

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 2.00 pm on**  
**Thursday, 5 June 2025**

Present:

Members:

Councillor G Lloyd (Chair)  
Councillor J McNicholas (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor A Jobbar  
Councillor L Kelly  
Councillor J Lepoidevin  
Councillor C Miki  
Councillor G Ridley  
Councillor R Singh

Non-Voting Co-opted  
Members:

Mrs S Hanson (Church of England representative)  
Mr G Vohra (Other Faith Groups representative)

Non-Voting Member (by  
invitation):

Councillor S Gray (Substitute for Councillor  
E Reeves – Green Group representative)

Other Members  
(by invitation):

Councillor P Akhtar (Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and  
Equalities)  
Councillor G Duggins (Cabinet Member for Policy and  
Leadership)  
Councillor A S Khan (Cabinet Member for Policing and  
Equalities)

Employees (by Service Area):

Children and Education  
Services

R Sugars, C Webb

Law and Governance

S Bennett, M Salmon

Apologies:

Councillor E M Reeves (Green Group representative)  
Mr D Jackson (Co-opted Member)

## **Public Business**

### **Welcome**

The Chair, Councillor G Lloyd, welcomed Councillor J McNicholas to his role as the new Deputy Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and Councillor L Kelly to her new role as Chair of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) for 2025/26.

The Committee congratulated Mrs S Hanson, Co-opted Member, on receipt of the Coventry Award of Merit for her significant contribution to education in Coventry.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

3. **Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received briefings from the Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership and the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities outlining the priorities for their portfolios for the Municipal Year 2025/26. The Committee noted a number of potential issues for consideration by them including:

- One Coventry Plan
- Job Shop
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- Modern Day Slavery
- Deaths by irresponsible cycling – new legislation

The following items were identified as potential items for the Boards indicated:

- Illegal activity relating to electric bikes and parking enforcement, including the use of digital technology - Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
- Diversity and Inclusion, and Community Inclusion - Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee notes the priorities outlined by the Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership and the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities for the Municipal Year 2025/26 and the potential issues for consideration by the Committee.**

4. **Coventry One Strategic Plan and Education Capital Programme 2024 - 2028**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Education, that would also be considered at the meeting of Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025, on the proposed Coventry One Strategic Plan for Primary, Secondary and Special Educational Needs (SEN) Education 2024-2028. The Plan was attached as an Appendix to the report.

Under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996, Coventry City Council had a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places and fair, appropriate access to education. It was the Council's role to plan, commission and organise school places in a way that raised standards, and managed supply and demand.

The Coventry One Strategic Plan set out pupil forecasts for primary and secondary schools, as well as Special Education Needs (SEND) across education planning

areas in response to rising or falling pupil cohorts across the city. It was proposed that this Strategy would be a flexible plan, able to adapt to shifting mechanisms of parental preference, unforeseen changes in supply and demand of school places, and future birth rates. To do this, the One Strategic Plan would be monitored and updated annually with presentation to the Cabinet Member whose portfolio included education, and Cabinet, alongside a wider process of constant review of School Place Planning. In addition, the procuring of school places would take place annually so as not to create an unstable number of school places.

There was commitment through a statement of intent to collaborate and work in partnership to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people in Coventry, ensure the sustainability of Coventry schools, and to enable the City Council to meet its statutory obligations. The options within the Strategic Plan had been discussed at Coventry Education Partnership meetings including headteachers and education colleagues from across the city.

The Strategy outlined within the One Strategic Plan Appendix was in line with the statutory requirement as outlined by the DfE to:

- i. Spend capital funding efficiently
- ii. Safeguard the quality of places in the system
- iii. Utilise spare capacity in the estate where it exists.

Capital allocations to meet projected shortfalls in provision were provided by the Department for Education (DFE) to all Local Authorities based on the data provided in the annual School Capacity return (SCAP). Demand for places minus the supply of places was multiplied by a cost per pupil place to inform the final allocation. This return informed the DfE of the expected change in pupil numbers over the next few years, the current capacity of schools to meet those numbers and the planned changes to that capacity. Funding was also secured via S106 contributions from housing developers in response to new housing estates. With recent financial allocations this proposed Strategy was sustainable and in keeping with the financial allocations announced.

Since the 2021/22 academic year there had been a large increase in the number of pupils moving into the city in year. The impact of this in-year movement had been that more places were required in schools than forecast, using up spare capacity and causing sufficiency pressures in some year groups. In response, a review and update of pupil forecast methodology had taken place, and additional school expansions as set out in the report. Since September 2024 the Authority had seen a decrease in the level of in-year growth, and would continue to factor a range of growth expectations to inform forecasts and sufficient supply of school places.

In response to rising pupil numbers seen since the academic year 2021/2022, bulge classes had been introduced at nine primary schools across the city, specifically in Years 1 to 5. This increase in demand had also led to expansions in secondary schools, particularly in Years 7 and 8. These measures had helped address immediate pressures on school capacity; however, further expansion would be necessary to ensure sufficient school places were available to meet future forecasted demand. Ongoing planning and funding would be essential to maintain access to quality education as the pupil population changed.

In considering the report and briefing by officers, the Committee asked questions and received responses on matters in the following areas:

- The rationale as to how and why schools were identified for the expansion programme.
- The current SEND provision for the City.
- Information in relation to “bulge” classes, including how consideration is given to oversubscribed schools when identifying locations, and when information will be available as to where those classes will be provided for the next academic year.
- The geographical distribution of places and location of new schools across the City to meet new housing developments and how housing trajectory figures are taken into account, working closely with Planning.
- The provision and funding of cross boundary places.
- Work undertaken to ensure quality is measured and delivered throughout schools in the City.
- Information regarding the use of S106 monies.
- Mental health provision in schools.
- Risks associated with expanding existing schools.
- Work undertaken in relation to attendance and behaviour, including the introduction of a new behaviour pathway in secondary schools.
- Coventry’s funding situation compared to other Local Authorities.
- The high needs deficit and the likely national impact on Local Authorities’ balance sheets of removing the current accountancy mechanism. It was noted that Coventry was in a significantly better position than many Local Authorities.
- Funding for the Woodfield School.
- How the Plan will be implemented, monitored and evaluated.
- Work undertaken with stakeholders.
- Sustainability and environmental issues and the consideration given to these when building and expanding schools.
- Compliance with statutory and DfE requirements.
- Consideration of parking provision for new and expanding schools.

The Committee noted typographical and grammatical errors contained in the report and recommended that these be corrected prior to consideration by Cabinet on 10th June 2025. The report would be updated, published and circulated to all Members of Cabinet.

A Briefing Note detailing Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee’s consideration of the report would be submitted to Cabinet for the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommends that Cabinet approves the Coventry One Strategic Plan and Education Capital Programme 2024-28.**

## **5. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2025/26**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that provided the draft Work Programme for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee for 2025-26, which was attached as an Appendix to the report and

included issues carried over from the Committee's Work Programme 2024/25 and suggested for meetings of the Board in 2025/26.

Scrutiny Work Programmes were working documents and would adapt and change over the year to react to Members' requirements.

The Committee requested that the reference in the Work Programme relating to 'Cost of Living and Poverty' be amended to the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing, Councillor K Caan.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee notes draft Work Programme attached as an Appendix to the report.**

**6. Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.45 pm)