

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 26 August 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor AS Khan (Deputy Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor K Caan
Councillor P Hetherton
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor P Seaman

Non-Voting Deputy
Cabinet Members: Councillor S Agboola
Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor B Christopher
Councillor D Toulson

Non-Voting Opposition
Members: Councillor J Gardiner
Councillor S Gray (on behalf of Councillor E Reeves)
Councillor G Ridley

Other Non-Voting
Members: Councillor R Lakha
Councillor G Lloyd

Employees (by
Directorate):

Children's and Education
Services S Sen (Director), M Steele

Finance and Resources B Hastie (Director), P Helm

Law and Governance J Newman (Director), S Bennett

Planning and
Performance C Boden-Hatton (Director)

Regeneration and
Economy R Back, D Keaney, C Styles

Apologies: Councillors R Brown, L Bigham, G Hayre, P Male, C Miks,
E Reeves, K Sandhu

Public Business

16. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

17. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record, subject to the amendment of Councillor N Akhtar in the list of Cabinet Member attendees in place of Councillor P Akhtar.

There were no matters arising.

18. **One Coventry Plan Annual Performance Report (April 2024 - March 2025)**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Planning and Performance which indicated that the One Coventry approach helps to shape the way the Council works with its partners to improve the city and improve people's lives. It includes the Council's vision and priorities, new ways of working, and core areas of activity to deliver the One Coventry Plan objectives, key strategies, and approaches. A One Coventry approach puts the needs of our communities at the heart of continued vision to improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

For each objective within the One Coventry Plan, the One Coventry Plan Annual Performance Report April 2024 - March 2025 appended to the report sets out the trends, where appropriate - actions taken, and performance metrics to provide an assessment of the progress made against previous years and to benchmark against other places. The appendix also included case studies to capture impacts that are less easy to measure numerically.

One Coventry Plan 2022-2030 performance is measured against 74 metrics. 7 are unable to be reported on this year as information is not available and 1 has not been fully developed and has been recorded within the 'progress not available indicators'.

Of the 66 metrics currently available, for 5 of them it is not possible to say whether they have improved or not because there isn't a clear desirable direction of change or because there is only data for this year. In summary, for the remaining 61 indicators, 67% (41/61) of the directional metrics (excluding cannot say or not available) they have improved or stayed the same.

The report had also been considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at their meeting on 21 August, 2025 and a Briefing Note had been circulated prior to the meeting detailing their consideration of the report. All key performance indicators that were below target will be considered by Scrutiny as part of a deep dive review, which is due to report back to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 30 October 2025. The Committee had recommended that Cabinet accept the recommendations contained in the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the comments and recommendation made by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee**
- 2) Approves the performance report attached at Appendix 1 to the report.**

3) Notes the Council's performance this year.

4) Notes the approach for the mid-year progress report.

19. Local Plan Review - Submission for Examination

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy which indicated that Local Plans should be considered for review at least once every five years, as laid out in Paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework and (Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012).

As the Local Plan was adopted in December 2017, Council approved the commencement of a full review of the Local Plan on 6th December 2022 with the objective of ensuring policies are up to date, in line with changes to national policy and guidance, and that they continue to reflect local priorities. Cabinet noted that the Coventry City Area Action Plan, was adopted alongside the Local Plan, and this will be incorporated in this review. Therefore, all references to 'The Local Plan', 'The Plan' and 'Plan Review' incorporate both documents.

Each policy in the 2017 Local Plan has been considered in turn in the context of current legislation and guidance and, where appropriate, updated evidence. The Reviewed Local Plan includes some policies that are unchanged from 2017, some with varying degrees of change and, where necessary, some new policies.

Consultation has been undertaken in line with the relevant regulations and the adopted Statement of Community Involvement to ensure that individuals, communities, stakeholders, and other organisations have ample opportunity to engage through a variety of means. The established planning policy database will directly notify those registered at the launch of the consultation.

Having completed the mandatory stages of consultation in Plan making, approval was now sought to submit the reviewed Local Plan for examination with the Planning Inspectorate and delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Economy, following consultation to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to make the necessary arrangements for examination including any modifications requested to the Plan during the examination period. Further to examination and upon receipt of a report from the Planning Inspectorate that the Plan has been found to be 'sound', the Local Plan will return to Council for adoption.

