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Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities held at 9.00 am on Monday, 28 July 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor AS Khan (Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

Law and Governance O Remi, C Boden-Hatton, D Cahalin-Heath, L Knight,
R Masih, L Stockin

Apologies: Councillors P Akhtar and J Lepoidevin

Public Business

35. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

36. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

37. Licensing Act 2003 - Review of Statement of Licensing Policy 2026 - 2031

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance, which sought approval to consult on the draft revised Statement of Licensing Policy 2026-2031 under the Licensing Act 2003. A copy of the revised Policy was appended to the report.

It was noted that the report was also to be considered by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee at its meeting scheduled for 5th August 2025.

The report indicated that, under the terms of the Licensing Act 2003, the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy (SLP) has to be renewed every five years. The current SLP came into effect on 16th March 2021 and, therefore, a review must be completed. There is also a requirement for the Council to publish and advertise the revised SLP at least 4 weeks before it comes into effect, in this instance by 16th February 2026.

The SLP will be relevant for all licensing decisions taken by the Council as the Licensing Authority over the five year period, commencing on 16th March 2026.

The general principles of the SLP remain the same and the document is centred around the Licensing Act's four licensing objectives of preventing crime and disorder; promotion of public safety; prevention of public nuisance; and protection of children from harm.

Before amending the Policy for a further five-year period, licensing authorities are required to carry out a wide consultation process. In addition to those it must consult by law, the Council has authority to include in the process any individuals or organisations it deems appropriate.

Statutory consultees include West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service, Planning, Environmental Health, Safeguarding Children Board, HM Revenue and Customs and Community Safety and Public Health.

The public consultation exercise will begin on the 12th August 2025, for an 8-week period finishing on the 7th October 2025. The consultation will include mailshots to representatives of the licensed trade, clubs and key partners; formally writing to the Chief Officers of the statutory consultees; mailshots to businesses and organisations; and wider public consultation through the City Council's website.

The report indicated that the revised SLP complies with updated guidance and regulations and has been developed with all 6 Warwickshire Licensing Authorities (Warwickshire County Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Stratford and Avon District Council and Warwick District Council), although each authority has adapted the Policy to suit the needs of their area and profile.

The key changes within the revised policy included to:

- Paragraph 8.11 – amended to include website links for drink spiking, violence against women and girls, serious youth violence and counter terrorism.
- Paragraphs 8.38 and 8.39 – added to include considerations relating to child exploitation.
- Paragraph 11.1 – amended to include best practice schemes.
- Section 16 – added to include environmental best practice in Licensed Premises.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities considered the draft revised Statement of Licensing Policy and authorised the Director of Law and Governance to carry out the consultation as detailed within the report.

38. Annual Compliance Report 2024 - Regulatory & Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance, which outlined the Council's use of the Regulation of Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), which governed the acquisition and disclosure of communications data and the use of covert surveillance by local authorities.

The report indicated that the Council used powers under RIPA to support its core functions for the purpose of prevention and detection of crime where an offence may be punishable by a custodial sentence of 6 months or more or were related to the underage sale of alcohol and tobacco. There were three processes available

to local authorities under RIPA: the acquisition of communications data; directed surveillance; and covert human intelligence sources (“CHIS”).

The Act set out the procedures that the Council must follow if it wished to use directed surveillance techniques or acquire communications data in order to support core function activities (e.g., typically those undertaken by Trading Standards and Environmental Health). The information obtained as a result of such operations can later be relied upon in court proceedings providing RIPA was complied with.

The Home Office Code for Covert Surveillance and Property Interference recommended that elected members, whilst not involved in making decisions or specific authorisations for the local authority to use its powers under Part II of the Act, should review the Council's use of the legislation and provide approval to its policies. The Council adopted this approach for the oversight of the authority's use of Parts I and II of the Act.

2019 saw the implementation of Part 3 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA). The IPA consolidated all existing powers available to law enforcement and other agencies. The legislation also ensured that the powers conveyed were fit for the fast-moving digital age and introduced the Office for Communications Data Authorisation (OCDA) which is now responsible for independently authorising all applications for communications data. This has removed the requirement for local authorities to seek judicial approval for communications data.

The Cabinet Member noted that, for the period 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024, no applications were made for either the Use of Directed Surveillance or Covert Human Intelligence sources or the Use of Acquisitions and Disclosure of Communications Data.

The Cabinet Member was advised that the report had also been considered by the Audit and Procurement Committee at their meeting on 21st July 2025. Whilst the Committee did not make any recommendations to the Cabinet Member for consideration, they had requested that consideration be given to the inclusion of information on work that had taken place across the authority through the use of other powers and that officers review the outcome of prosecution and enforcement work, for example relating to fraudulent trading activity, or the underage sale of alcohol or tobacco, to determine where this should be reported. In addition, they requested that information on the use of RIPA powers for the period January 2025 to July 2025 be circulated. It was confirmed that this request was being progressed with the Council's Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:

- 1. Notes the comments made by the Audit and Procurement Committee.**
- 2. Approves the report as a formal record of the Council's use and compliance with RIPA.**

39. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

40. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 9.35 am)