

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 10 December 2024**

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)  
Councillor A S Khan (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor N Akhtar  
Councillor L Bigham  
Councillor R Brown  
Councillor K Caan  
Councillor J O'Boyle  
Councillor K Sandhu  
Councillor P Seaman  
Councillor P Hetherton

Non-Voting Deputy  
Cabinet Members:

Councillor S Agboola  
Councillor P Akhtar  
Councillor G Hayre  
Councillor S Nazir  
Councillor D Toulson

Non-Voting Opposition  
Members:

Councillor P Male  
Councillor E Reeves  
Councillor G Ridley

Other Non-Voting  
Members:

Councillor R Lakha  
Councillor C E Thomas

Employees (by Service area):

Chief Executive Julie Nugent (Chief Executive)

Adult Services and  
Housing J Crawshaw

City Services and  
Commercial A Walster (Director of City Services and Commercial),  
R Back, C Eggington, C Styles

Policy and  
Communications M Burrows (Interim Director of Policy and Communications)

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

Innovation R Sekhon

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

Apologies: Councillor F Abbott  
Councillor A Jobbar

## **Public Business**

### **41. Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

### **42. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

### **43. PFI Street Lighting LED Upgrade**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Innovation, that would also be considered at the meeting of Council on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2024, which sought approval to approve the investment of £10.28m to progress with the upgrade of the majority of the city's streetlights (29,500) to LEDs.

In 2023/24 the Authority spent £3.4m on energy for streetlights; based on 38p kwh. There was now an opportunity to reduce revenue costs by investing in energy efficient LED street lighting technology, which used approximately 50% less energy than the current lights. LEDs also had a much lower maintenance requirement. Overall, this would result in savings of over £900k based on current consumption, which would more than cover the borrowing cost as well as delivering all the other benefits. The lower energy consumption would result in a reduction of carbon emissions by 1200 tonnes per annum.

LEDs would provide resilience to changes in energy prices which could be impacted by world affairs. LED lighting would provide the City Council with the opportunity to dim the lights to as low as 30% whilst still providing the same quality of our current lighting at 50% dim. This would enable a review of the part night switch off policy and to potentially generate additional savings.

The LED upgrade also offered the opportunity to help make Coventry a 'Smart City' by incorporating smart sensor ports in 1 in 5 of the new lanterns. This would offer opportunity to easily collect environmental data (air quality, noise, or traffic flows for example) across the whole city.

A successful LED trial had been implemented in the Hillfields area which had received positive feedback from residents and Ward Councillors. All new street lighting installations were LED in line with the Street Lighting Development Specification document.

The PFI partnership had been very successful and had reduced energy and CO2 consumption by 73,599,228 kwh, 60,2898 tonnes and a mitigated saving of £14,747,435 to date. The improved efficiency of the LEDs would further reduce annual carbon emissions by 1200 tonnes, furthering the ambition to become a net zero city.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends that Council:**

- 1) Approves capital expenditure of up to £10.28m to be financed from borrowing, to fund the LED upgrade of up to 29,500 streetlights with up to 1 in 5 having smart sensor ports.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Innovation, the Director of Law and Governance, and the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for City Services, to enter into and finalise the financial and legal terms necessary to implement the LED upgrade via the appropriate mechanism contained within the PFI Streetlighting Agreement.**

**44. Pre-Budget Report 2025/26**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance and Resources, that outlined as a basis for consultation a set of new revenue budget proposals for 2025/26 to 2027/28, which represented changes to the Council's existing Budget. Consultation views were also sought on the potential level of Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept increases for 2025/26. The final Budget proposals and the Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept increases would be subject to Council approval in February 2025. Appendices to the report provided: the Pre-Budget Proposals and Financial Position; the Consultation on proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme; the Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment; and the EIA Council Tax Support Scheme.

The ambition to deliver the Council's overall future strategy continued to be the focus of the Pre-Budget proposals. The strategy was contained within the "One Coventry Plan" which set out key priorities including: improving the economic prosperity of the city and region; improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within communities; and tackling the causes and consequences of climate change. Implicit within the plan was the Council's commitment to delivering a range of core services to everyone in the city. The Council had sought stakeholder views on these priorities ahead of the pre-budget report, in order to inform the budget consultation process.