The report indicated that the Regulation 19 Version of the full Local Plan has been produced further to earlier stages of consultation and engagement and officers consider should be submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination. It therefore contains the information and detail that would be found in an adopted Local Plan.

The Regulation 19 Plan is informed by an up-to-date evidence base, which has been published in full alongside the Regulation 19 consultation. In the formulation of the reviewed Plan, officers and the Local Plan Advisory Panel have considered feedback from the Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultations, alongside the relevant expert evidence.

The Local Plan Review contains the following development targets for the 2021-2041 plan period:

- 29,100 dwellings.
- 60ha employment land.

The proposed development targets are informed by the 2022 Coventry and Warwickshire HEDNA (Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment) and additional updated evidence. Development that has already been completed in the 2021-2041 period counts towards these targets and therefore new allocations proposed within the plan are for the quantities of additional development required to achieve these overall targets.

The Local Plan Review does not propose any changes in respect of Greenbelt boundaries or designations. All newly proposed development allocations are on previously developed land and therefore in line with the Local Authorities 'brownfield first' approach to identifying development land. In pursuing an approach of 'brownfield first' and protection of the City's remaining areas of Greenbelt, the Regulation 19 Version also reviews the policy areas of development density and design. This approach is in alignment with National Governments priority for higher density development within urban areas, alongside locally embedding high quality standards upon design and internal living spaces.

The City of Coventry has a tightly drawn administrative boundary and therefore development land is always in short supply. Through the allocation of brownfield development sites, the Council is able to identify land to meet the overall target of 29,100 dwellings. However, at this stage and notwithstanding a dedicated 'call for sites' being undertaken for employment land, identification of land to meet the overall employment land need has not been possible. The Council recognises the need to support the local economy and enable job creation and continues to work with our Duty to Cooperate partners to consider strategic options for meeting this need in the absence of suitable available sites within the city.

The Local Plan Advisory Panel has made clear the priority for the delivery of Social Rented housing and a suitable mix of house types to meet the needs of communities within the city. To the end, the policies proposed within the Reviewed Local Plan include the following changes:

- Reduced threshold for the provision of Affordable Housing on new development sites – any site over 10 dwellings should now provide Affordable Housing
- An increased proportion of Social Rented housing on all qualifying sites
- Adoption of Nationally Described Space Standards for all new housing developments

In respect of Climate Change, the Regulation 19 Plan includes new and revised policies seeking to reduce the negative environmental impacts of new development. These policies are proposed to surpass current Building Regulations requirements for both residential and non-residential new build requirements, and policies are included for the setting of new standards for developers to meet for on-site renewable energy generation, restrictions in the use of fossil fuels and improved thermal efficiency.

The Plan review has undertaken to develop policy to guide the highest possible quality of development throughout the city, this includes both the development of new policy standards, and also a review of the engagement of current policy in the past plan period. Where additional clarity has been identified as being required, or modifications to be responsive to market delivery this has also been incorporated into policy development.

There are several policy areas where the Council would have wished to set higher and more ambitious standards for new development to meet our wider aspirations for the city and its communities, however national planning guidance requires that the viability of development is considered when formulating local planning policy. To that end, the viability implications of the policy proposals within the Reviewed Local Plan have been fully assessed and have iteratively informed the policy detail. The Plan therefore seeks to deliver a balanced set of changes to policy that will enable development to sustainably meet the needs of the city.

The report provides information in relation to the following:

- Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework
- Technical Requirements
- Public Consultation on the Proposed Submission

RESOLVED that Cabinet endorses the submission of the draft Coventry Local Plan at Appendix 1 – 5 together with relevant associated documentation for independent examination by the Secretary of State and recommends that Council:

- 1) Approves the submission of the draft Coventry Local Plan at Appendix 1 – 5 together with relevant associated documentation for independent examination by the Secretary of State.**
- 2) Directs that submission is accompanied by a request that the Inspector appointed to carry out the examination recommends any modifications necessary to make the Coventry Local Plan sound and legally compliant in accordance with Section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).**
- 3) Delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration and Economy, following consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to take or authorise such steps as may be necessary for the independent examination of the Coventry Local Plan to be completed including but not limited to:**
 - a) Makes appropriate arrangements for submission of the Coventry Local Plan and the completion and submission of all documents relating to the Coventry Local Plan;**
 - b) Makes all necessary arrangements for examination including:**
 - the appointment of a Programme Officer;

