

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) held
at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 21 September 2023

Present:

Members: Councillor E Ruane (Chair)
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor J Innes
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor P Male
Councillor K Maton
Councillor J McNicholas

Other Members: Councillor R Brown, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

Employees:

Finance B Hastie (Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer)),
P Jennings, T Pinks

Human Resources: S Newing (Chief People Officer), Z Bhana, G Haynes, A Hyland,

Law and Governance: M Jeffery, C Sinclair, A West

Apologies: None

Public Business

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

8. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2023 were signed as a true record.

Matter Arising: Minute 2 (Minutes - City of Culture). The Chair confirmed that he had received a response from Warwick University and would circulate it to Members of the Board.

9. Coventry City Council Apprenticeship Update

The Board considered a presentation and briefing note which provided an update on the City Council's internal Apprenticeship programme.

The Apprenticeship and Early Careers Team were responsible for managing the council's apprenticeship programme and apprenticeship levy account. The team engaged with managers and services across the Council to identify opportunities to create new apprenticeship roles (Traditional Apprentices) and to match appropriate apprenticeship standards to existing roles to upskill current staff (Employed Apprentices).

As part of this engagement, apprenticeships were mapped to career pathways to aid in areas of skills shortage and as part of workforce planning activities. Further information on apprenticeships and the difference between Traditional and Employed Apprentice were set out in appendix 1 of the report.

The Board questioned Officers and received responses on a number of matters relating to the presentation including:

- Pathways for Looked After Children
- Recruitment of Social Workers
- Officer opportunities for undertaking qualifications

Following discussion, the Board asked for further information on:

- The Levy transfer and recipients
- An overview of the residential areas of apprentices to see the spread throughout the city and beyond.
- Details of local training providers prioritised to delivery training.
- Opportunities to use the levy to help the voluntary sector

RESOLVED that the Board note the content of the briefing note and agreed to continue to support the work and the achievement of the Apprenticeship and Early Careers Team within People & culture in continuing to deliver a successful apprenticeship programme and outcomes for the Council's apprentices.

10. **Commercial Investments and Income Generation**

The Board considered a briefing note and presentation which set out the Council's approach to making commercial investment decisions, the statutory framework that the Council needs to work within and how decisions were made, including the policy basis. The briefing note examined the content of the Council's Commercial Investment Strategy including annual limits and details about the overall commercial portfolio and performance.

The 2022/23 Revenue and Capital Outturn Report was included as Appendix 2 to the briefing note and provided an understanding of the Council's current financial challenges and financial context for its overall strategy. The Strategic Energy Partner Report (scheduled for Cabinet on 29 August) was also attached at Appendix 3, providing a current example of the Council's approach to commercial investment. Further papers had been published in relation to the Council's Shareholder Committee with details of the Council's shareholdings and these had

been made available to Committee members separately and were available to view on the Council's website.

The Board questioned Officers and received responses on a number of matters relating to the presentation including:

- Mechanism for the City Council acquiring further shares in companies if it were considered prudent.

Following discussion, the Board asked for further information on:

- Details of the Council's Company Shareholdings in respect of purchase price and current value.

RESOLVED that the Board note the content of the briefing note and presentation.

(Note: Cllr McNicholas asked that it be noted that he is a Member of Birmingham International Airport Holdings Limited Board of Directors).

11. Work Programme and Outstanding Issues

In noting the Work Programme, Members requested the following amendment/addition:

- That the five topics listed for the 16 November 2023 meeting be reviewed with a view to rescheduling some to meetings with fewer items anticipated
- The inclusion of an item on assessing value for money for the City Council's existing contracts.

There were no outstanding items.

12. Any other items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.45 pm)