The Council's financial plans were heavily dependent on both the allocation of Government grant resources and Government decisions which dictated councils' tax-based income streams. It continued to be the case that it was difficult to anticipate the final decisions that the Government would make on these matters and as a result, a number of key elements of the Council's financial plans were subject to some uncertainty with a degree of risk that the position presented in the report could be subject to change once the details of the local government financial settlement were published. The Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2025/26 was again expected to be published in late December 2024, which continued to be a very late point in the financial planning cycle. Once received, it would provide a stronger indication of the likely position.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer set out the Government's Autumn Statement on 30th October 2024. The Statement provided a one-year Department Expenditure Limit position for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

(MHCLG). The Chancellor's statement recognised the need for additional funding in Local Government and also indicated that ahead of more holistic funding reform from 2026/27, the settlement for next year would start to reflect 'need' to a greater degree than current allocations. The Chancellor committed £1.3 billion of additional funding for Local Government nationally, of which at least £600m would be targeted towards Adult Social Care. Whilst some initial assumptions had been made of the financial benefit for Coventry to inform the report, the Council would need to assess the provisional local government finance settlement expected late December 2024 to confirm the position.

The £1.3bn allocation was contributing to a Local Government Core Spending Power (CSP) real terms increase (announced in the Autumn Statement) of 3.2% nationally, which also assumed that all Local Authorities would increase the Adult Social Care Precept by 2% and raise their Council Tax by 3% (the maximum permitted without a referendum). As a result, the report recommended that the Council should consult on the basis of increasing Council Tax on this basis, an overall combined rise of 5%.

The financial gap identified in the report required considerable service savings or additional income proposals to address it, some of which would affect services to the public. The report included proposals on which to consult, which collectively could form the basis of a balanced budget in 2025/26, albeit with financial gaps in future years. The outcome of the final Local Government Settlement would determine the extent of the options required to deliver a balanced budget. The Council was keen to avoid the need to reduce vital services and would seek to explore all possible avenues to do this, however there was currently a strong expectation that some difficult decisions would need to be included as part of the final budget proposals.

A Medium-Term Financial Strategy was intended to be presented alongside the final Budget Report in February 2025. This would include the current financial context facing the Council in relation to a continued impact of the previous high inflation environment and difficult market conditions faced within both adults and children's social care, and pressures on temporary accommodation costs to meet statutory duties in relation to preventing homelessness. It may not at the point of reporting, however, reflect the Government's stated intentions to reform Local Government finances which was expected could impact subsequent years.

The proposals in the report were made as a basis for public consultation and the results of the consultation would be reflected in the final Budget Report in February 2025 and considered as part of the final decisions recommended in that report. Further work would be undertaken to confirm all the financial assumptions included, between now and the final Budget Report in February.

An outline of the resources and the spending and savings proposals were summarised in Section 2, within Table 1, of the report and detailed on a line-by-line basis in Appendix 1 to the report. The financial proposals assumed that the Council would approve an increase in Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept by the maximum allowed.

Appendix 2 to the report contained details of proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. The report requested approval to conduct a public consultation

on the proposed Council Tax scheme. The budgetary challenges faced by the Council for 2025/26 required the Council to review all areas of discretionary expenditure and potentially the option to reduce the amount of support provided through the CTS Scheme for working age households.

The report also included an indicative outline of the Council's prospective Capital Programme for 2025/26 based on current knowledge. This would be updated in the February 2025 Budget Report, reflecting the most up to date programme information available. The draft programme was based overwhelmingly on pre-existing decisions and patterns of expenditure.