- the undertaking and/or commissioning of other work necessary to prepare for and participate at examination;
 - proposing main and/or minor modifications to the Plan and/or modifications to the Policies Map;
 - entering into Memorandums of Understanding and Statements of Common Ground; and
 - the delegation to officers and other commissioned experts to prepare and submit evidence, representations and submissions to the examination and, where necessary, appear at any hearing sessions and represent the Council; and
- c) Implements any consequential actions relating to the examination, including undertaking any consultation that may be necessary, and publishing the recommendations and reasons of the person appointed to carry out the examination.

20. **Local Development Scheme (LDS) Update**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy which indicated that the Planning & Compulsory Planning Act 2004, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, requires each local planning authority to prepare and maintain a document setting out the programme for the preparation of planning documents. This is known as the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The LDS is a project plan for preparing planning documents, but it is not a policy document itself. It provides a starting point for the local community and stakeholders to find out what planning documents are being prepared by the Council and the timetable for when these documents will be produced. In particular, it sets out the timetable for the review and update of the Council's Local Plan and outlines the dates when there will be formal opportunities to get involved with the plan making process.

Local Plans must be considered for review at least once every five years, as laid out in Paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework:

“Policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary”

In November 2022, Cabinet and Council gave authority to progress with a full review of the Local Plan, seeking to assess if the existing suite of policies had proven effective in decision making, and if these policies aligned with the wider corporate objectives of the Local Authority. Cabinet and Council authority to progress to the Regulation 19 stage of plan making was agreed in January 2025, and the representations from this publication have now been analysed to inform the forthcoming timelines of the Local Plan Review process.

Further to analysis of the representations received from public consultation, which informs the necessary evidence base to progress to further stages of the plan

review, the Local Development Scheme has been reviewed to ensure that the timescales presented provide an accurate forecast of the forthcoming stages. There are several variables that may lead to that 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 will be reported to Cabinet in future reports.

An indicative timeline of the Plan review was detailed in the report and included in a refreshed Local Development Scheme at Appendix One to the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends that Council:

- 1) Adopts the updated draft Local Development Scheme attached at Appendix 1 of the report to take effect immediately.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration and Economy, following consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to prepare the Local Development Scheme for publication and correcting any minor errors provided that that such changes do not affect the substantive contents of the Local Development Scheme.**

21. Acceptance of the Music Hub Revenue Grant for the Strategic Area of Coventry, Warwickshire and Coventry

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children's and Education Services which indicated that in June 2022 the Departments for Education and for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport published a refreshed National Plan for Music Education: the power of music to change lives, setting out government's priorities until 2030 for music education. Subsequently the Music Hubs programme was announced as changing from 119 Hubs to 43 larger more strategic Hubs to be in place for September 2024.

Since 2012 Coventry City Council has been the lead organisation for the single Local Authority Music Hub, with independent local governance and a collection of delivery and strategic partners. The grant of approximately £530K per annum, based on a national funding formula, has been used to support both the Music Service and partners during this period.

In 2024 following consultation with partners, Coventry City Council submitted a bid to be the Hub Lead Organisation in a consortium for the region of Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire. Coventry City Council subsequently became the lead organisation for 'Heart of England Music' the Music Hub for Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire, managing the revenue and capital grants on behalf of the 3 Local Authorities.

During the 2024/25 academic year the 3 Local Authority Music Services work within the remits of an agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Arts Council England (ACE) grant conditions to deliver the Hubs programme. The MOU will be updated for 2025/26 academic year to mirror the changes to the funding formula, any Music Hub Partners commissioned delivery, and any changes required due to updated grant terms and conditions for 2025/26.

The regional funding amount will be £1,708,871 for the 2025/26 academic year with £549,373 specifically allocated for Coventry. Coventry City Council will retain a £25k management fee from the overall grant allocation for management and reporting responsibilities. This is an increase from £8K in 2024/25 following a review of expectations during the first year of the new Hub programme. The ACE grant for Music Hubs is confirmed until August 2026. The national grant is allocated via a formula based on 90% per child in LA areas and 10% based on a free school meals calculation.

