

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 17 October 2023

Present:

Members: Councillor J Birdi (Chair)

Councillor F Abbott	Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor S Agboola	Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor N Akhtar	Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor P Akhtar	Councillor P Male
Councillor M Ali	Councillor A Masih
Councillor L Bigham	Councillor K Maton
Councillor J Blundell	Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor R Brown	Councillor B Mosterman
Councillor K Caan	Councillor M Mutton
Councillor G Duggins	Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor S Gray	Councillor E M Reeves
Councillor L Harvard	Councillor G Ridley
Councillor G Hayre	Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor M Heaven	Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor P Hetherington	Councillor P Seaman
Councillor A Hopkins	Councillor B Singh
Councillor J Innes	Councillor R Singh
Councillor A Jobbar	Councillor R Thay
Councillor A Kaur	Councillor CE Thomas
Councillor S Keough	Councillor A Tucker
Councillor T Khan	Councillor D Welsh
Councillor AS Khan	
Councillor R Lakha	

Honorary Alderman: J Clifford, D Skinner

Apologies: Councillor R Bailey, J Gardiner, T Jandu, M Lapsa, C Miks, S Nazir, E Ruane and R Simpson
Honorary Alderman H. Fitzpatrick, M Hammon, T Skpper, K Taylor

Public Business

60. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 September 2023

The minutes of the Meeting held on 5 September 2023 were signed as a true record.

61. Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor

1. Events in the Middle East

The Lord Mayor referred the current events in the Middle East in which innocent Israelis, Palestinians and people from other countries, including Britain, had lost their lives. He indicated that the City Council's thoughts were with them and all those affected.

Members stood for two minute's silence as a mark of respect.

2. Service of Thanksgiving – 22nd October 2023

The Lord Mayor referred to a Service of Thanksgiving for the City of Coventry and the Office of Lord Mayor which would be held at 11 am, on Sunday 22nd October at the Ramgarhia Gurdwara, 1103 Foleshill Road, Coventry to which all Members of the City Council were invited.

3. Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade

The Lord Mayor referred to the annual Remembrance Day Service and Parade which was taking place on Sunday 12th November 2023 to which Members of the City Council had been invited.

62. **Petitions**

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

- (a) Request the Council to fix the park in CV2 1UL Butterfly Walk – 22 signatures, presented by Councillor P Seaman**
- (b) Request that the Council to take action regarding the safety and wellbeing of residents of Park Street – 11 signatures, presented by Councillor AS Khan**
- (c) Request that the City Council resurface Upper and Lower Eastern Green Lane immediately – 186 signatures, presented by Councillor G Ridley**

63. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

64. **Scrutiny Annual Report to Council 2022-23**

Further to Minute 10 of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, the City Council received a Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator regarding the Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23, which was appended. The Constitution required that Scrutiny reported annually to inform Council of its work.

RESOLVED that the City Council received and notes the Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23.

65. **Adult Social Care Annual Report 2022/23 (Local Account)**

Further to Minute 33 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Adult Services and Housing, which described the performance of Adult

Social Care and the progress made against the priorities for the year in the Adult Social Care Annual Report (also referred to as the Local Account, and which was attached as an Appendix to the report). The report also provided specific examples of operational activities to support service users and carers.

The Cabinet, at their meeting, had noted that the report had been considered by the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) at its meeting held on 13th September 2022 (their Minute 11/23 refers). A Briefing Note was appended to the report that set out the Boards comments and recommendations which the Cabinet had accepted.

Although there was not a statutory requirement to produce an annual report, it was considered good practice as it provided an opportunity to be open and transparent about the successes and challenges facing Adult Social Care and to show what was being done to improve outcomes for those that came into contact with the services.

The Local Account also looked forward to 2023/2024 and included summary details regarding key areas for development. These were improvements the service intended to make in order to improve service delivery, improve outcomes for people and support the ability to operate within the resources available. The priority was to improve care and support services for adults and to ensure a stable provider market for the City.

RESOLVED that the City Council receives and notes the Adult Social Care Annual Report 2022/23 (Local Account).

66. **Coventry Youth Justice Plan - 2023-25 Strategy**

Further to Minute 32 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services which sought endorsement of the Coventry Youth Justice Services (CYJS) – Youth Justice Plan (a copy of which was attached as an Appendix to the report), following its sign-off by its Chair, the Interim Director of Children's Services.

