult service, inclusion and other aspects of autism and neurodiversity.

The Cabinet thanked the officers and Members who had been involved in the work of the Task and Finish Group, in particular they recognised the work undertaken by the Chairs of the Scrutiny Boards, and asked that Cabinet's thanks to all concerned be placed on record.

**RESOLVED that the Cabinet agrees the following recommendations of the Autism Task and Finish Group:**

- 1) That the Council work with partners to identify sustainable, long-term funding as there is currently only funding available for the first year of the All-Age Autism Strategy delivery plan.**
- 2) Ensure tackling health inequalities for autistic people is prioritised for delivery as part of the All-Age Autism Strategy implementation plan to improve physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing.**
- 3) Work with partners to accelerate and build on existing workstreams, to reduce the unacceptably long waiting times for diagnostic assessment.**
- 4) The Council and health partners work with schools, colleges and universities to ensure that all educational professionals (teachers, senior leaders, early career teachers, support staff) have a good understanding of the needs which may present for autistic and neurodiverse pupils and provide appropriate Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to ensure high quality provision at both whole class and individual intervention level.**
- 5) The Council strengthen data sharing, alongside all relevant partners, between organisations to enable evidence gathered through assessments to be used by other professionals as part of the autism assessment process, to assist and expedite diagnosis with the necessary data protection safeguards put in place.**
- 6) Support the Education and Childrens' Service Scrutiny Board undertaking a task and finish group during the 2022/23 municipal year to look at the in-depth challenges facing schools in providing support to children, young people and their families who are on the autism assessment pathway.**
- 7) Health partners review the referral process for diagnosis to simplify it and enable electronic submission of referral forms.**
- 8) Health partners to include schools in correspondence about appointments where schools were involved in the referral process. This will enable schools to support pupils and families through the diagnostic process.**
- 9) The Council work with partners to ensure information on referral and support pathways is accessible to parents, carers, young people and professionals.**
- 10) Community support services should be offered in the wider context of neurodiversity rather than limited to those with an autism diagnosis. Services should be titled and described to reflect that not all services require a diagnosis to access them.**

- 11) **The Council, with partners develop a holistic approach to support for families post diagnosis which includes emotional as well as clinical support and access to training.**
- 12) **To continue the Council's participation in the Employ Autism scheme, or the development of an inhouse equivalent and ensure there is appropriate resource for it to be delivered.**
- 13) **For the Council to lead by example and become an inclusive employer including for autism and neurodiversity.**
- 14) **Support SCRUCO including a future item on skills resilience pathways into employment for those with disabilities, including neurodiversity.**
- 15) **The Council works towards Coventry becoming a city which celebrates, supports and accepts autism and neurodiversity. This would include.**
  - a. **the introduction of more inclusive spaces and autism friendly environments throughout the City including in the City Centre, Parks and Open Spaces**
  - b. **safe spaces/low sensory stimulus areas to enable autistic people to decompression throughout the City.**
  - c. **public realm designs should include inclusive spaces including Autism friendly environments.**
- 16) **The Council resource and pursue digital opportunities including the development and rollout of a Neurodiversity Support App for Coventry.**
- 17) **Support Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board receiving an update in 6 months-time on progress towards the recommendations, particularly the impact of measures to reduce waiting times for diagnostic assessments with regular briefings to the Chair in-between.**

**101. Renewal of a Public Spaces Protection Order for St Michaels and Surrounding Areas**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services that sought approval to renew the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for the St. Michael's Ward and surrounding areas. Appendices to the report provided: The Draft Public Space Protection Order for St Michaels and surrounding areas; a map outlining the area covered by the PSPO; Partner Impact Statements; and St Michael's Ward Crime Statistics.

In 2019 a Public Spaces Protection Order was created for St Michael's Ward and surrounding areas. The Order was granted following public consultation that was overwhelmingly in favour of the Order being granted. The matter was also considered at the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee (their minute 68/19 referred).

The original reason for the order being sought was in response to the serious instances of public place violence witnessed in the City and criminal exploitation of young people.

In the three years of the Order's operation there had been 49 breach notices issued. Breach notices allowed further assessment to decide upon the most appropriate sanction, this may be a formal warning, a referral to other agencies regarding drug or alcohol use or it may result in a fixed penalty notice or a referral to court. Most individuals were only encountered once and as such fixed penalty notices or referrals to court were not often issued.

The Police were looking to create a system of recording each interaction with the public under this power to better assess the number of interactions as well as breaches. All encounters would be recorded on body worn cameras and as such if people had a complaint regarding the use of the powers, the recordings could be assessed.

Recently there has been a downwards trend in the seriousness of incidents and the Local Authority could point to some excellent partnership work to address matters but could not discount that some reduction was as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such it was still felt that there was justification for the renewal of the Order.

The Cabinet noted that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee had included an item on Public Space Protection Orders in place across the City in their 2022/23 Work Programme, to review data and evaluate the Orders effectiveness.

**RESOLVED that the Cabinet agrees to renew the Public Spaces Protection Order for the St Michael's Ward of the City and the surrounding areas.**

102. **Approval of Sport England Commonwealth Active Communities Funding Awarded to Coventry City Council**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Business, Investment and Culture that sought retrospective approval for acceptance of a grant of up to £624,624.00 from Sport England as part of the Commonwealth Active Communities Fund Programme.

Coventry City Council had successfully bid to Sport England for a grant of up to £624,624.00 as part of the Commonwealth Active Communities Fund programme. The Commonwealth Active Communities Fund was awarded to four West Midlands areas in total – Coventry, Solihull, Birmingham, and the Black Country – to support the creation of a wide range of opportunities to help people get active in their local spaces as part of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games legacy.

The focus of the funding for Coventry would geographically be on the whole of the city. However, the project would focus primarily on the individuals and groups that were suffering from social isolation – a particularly acute issue in the city heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic and successive lockdowns. Through the development of the successful Active Communities funding application, the aim of the project had been focused to reach those who were most inactive and those least engaged, to create opportunities and fundamental behaviour changes that would increase activity, reduce isolation and address social and health inequalities.

'Coventry Moves' was the name of the funded project. A project oversight group had been established, on behalf of Coventry City Council in partnership with Coventry Sport & Physical Activity Strategic Board, to support delivery of the project.

The funding secured would focus on three key themed areas and would further support delivery of the International Children's Games to be hosted in Coventry in August 2022. The three areas focused on: young people's participation taking place around local parks; closing a number of streets in local communities to engage with people around sport and physical activity; and an adult social care project that would develop pilot work around 'Commonwealth care homes' that aimed to increase physical activity amongst older residents.

**RESOLVED that the Cabinet retrospectively approves the acceptance of the Commonwealth Active Communities funding in the sum of £624,624.00 awarded to Coventry by Sport England.**

103. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

104. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.00 pm)