

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 10.00 am on Tuesday, 9 July 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor R Brown
Councillor K Caan
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor P Hetherton
Councillor D Welsh

Non-Voting Deputy
Cabinet Members: Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor S Nazir

Non-Voting Opposition
Members: Councillor P Male
Councillor G Ridley

Other Members: Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor C E Thomas

Employees
(by Service Area):

Chief Executive J Nugent (Chief Executive)

Childrens Services and
Education M Steele, R Sugars

Communications M Burrows (Strategic Lead for Policy and
Communications)

Finance and Resources B Hastie (Director of Finance and Resources), P Helm,
T Pinks

Law and Governance J Adams, D Blackburn, G Carter, L Nagle, M Salmon

Others in attendance: Chief Inspector D Amos, West Midlands Police

Apologies: Councillor F Abbott
Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor G Hayre
Councillor A S Khan (Deputy Chair)
Councillor P Seaman

Public Business

6. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

7. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

8. Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance and Resources that outlined the final revenue and capital outturn position for 2023/24 and reviewed treasury management activity and 2023/24 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 overall financial position included the following headline items:

- An overspend of £1.8m, balanced by a contribution from unearmarked reserves.
- Capital Programme expenditure of £115.3m
- A reduction in the level of available Council revenue reserves from £128m to £118m

Further detail within the overall position included:

- An overspend of £4.9m in Adults' Social Care reflecting an increased number of high-cost complex cases.
- An overspend of £4.7m within Streetscene and Regulatory Services representing a reduction in income generation in several areas such as planning applications, car parking in parks and bereavement services as well and pressures within urban forestry due to remedial works on trees. A significant proportion of this pressure was within Waste & Fleet services relating to implementation of HSE recommendations, costs of increased tonnages and increased gate fees, and deficits on planned income in both Commercial Waste and Passenger Transport.
- An overspend of £2.8m within Childrens' Services reflecting high placement costs and staffing pressures in Help & Protection (Area Teams) due to high levels of cases which required additional workers and agency staff.
- An overspend of £2.5m on Housing & Homelessness due to an increase in people seeking support and being placed in temporary accommodation (TA), combined with an increase in TA fees.
- An underspend of £1.8m in Education & Skills due to management of vacancies within Customer Services, alongside other efficiencies and the utilisation of grant income and earmarked reserves.
- An overspend of £1.4m on Business, Investment & Culture represented underachievement of sponsorship income and reduced grant from ERDF as well as holding costs for the City Centre Cultural Gateway due to slipped project implementation timescales.

- An overspend of £1.4m on Transport & Highways relates to increased costs in highways maintenance to address highways defects, as well as continuing high costs of energy for street lighting.
- The service had experienced pressures in highways maintenance due to the cost of addressing highways defects and income pressures resulting from sickness and recruitment challenges. In addition, the continuing high cost of energy had resulted in pressures in street lighting. These pressures had been partially offset by a recovery in car park income.
- A net underspend of £12.4m within central budgets, included higher dividend income from Council owned companies, interest income from loans, higher than budgeted investment income, and distribution of Business rates Levy Account Surplus.

The underlying revenue position had improved by £6.7m since Quarter 3 when an overspend of £8.5m was forecast. The majority of the improved position related to increased one-off income within Contingency and Central budgets which were set out in the report.

The prudent management of the Councils financial position throughout the Covid crisis enabled the Council to retain some resources to manage any legacy issues. £1.8m of this had been used to balance the position at the end of 2023/24. Although the Covid crisis was no longer a significant threat to the Councils service delivery and financial position, the cost-of-living crisis and high levels of inflation had had tangible impacts on demand for both Childrens, Adults and Housing services. The complexity of need, support required and sufficiency of the external market to provide for this had directly impacted the Councils financial outturn reported up to 31st March 2024 and would be an ongoing financial challenge in 2024/25.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet:

- 1) **Approves the final balanced revenue outturn position after a contribution of £1.8m from reserves.**
- 2) **Approves the resource switch of £5.9m of capital projects funded by revenue to capital receipts, to create the Financial Risk Contingency within Reserves, referenced in Section 2.2.3 of the report.**
- 3) **Approves the final capital expenditure and resourcing position (Section 2.3 and Appendix 2 of the report), incorporating expenditure of £115.3m against a final budget of £137.1m; £21.7m expenditure rescheduled into 2024/25 and £0.1m underspend.**
- 4) **Approves the outturn Prudential Indicators position in Section 2.4.4 and Appendix 3 of the report.**
- 5) **Recommends that Council approves the reserve contribution of £1.8m for the purposes described in Section 5.1 of the report.**

6) Recommends that Council approves the resource switch of £5.9m of capital projects funded by revenue to capital receipts, to create the Financial Risk Contingency within Reserves, referenced in Section 2.2.3 of the report.

9. Proposed Consultation and Amendments to the City-Wide Public Space Protection Order

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance that sought permission to consult on a new City-wide Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) as the previous Order had now expired. Appendices to the report provided the Proposed Consultation and Engagement Plan, the Timeline of the Order, the Operation Prosperity Police Document, and the Draft Equality Impact Assessment.