Youth Justice Services (known as Youth Offending Teams) were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 with the principal aim being to prevent offending behaviour by children. The Act imposed a duty on each local authority together with its statutory partners, Police, Health, and Probation, to ensure that adequate Youth Justice Services were available in their area.

The key tasks of the service were:

- Management and delivery of community sentences
- Assessing and delivery of Out of Court Disposal interventions
- Assessing and delivery of diversion 2 support to children at risk of entering the Youth Justice System.
- Management and delivery of secure estate sentences and resettlement
- Servicing the Youth Court and Crown Courts (in terms of provision of the court team, Bail & Health Assessments, provision of Pre-Sentence Reports and Stand-down Reports)
- Parenting services and management of Parenting Orders
- Victim services

The legislation also imposed a duty to complete and submit a Youth Justice Plan each year. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) provided a grant to the Service, outlined delivery expectations, and oversaw performance for youth justice services. As part of their grant the YJB had mandated a template for all youth justice plans and thus the Plan has been presented in this format.

The Plan demonstrated, in line with the Youth Justice Board (YJB) grant requirement, the continued delivery of services as set out in s38 Crime and Disorder Act 1998. CYJS had submitted the Plan in line with the mandated YJB structure. The Plan demonstrated the delivery of the Service's functions and the methods for achieving this in line with the grant requirement. The Plan presented an analysis of youth justice provision in Coventry, performance, arrangements for delivery and resourcing, and emerging risks and challenges; this analysis had enabled the formation of a new vision, aligned priorities, and a new improvement and business plan for 2023-25.

RESOLVED that the City Council endorse the Coventry Youth Justice Plan - 2023-25 Strategy.

67. West Midlands Combined Authority Devolution Deal

Further to Minute 38 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided an overview of the background to the Deeper Devolution Deal (the Deal), the main elements, the proposed implementation and the next steps.

The Deal was agreed in principle by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Mayor and Portfolio Leaders on 10 March 2023 and announced in the Chancellor's Budget on 15 March 2023.

Following the announcement, a formal ratification of the deal was required by the WMCA and its constituent Local Authorities (LAs). The WMCA had taken the decision to approve the Deal at its Board Meeting on 13 October 2023. A two thirds majority of voting Constituent Members was required for the Deal to be ratified.

The devolution of the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) to the WMCA was a public authority function, which could be dealt with under section 105B of the Local Democracy, Economic and Construction Act 2009. It would require a scheme, governance review and the consent of the LA's before the laying of the Order by Government. An in-principle agreement of the devolution of the BSOG (the Order) was part of the document and was considered at the WMCA Board on 13 October 2023.

The Order would now be considered through the constituent authorities governance, before returning to the WMCA Board later in the year for final approval.

The report provided a summary of the funding opportunities available through the Deal and their potential benefit to Coventry. A copy of the latest WMCA Devolution

Deal Thematic Summaries and WMCA Devolution Deal Implementation Plan were attached to the report as Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.

The report stated that if the City Council chose not to ratify the Deal, this could prevent Coventry and the region from accessing the additional funding and powers available. It would also undermine the relationship between the WMCA and the Government and make future cooperation on devolution or other policy topics far more difficult. This option was therefore not recommended.

The recommended approach would be for the City Council to ratify the new Devolution Deal based on an examination of all the opportunities, and the associated risks of the proposals contained within the Deal. Officers had worked hard to understand the implications of each of the themes within the Deal and ways to maximise the opportunities for the city whilst monitoring and mitigating risks as far as possible. Consideration had also been given to how the Deal could help to deliver the aims of the Once Coventry Plan. The Council would ensure that it works to get the most out of the new deal by having the right involvement from members and officers in the various WMCA groups responsible for each of the devolution themes.

Each of the key themes in the Deal and the risks and opportunities associated with them were detailed in the report.

Regarding timescales, the WMCA had approved the Devolution Deal at its Board meeting on 13 October 2023. This would now be followed with the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between themselves, Government and the 7 local authority members in November 2023 in respect of Business Rates Retention. The funding settlement itself would not begin until April 2025, but work to understand the implications of such a deal on the WMCA and its constituent authorities had already commenced. Other elements of the deal such as Commonwealth Games Legacy funding would commence immediately.