Cabinet noted that the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) would consider the revenue spending and savings proposals for 2025/26 together with the approach in relation to Council Tax, as part of the consultation process, at their meeting on 8th January 2025.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- 1) Approves as a basis of consultation: the revenue spending and savings options set out in Appendix 1 of the report and the broad Capital Programme proposals in Sections 2.8 to 2.10 of the report.**
- 2) Approves as a basis of consultation: the approach in relation to Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept in Section 1.10 of the report, including a Council Tax rise of just under 3% and an Adult Social Care Precept of 2%.**
- 3) Agrees a seven-week public consultation on the 2025/26 budget proposals set out in this report to commence on 11th December 2024 and conclude on 28th January 2025. This includes consultation with residents, partners and business.**
- 4) Approves as a basis of consultation the draft council tax support scheme based on the preferred option detailed in Appendix 2 to the report in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as substituted by the 2012 Act).**

**45. 2024/25 Second Quarter Financial Monitoring Report (to September 2024)**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance and Resources, that would also be considered at the meeting of Audit and Procurement Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025, which advised of the forecast outturn position for revenue and capital expenditure and the Council's treasury management activity as at the end of September 2024. The net revenue forecast position after management action was for spend in 2024/25 of £10.2m over budget. Whilst not a wholly comparable position, at the same point in 2023/24 there was a projected overspend of £11.5m. Appendices to the report provided Revenue Position: a Detailed Service Breakdown of Forecast Outturn Position; the Capital Programme: Analysis of Budget/Technical Changes; the Capital Programme: Analysis of Programme Acceleration/(Rescheduling); and Prudential Indicators.

The Council continued to face budget pressures within both Adults and Children's social care, Housing, and City Services. Other overspends were also being reported in Property Services and Business, Investment and Culture. These financial pressures were being caused by a combination of legacy inflation impacts, continued increases in service demand, complexity of cases and social care market conditions, income shortfalls due to reduced activity, and slippage in the delivery of some service savings.

The Council's position included a significant number of one-off actions that had been applied to reduce the overspend. Recognising that the underlying position was significantly higher, further urgent action was required to address the pressure in year and to prevent the 2025/26 position increasing to unmanageable levels.

The Council's capital spending this year was projected to be £143m and included major schemes progressing across the city. The size of the programme and the nature of the projects within it continued to be fundamental to the Council's role within the city. Although prevailing inflation rates looked to be stabilising, legacy inflationary pressures and high borrowing rates continued to affect capital projects. The assumption was that stand-alone projects that were already in-progress would be delivered as planned but that future projects that had not yet started would need to be re-evaluated to determine their deliverability within previously defined financial budgets.

The materiality of the financial pressures, both revenue and capital, had reaffirmed the imperative to maintain strict financial discipline and re-evaluate the Council's medium-term financial position. This would be a priority across all services as the Council developed its future budget plans in the coming months.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- 1) Approves the Council's second quarter revenue monitoring position.**
- 2) Approves that, senior officers work in collaboration with portfolio holders to continue to identify further cost reductions to mitigate 2024/2025 pressures.**
- 3) Approves the revised forecast capital outturn position for the year of £143m incorporating: £2.7m net increase in spending relating to approved/technical changes and £53m of net programme rescheduling of expenditure into future years.**

**46. Local Development Scheme (LDS) update**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of City Services and Commercial that sought approval of the adoption of the draft Local Development Scheme.

Further to Cabinet and Council decisions to progress with a full review of the Coventry Local Plan in November 2022, the Local Development Scheme had been updated to indicate the timescales and the ongoing process of the review. The Local Authorities Local Development Scheme should be kept up to date and made publicly available in order enable the local community and interested parties to be informed of progress.

Further to the initial stage of public consultation held in 2023, the timescales had been reviewed and an updated Local Development Scheme produced, attached at Appendix One to the report, to illustrate the progress of the Local Plan Review.

