

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)**  
**held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 5 February 2025**

Present:

Members: Councillor R Singh (Chair)  
Councillor P Akhtar  
Councillor J Blundell  
Councillor T Jandu  
Councillor A Jobbar (Substitute for Councillor S Jobbar)  
Councillor T Khan  
Councillor B Singh

Other Members: Councillor J O'Boyle  
Councillor E Reeves

Employees (by Service area):

City Services and Commercial J Seddon, A Saffrey, L Lewis

Law and Governance: G Holmes, E Jones, A Veness

Others Present: M Anderson – Heatline

Apologies: Councillor F Abbott, S Jobbar and A Kaur

**Public Business**

**12. Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

**13. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

**14. Heatline District Heating Update**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a briefing note of the Director of City Services and Commercial which provided an update on the current state and efficiency of the Heatline District Heat Network system in Coventry, including its capacity usage, contribution to net zero and commercial aspects.

The board received a presentation outlining the following:

- An Introduction to Heat Networks
- Organisational Arrangements of Heatline
- Commercial Arrangements of Heatline
- Associated Energy Statistics
- Heatline's Alignment with the UK's Net Zero Transition
- Current Growth Potential of Heatline
- Future Heat Network Activity

There were frequent comparisons of Heatline with the wider context of heat networks in the UK. However, due to the lack of published detail around heat networks, these comparisons were largely qualitative and based on observations or inference from the limited information coming out from the ongoing government consultations on Heat Networks.

In considering the briefing note and a presentation by officers, the Board asked questions and received responses on matters in the following areas:

- Profitability so far, and projections for the future as profit so far had been lower than predicted and largely due to carbon credits.
- The expansion plans involved and if there were existing discussions with city centre south.
- How much student accommodation was included in expansion plans and if that could be expanded.
- That the specific number of heat networks in Coventry, as the national figure of 14,000 wasn't available at local levels.
- What had changed and what would improve under a new parent company.
- What new approaches there would be to raise revenue whilst sticking with the Council's goals and objectives.
- That the current contract runs until 2038 and at that point the assets will return to the Council.
- How much of the physical assets belonged to the council, the investment the Council had made to make Friargate viable and how much private investment had been made into the project and assets.

**RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):**

**1) Agrees the recommendations in the report.**

**2) Agrees that 'Heatline Update' be added to the Work Programme, in 12 months' time.**

**15. Development of Coventry's Local Cycling and Walking Innovation Plan**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a briefing note of the Director of City Services and Commercial, which provided an update on progress on the development of Coventry City Councils (CCC) Local Cycling and Walking Innovation Plan (LCWIP).

The LCWIP was a planning tool for local authorities to develop networks of walking and cycling routes, providing a policy framework for active travel that supports the implementation of the Coventry Transport Strategy, adopted by the Council in December 2022. National guidance exists to help local authorities write effective LCWIPs. A core focus of an LCWIP is planning networks based on travel demand. A good LCWIP will consider not only existing travel demand, but also potential travel demand – including scope for mode shift (changing travel choices) and amended travel patterns due to new developments.

The officers explained their approach, emphasising understanding limitations of the current network and where they could link up existing routes or expand old routes to create a connected network of segregated cycle and walking routes. They also emphasised this was possible because of government funding and was in line with government goals of giving green transport options to the public.

In considering the report and a presentation by officers, the Board asked questions and received responses on the matters in the following areas:

- To confirm that there would be ample consultation with the public before plans were set so people could provide their input.
- To confirm the definition of a segregated cycle route and to explain why certain legacy cycle routes do not meet that standard.
- How segregated walkways will look in practice and to explain the “hierarchy of network quality”.
- How Coventry relates in quantity and quality of cycle routes as compared to other local authorities around the country.
- How officers could emphasise the value and importance of cycle routes to the public.
- If cycle routes were good value for money and valuable to the public.
- How much these routes were used and if that will change over time
- If routes would be integrated with and intersect with the VLR tracks when that programme is expanded
- That a change in behaviour will be generational, and it will take time for attitudes and trust in the safety of cycle routes to develop.

**RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3), having reviewed the report, recommend that Cabinet:**

- 1) Agree the recommendations in the report.**
- 2) The Local Cycling and Walking Innovation Plan to come back to the Board pre-consultation during summer 25.**
- 3) That the consultation should:**
  - a. Use statistics and key facts of usage to promote with the wider public.**
  - b. Ensure schools have information on consultation to share with parents**
  - c. Use networks set up during Covid to share information about the consultation**
  - d. Include local broadcasters**
  - e. Hold a consultation event for Members**

16. **Work Programme 2024/25**

The Business, Economy, and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that detailed issues on the Board's Work Programme for meetings of the Board for 2024/25.

**RESOLVED** that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the issues on the Board's Work Programme for 2024/25 and that the WMCA Bus Franchising Item on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February will be an opportunity for Members to respond to the consultation.

17. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.00 pm)