In addition, the Bus Services Operating Grant (BSOG) would require further negotiations with Government. The outcome of these negotiations would form an order, allocating the BSOG responsibilities to the Mayor. Once further negotiations with Government have taken place, all 7 constituent members of the WMCA would be asked to approve the new arrangements. These would be brought back to Cabinet at the appropriate time for debate and decision.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- 1. Approves the ratification of the West Midlands Devolution Deal as set out in the report and attached Appendices including the in-principle devolution of the management of Bus Services Operator's Grant as a Mayoral function.**
- 2. Notes the performance to date of the West Midlands 100% Business Rates Retention pilot.**
- 3. Agrees to the development of the Memorandum of Understanding with Government, regarding the offer of 10-year, 100% Business Rate**

retention for the West Midlands, in accordance with the Devolution Deal.

4. Delegates authority to officers, overseen by the Chief Executive, and following consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Members, to engage on the detailed implementation of the agreed elements of the Devolution Deal, which will include aspects that require further negotiation and future decision making.
5. Requests that further reports are received by Cabinet (and Council if appropriate) on specific issues relating to the detail of the Devolution Deal such as approval of the making of the Statutory Instruments following the receipt of a draft order for Bus Service Operator's Grant (BOSG).
6. Requests that throughout the duration of the implementation of the Devolution Deal, half yearly updates be submitted to Cabinet and Scrutiny to outline progress.

68. Question Time

Councillors D Welsh and A 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 J Blundell	Councillor R Lakha	Statement of Accounts - approval timescales
2	Councillor M Mutton	Councillor C Thomas	Disability and Equalities Advisory Panel
3	Councillor J Blundell	Councillor P Akhtar	Withdrawal of the No 19 bus service
4	Councillor G Ridley	Councillor G Duggins	Condemnation of events in the Middle East and the loss of civilian life.
5	Councillor S Agboola	Councillor G Duggins	Black History Month
6	Councillor M Heaven	Councillor P Hetherington	Parking charges in the City Centre*
7	Councillor C Thomas	Councillor R Brown	Council funding gaps
8	Councillor Ridley	Councillor R Brown	City Council investments*

* Members agreed to provide further information in relation to the question.

69. **Statements (if any)**

There were no statements.

70. **Debate - Single Status**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor J Blundell and seconded by Councillor T Sawdon:

“In view of the catastrophic mismanagement of public finances at Labour controlled Birmingham this Council notes the resolution of single status under a Conservative Administration in Coventry.”

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

71. **Debate - EPC rating for Private Rented Accommodation**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor E Reeves and seconded by Councillor S Gray:

“The Prime Minister’s decision not to increase the required EPC rating for all private rented accommodation will leave many tenants in fuel poverty. Also housing stock causes a significant part of the city’s carbon emissions.

Therefore, this council commits to looking at all possible ways to encourage and support landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their properties so that the 25% of Coventry citizens who rent privately can live in homes they can afford to heat”.

The following amendment was moved by Councillor D Welsh, seconded by Councillor J O’Boyle and, in accordance with the Constitution, accepted by Councillor E Reeves.

Delete the 2nd paragraph and replace with the following:-

This Council will continue to work with partners to look at all possible ways to encourage and support landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their properties, but this council cannot do it alone. To make a significant impact on carbon emissions and make homes affordable to heat requires investment by government to improve energy efficiency for owner occupiers, private and social renters.

The amended Motion now to read:-

“The Prime Minister’s decision not to increase the required EPC rating for all private rented accommodation will leave many tenants in fuel poverty. Also housing stock causes a significant part of the city’s carbon emissions.

This Council will continue to work with partners to look at all possible ways to encourage and support landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their properties, but this council cannot do it alone. To make a significant impact on carbon emissions and make homes affordable to heat requires investment by government to improve energy efficiency for owner occupiers, private and social renters.”

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

72. **Debate - 20 mph Zones**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor M Mutton (on behalf of Councillor S Nazir), seconded by Councillor N Akhtar and carried:

“Coventry City Council rejects the Conservatives’ plans to abolish 20mph zones and take road safety out of the hands of local government. This will make speeding worse and put the lives of children and old people at risk across Britain.”

RESOLVED that the Motion as set out above be adopted.

(Meeting closed at 6.30 pm)