The new PSPO had conditions within it to address the unauthorised use of ‘off-road’ motorbikes and other specific mechanically propelled vehicles in the city. It also sought to control the drinking of alcohol in public spaces.

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 Local Authorities must carry out a statutory consultation before implementing a PSPO. The report therefor sought permission to carry out a consultation to enable the authority to gain a full understanding of members of the public and key stakeholders that would be affected by the order.

The Cabinet requested that a copy of the Regulatory Services Operational Plan, which included details of the Public Space Protection Orders in operation in the city, be circulated to them.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet:

- 1) Authorise a 4-week citywide consultation to commence on 19th July 2024 to 16th August 2024.**
- 2) Request a future report setting out the consultation responses received, and the proposed draft citywide Public Space Protection Order.**

10. Proposed Consultation for the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2024-2027

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance, that had also been considered at the meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 26th June 2024, on proposals to create a Community Safety Plan.

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were the statutory body that brought together local partners to solve shared issues around Crime and Disorder, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Drug and Alcohol misuse and Reoffending. The CSP in Coventry met as the Police and Crime Board (PCB) and was chaired by the Local Authority.

CSPs were required to develop an overarching Community Safety Partnership Plan under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The plan provided an overview of the work and priority areas that fell under the responsibility of the CSP.

The Plan was intended to focus upon those issues of most concern to residents that caused the most harm to communities and required a coordinated approach to deliver lasting change.

The Community Safety Plan would be informed by:

- the views of residents, including those who had been affected by crime and/or accessing services;
- analysis of the problem, drawing on data and information from a breadth of partners;
- evidence of “what works” in tackling crime and disorder; and
- the views of professionals and stakeholders working locally.

To help inform the Plan a public consultation would be undertaken and the information together with data from West Midlands Police would be reviewed in workshops by the sub-groups of the PCB. This would be used to develop a Community Safety Partnership Plan which identified how these priorities would be delivered.

When completed the draft Plan would be brought back to Cabinet for approval, anticipated to be submitted to 7th January 2025 meeting.

A Briefing Note was attached to the report that detailed recommendations made by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee. Having considered the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the need to create a Community Safety Partnership Plan, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1) Agreed to receive a future report setting out the responses received, and the proposed Community Safety Partnership Plan 2024-2027.
- 2) Identified the following additional recommendations for Cabinet:
 - a) That the Cabinet request officers to use all of the Council’s partners’ communication channels, including faith groups and housing providers, to ensure as wide consultation as possible.
 - b) That additional bullet points be added to Question 5 of the questionnaire (relating to main priorities for the Community Safety Partnership to focus on) identifying.
 - i) environmental ASB – e.g. fly-tipping and dog fouling, and
 - ii) off-road e-bikes

The Cabinet requested that a letter be sent to the Community Safety Partnership requesting that the speed of traffic be considered as part of the Community Safety Plan.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet, having considered the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the need to create a Community Safety Partnership Plan:

- 1) Approves the recommendations from the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.
- 2) Authorises a citywide 12-week consultation beginning 10th July to 2nd October 2024.
- 3) Requests a future report setting out the responses received, and the proposed Community Safety Partnership Plan 2024-2027.

11. **Acceptance of the Music Education Revenue and Capital Grants for the Strategic Area of Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Childrens Services and Education that sought acceptance of the Music Education Revenue and Capital Grants for the Strategic Area of Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull.

On 25 June 2022, the Department for Education and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) published a refreshed National Plan for Music Education: the power of music to change lives, setting out government's priorities until 2030 for music education from birth until they leave education". Subsequently the Music Education Hubs Programme was announced as changing from 119 Hubs to 43 larger more strategic Hubs to be in place for September 2024 managed by Arts Council England.

Coventry City Council had been successful in its application to be the Hub Lead Organisation as part of a consortium for the region of Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire. This was a partnership bid with the three current Music Hub lead organisations (Council based Music Services). The application had been successful to initially lead this consortium with a view to explore future partnership models for the consortium to ensure strategic impact for the region.

The revenue grant for academic year 2024/25, of which the Council had received a conditional offer, would be £1,684,457 to be accepted by 22nd August 2024.

The Council as the Hub Lead Organisation had additionally been awarded a capital grant to spend over the next 2-5 years on musical instruments and adaptive technology of £553,330. This was to be accepted subsequently to accepting the revenue grant after 1st September 2024.

The two grants had ringfenced funding for each Local Authority. For Coventry this was £534,408 revenue and £175,548 capital.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet:

- 1) Approves acceptance of the revenue grant for academic year 2024/25 to the sum of £1,684,457 and by way of such acceptance note Coventry City Council will become the Music Hub Lead for Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire.
- 2) Approves acceptance of the forthcoming capital grant for academic year 2024/25 to the sum of £553,330.

- 3) Approves passing of the necessary grant funds, derived from recommendations 1) and 2) above, to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council.
- 4) Approves entering into the necessary grant arrangements with Coventry City Council's delivery partners in order to deliver upon the requirements of recommendations 1) and 2) above.
- 5) Delegates Authority to the Director of Childrens Services and Education, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, to enter into such contractual arrangements to give effect to the above recommendations.

12. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

13. **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 11.15am)