

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 2.00 pm on**  
**Thursday, 31 October 2024**

Present:

Members: Councillor L Kelly (Chair)  
Councillor B Christopher (Substitute for Councillor C Thomas)  
Councillor A Hopkins (Substitute for Councillor A Jobber)  
Councillor R Lakha (Substitute for Councillor C Miki)  
Councillor J Lepoidevin  
Councillor E M Reeves  
Councillor R Singh

By Invitation: Councillor N Akhtar  
Councillor P Akhtar  
Councillor G Duggins  
Councillor S Gray  
Councillor J O'Boyle

Other Members: Councillors E Reeves

Employees (by  
Directorate):

Adults and Housing J Crawshaw, M Donovan

Law and Governance G Holmes, L Knight, A Veness

Property Services and  
Regeneration L Lowell

Regeneration and  
Economy R Palmer, B Willers

Apologies: Councillors M Ali, R Bailey, G Hayre, G Lloyd and G Ridley

## **Public Business**

### **35. Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

### **36. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September, 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

### **37. Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 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 42 below headed 'Temporary Accommodation – Lease Renewal of Caradoc Hall, Coventry' 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.

### 38. **Climate Change Strategy**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report and received a presentation on the Climate Change Strategy.

The report is also to be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and by Council at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024.

The Coventry Climate Change Strategy 2024-2030 sets out how the Council plans to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change, which is central to the delivery of the One Coventry Plan. The Strategy sets out the challenges and opportunities to creating a more sustainable city through the following five key pathways or themes:

- Adaptation and Resilience
- Route to net zero
- A circular economy
- Fairer green future
- Nature

The report provided a summary of the five pathways, which included the existing challenges and key recommendations.

Tackling the causes and consequences of climate change is a key priority for the Council as set out in the One Coventry Plan. The Strategy gives a comprehensive insight into the challenges and opportunities the Council faces collectively in tackling the causes and consequences of climate change. Whilst the challenges ahead are significant, taking positive action to address them brings about real opportunity to create a better future for the city and its residents. The Climate Change Strategy is an important step for Coventry in being clear on the Council's level of ambition, to be a leading city on the global stage, which is innovative, forward-thinking and capable of delivering meaningful change and leading the green industrial revolution. The Council needs to be bold and rise to these challenges. However, the Council can't do this alone and the success of how it responds to this will rely on city-wide support.

Climate change has many complex challenges which must be looked at holistically to deliver meaningful and lasting change.

The Council recognised the importance of this issue well before many authorities were declaring emergencies, the Council were a founding signatory of the Global Covenant of Mayors in 2008, which set a target of achieving net zero by 2050 and the Council published its first Climate Change Strategy in the same year. In 2021 the Council signed up to the Covenant of Mayors revised interim target of 55-65%

reduction in emissions from 1990 levels by 2030. The Council are committed to working towards the UK government's more recent interim target for a 68% reduction in emissions by 2030. More recently the Council has been working towards how it can support government targets to tackle the ecological emergency, whereby 30% of land in the UK should be conserved and managed for nature by 2030. Whilst Coventry recognises the importance of targets to give focus, the Council's focus is taking action and being innovative to tackle climate change.

It is important that the Council is seen to lead from the front; and is committed to reducing the direct impact the Council has on the environment and climate change, and have a role to lead and encourage city-wide action. It is for that reason that the Council helped to develop an independent Climate Change Board in 2021, where the Council in its leadership role, representing the interests of its citizens, brings together the leading stakeholders in the private, public and voluntary sectors to take action on climate change and promote sustainability.

The Board is made up of more than 25 partner agencies from the public, private and third sectors. The Board is supported by five pathway groups, focusing on each of the key areas of the Strategy, expertly chaired by professionals in those areas. The Board and pathway groups share ideas and resources to develop solutions to these difficult and complex issues affecting the city and its people and have had an important role in developing this Strategy. The Council will also continue to engage with residents and help empower community organisations to develop projects on the ground and encourage behavioural change.

The Committee noted that the Council's emissions only account for 1% of the city as a total, but the organisation is taking significant steps to decarbonise its estate and fleet and to ensure that climate change and sustainability is embedded in all policy areas, from planning to procurement. The Council has an important role in terms of co-ordinating the city's approach to tackling climate change, which includes partnership working, building support and empowering citizens to take action. Key actions in the next 12 months will include training and reviewing resources to build knowledge, capacity and awareness to help deliver against the Action Plan.

The Climate Change Action Plan sets out all of the planned activities and projects, many already in development or underway, or plans the Council aspires to deliver in response to the Climate Change Strategy, to make a real difference city wide. Whilst a large number of the actions sit with the Council, there are also initiatives that require support from partners, businesses and communities to reflect the citywide action required. The Action Plan will remain a live document and be used to monitor progress and performance to make sure that the actions being taken are delivering against goals.

It was acknowledged that there is a huge amount to do, and whilst it is important to be aspirational there is also a requirement to be practical about what can be achieved. The Council will work hard to raise finance, engage partners and work with communities and organisations across the city to help remove barriers, identify opportunities and make this happen. It must also ensure it considers the risks and impacts of activities and take collective action to deliver a just transition as part this.