There were several variables that may lead to the timeline being extended, including the unavailability of Inspectors to convene the Examination in Public or a longer time needed to assess and integrate complex representations to the consultations. Any significant delays would be reported to Cabinet in future reports. An indicative timeline of the plan review was shown in a table in the report and included in a refreshed Local Development Scheme at Appendix One to the report.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- 1) Approves the adoption of the draft Local Development Scheme attached at Appendix 1 to the report.**
- 2) Approves that the draft Local Development Scheme attached at Appendix 1 to the report, will have effect from 11th December 2024.**

**47. Local Plan Review - Regulation 19 Stage**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of City Services and Commercial, that would also be considered at the meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and the meeting of Council on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025, which sought approval to undertake Regulation 19 stage of the Local Plan Review. Appendices to the report provided: Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Version CCC Local Plan; Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Appendices; Sustainability Appraisal; Sustainability Appraisal Appendices; Equalities and Health Impact Assessment; Consultation Statement; Policy matrix – 2017 Local Plan Policy Proposed Policy updates and changes guidance note; and Policy guidance – 2017 City Centre Area Action Plan Proposed Policy updates and changes guidance note.

On 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022 Council resolved to adopt a new Local Development Scheme (LDS) and to undertake a review of the Local Plan (their minute 84/22 referred). In July 2023 Cabinet approved the Regulation 18 'Issues and Options' consultation (minute 12/23 referred) which ran until September 2023. Approval was now sought to undertake Regulation 19 stage for a 6-week publication period.

The Local Plan review was presented to the Community and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 (their minute 9/23 referred) during the Regulation 18 stage to inform the ongoing development of the plan. Ongoing member engagement had also been undertaken through meetings of the Local Plan Advisory Group in the formulation of the draft plan for regulation 19 publication.

Approval to publish for Regulation 19 was in line with the Council's adopted timetables and was the most effective route to adopting an up-to-date Local Plan for the city and for meeting the development needs of communities in a balanced and sustainable way.

The Council received 930 separate responses from the Regulation 18 consultation which had been used to inform the development of the Regulation 19 plan, alongside a range of engagements and a specialist evidence base. The report sought authority to undertake this next required phase of plan preparation, prior to returning to Cabinet and Council for authority to submit to the Secretary of State for examination, this later request would be accompanied with a summary of responses from the Regulation 19 stage.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet requests that Council:**

- 1) Approves the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan (Regulation 19) document and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal and Equalities / Health Impact Assessment for a 6-week consultation period to begin at the earliest opportunity.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of City Services and Commercial, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to authorise any non-substantive changes to the documents prior to consultation.**

48. **Agreement and Adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-29**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adult Services and Housing, that would also be considered at the meeting of Council on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025, which sought adoption of the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-29 and the supporting Delivery Plan. Appendices to the report provided: the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy; the Delivery plan; the Consultation Report; the Equality Impact Assessment; the Coventry City Council Homelessness review 2024.

There was a statutory duty on all Local Authorities in England to publish a Homelessness and a Rough Sleeping Strategy following a review of homelessness in their area every 5 years.

Following engagement with key stakeholders and people who used the homeless service as well as using the findings from the latest homelessness review 2024, a Strategy had been developed for the period 2025 - 2029 (attached as an Appendix to the report) detailing how the City Council's responsibilities would be delivered. The results of the consultation that was undertaken were summarised in Section 3 of the report and in a further Appendix to the report.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2025 - 2029) focused on three main themes:

- Early intervention and prevention
- Targeted and crisis support
- Move on and tenancy sustainment

It was underpinned by 4 key principles:

- Partnership



- Intelligence led
- Improving life chances and health outcomes
- Maximizing opportunities.

The Strategy was supported by a Delivery Plan that would remain a live document and be monitored and delivered by the City Council and its relevant partners.

The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was considered by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) at its meeting on 5th September 2024 (their minute 8/24 referred) and resolved that the Board 1) Agreed the priorities and themes within the new strategy and 2) Supported the Draft Strategy and the development of a comprehensive Action Plan that would deliver the key priorities and themes.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet requests that Council:**

- 1) **Notes the consultation responses received to the Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025/2029 (set out in Appendix C to the report).**
- 2) **Adopts the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-29, (set out in Appendix A to the report), and the supporting Delivery Plan (set out in Appendix B to the report).**
- 3) **Delegates responsibility to the Director of Adults and Housing and Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to make variations and updates to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Delivery plan.**

49. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

50. **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: 2:30pm)