The Committee sought clarification about the membership of the Climate Change Board as it was understood that a number of residents had tried to engage with the Board without success. It was confirmed that the members of the Board are all professionals in various capacity who volunteer their time and expertise in respect of climate change, with the relevant abilities, skillsets, knowledge and organisations behind them to enable ideas to become projects. There is however work ongoing outside of the Climate Change Board to engage with the community in respect of project development on the ground.

Concerns were raised regarding the number of properties within the city reported to be at risk of flooding. The Committee requested that information be circulated to the Committee Members and Members of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) who were invited to attend the meeting, identifying the flood risks within the city by electoral wards.

Whilst considering decarbonisation, reference was made to the installation of cycle routes around the city and the public misconception that the Council have funded these projects. The Committee requested that information in respect of cycle routes and how they have been funded be publicised through the Communications Team, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for City Services and the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change.

The Committee discussed the route to net zero and made particular reference to the electric vehicle charging facilities and the impact of charging points being damaged or vandalised. During the course of this discussion, the Committee requested that investigations be made into the level of vandalism that has occurred and that information be circulated to all Councillors on the process for reporting where charging facilities have been damaged or vandalised.

**RESOLVED that, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee note the report and confirm there are no comments or recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration at their meeting on 5th November 2024.**

### 39. **Temporary Accommodation - Lease Renewal of Caradoc Hall, Coventry**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Housing, which set out options to enter into a new lease for Caradoc Hall for 10 years.

The report would also be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and the Council at its meeting scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024.

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended) places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to provide Temporary Accommodation to homeless households who are eligible and have a priority need.

Nationally the number of households living in temporary accommodation has increased significantly over the last 3 years and as of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 the Government's quarterly publications show this is the highest recorded figure ever.

Coventry has also seen an increase in demand with 1,329 households living in temporary accommodation as at the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024.

The Housing and Homeless Service have implemented several different accommodation options leading to a diverse temporary accommodation portfolio including lease agreements with private providers, provision through Registered Providers and the purchasing of properties. The results being that despite increases in temporary accommodation the Council has very few families in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation in comparison to similar sized Councils. As of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 there were 1,326 households in temporary accommodation with 938 being families with dependent children. Even with these significant numbers there were no families in B&B and only 19 single people. B&B does not typically have cooking facilities and is often the most expensive temporary accommodation option alongside being the most inappropriate form of temporary accommodation, particularly for families with dependent children.

The lease of Caradoc Hall would allow the Council to secure the use of the building for 10 years. The length of the lease term reflects the current demand and includes a break clause for the Council to terminate the lease arrangement after five years.

As part of the proposed lease agreement, the managing agent will commit to a refurbishment of the 103 flats in line with a condition survey agreed with the Council, as well as continued improvements to the building such as replacement of the lifts.

Caradoc Hall is a residential building and as of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023, the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 made it a requirement in law to provide information to fire and rescue services to assist them in planning for and responding to a fire in the building. Caradoc Hall has complied with these regulations. A high-rise residential building is defined as a building containing two or more sets of domestic premises that is at least 18 metres tall or has at least seven storeys. The Housing & Homeless service has commissioned independent fire safety inspections quarterly with high levels of compliance by the provider. The building has a sprinkler system installed as part of the initial lease, smoke detectors and linked fire panel.

A corresponding private report detailing confidential financial matters was also submitted for consideration (minute 42 below refers).

Following questions from the Committee, it was clarified that Caradoc Hall is owned by a private landlord. Residents in the accommodation are required to pay Council Tax and their own utility bills. The length of stay at the accommodation varies according to the requirements of the resident. Where residents require a 2 bedroom property, the wait for suitable accommodation is approximately 12 months. For 3+ bedroom properties, the wait is longer. Caradoc Hall is primarily used to accommodate small families. The increase in the number of families requiring temporary accommodation is due to a number of factors such as friends and families no longer being able to offer support and families fleeing from domestic violence. Caradoc Hall had undergone extensive refurbishment 5 years ago, which included some of the extractors being replaced, and whilst a further refurbishment will be undertaken to return the properties to the same standard as

5 years ago, there had been limited incidents of damp or mould identified during the structural assessment. The proposed refurbishment will take place as individual flats become vacant.

**RESOLVED that, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee note the report and confirm there are no comments or recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration at their meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024.**

40. **Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2024/2025**

The Committee considered and noted their Work Programme and Outstanding Issues for 2024/25.

41. **Any other Items of 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.

42. **Temporary Accommodation - Lease Renewal of Caradoc Hall, Coventry**

Further to Minute 39 above, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a private report of the Director of Adults and Housing, which set out options to enter into a new lease for Caradoc Hall for 10 years.

During consideration of the report, the Committee requested that information be circulated to the Committee Members and the Members of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) who were invited to attend the meeting, on the total costs of the existing lease for temporary accommodation at Caradoc Hall.

**RESOLVED that, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee note the report and confirm there are no comments or recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration at their meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024.**

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

There were no other items of private business.

(Meeting closed at 4.10 pm)