Music Hubs, as part of the grant conditions, must demonstrate an ability to generate additional match funding exceeding the grant amount. This can include income from partners of the Music Hub, which is recorded by ACE but does not go through the Music Hub's accounts. This condition is met as the total Music Hub traded income already exceeds the grant allocation. Options to develop the partnership model will continue to be explored to grow the service's income, expand the reach for Children and Young People, and explore efficiencies where appropriate.

To fulfil the conditions of the grant a board of stakeholders and partners has been established to provide external governance, including, but not limited to, Early Years settings, schools (including specialist), Further Education, Higher Education establishments and industry partners. The Board oversees the setting of SMART objectives for the regional music hub, monitors performance against educational targets, as well as overseeing fundraising, income and the financial management of partners.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1) Approves acceptance of the revenue grant for academic year 2025/26 from ACE to the sum of £1,708,871 and by way of such, acceptance that Coventry City Council will continue as the Music Hub Lead for the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire region.**
- 2) Approves the allocation of the necessary grant funds, derived from (1) above, to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (£355,704) and Warwickshire County Council (£803,795), subject to the funding of other Hub member organisations as determined by the Music Hub Independent Board.**
- 3) Approves entering into the necessary grant arrangements and other required legal documentation with ACE and Coventry City Council's delivery partners to deliver upon the requirements of (1) and (2) above.**
- 4) Delegates authority to the Director of Children's and Education Services, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, to enter into such contractual arrangements to give effect to the above recommendations.**

22. **2025/26 First Quarter Financial Monitoring Report (to June 2025)**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance and Strategic Resources, which would also be considered by the Audit and Procurement Committee, and which indicated that Council approved the City Council's revenue budget of £296.7m and a Capital Programme of £171.6m in February 2025. The report was the first quarterly monitoring report for 2025/26 and advised Cabinet of the forecast outturn position for revenue and capital expenditure, recommending any action required, and reported on the Council's treasury management activity.

The current 2025/26 revenue forecast is for net expenditure to be £1.6m over budget (after management action). The reported forecast at the same point in 2024/25 was an overspend of £7.1m which reflected pressures relating primarily to social care activity and price.

The report indicated that the Council continues to face budget pressures within Adults' Social Care, with overspends also being reported in Property Services and Development, Regeneration and Economic Development and City Services. These financial pressures are being caused by a combination of continued service demand, complexity & market conditions in social care, legacy inflation impacts, and income shortfalls due largely to the economic climate.

The Council's capital spending 2025/26 is projected to be £187.6m and includes major schemes progressing across the city. The size of the programme and the nature of the projects within it continue to be fundamental to the Council's role within the city. Although prevailing inflation rates look to be stabilising, legacy inflationary pressures continue to affect capital projects. The position will continue to be monitored to ensure projects are delivered within available resources.

The report indicated that, whilst it is not unusual to experience a forecast overspend at this point, it is essential that the Council maintains strict financial discipline to operate within approved budgets. The revenue budgets and forecast positions are detailed in the report and are analysed by service area. An explanation of the major forecast variances was detailed in the report and further details provided in Appendix 1 to the report.

The report also outlined details of movement in the capital budget, the Treasury Management position and the Commercial Investment Strategy.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the Council's first quarter revenue monitoring position.**
- 2) Approves the revised forecast capital outturn position for the year of £187.6m incorporating: £16m rescheduling from 2024/25 outturn, £1.9m net increase in spending relating to approved/technical changes and £1.9m of net programme rescheduling of expenditure to future years.**

23. **Schedule 1 of the West Midlands Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017, Combined Authority Roads**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy which outlined a proposal by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to remove Schedule 1 of the West Midlands Combined Authority (Functions and Amendments) Order 2017, which prescribes a list of roads designated as Combined Authority Roads. Combined Authority Roads are also known as Key Network Roads.

The WMCA Board, at its meeting on 25th June 2025, resolved:

- 1) That WMCA Board agree to initiate a period of statutory consultation in relation to the removal of Schedule 1 to the West Midlands Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017.
- 2) That the consultation run from 23 June 2025 to 15 August 2025 for 8 weeks.
- 3) That a report be brought back to the WMCA Board on 12 September detailing the outcome of the consultation and proposed next steps.

The report indicated that the reason for this resolution is that Schedule 1 duplicates WMCA powers under Section 107ZA of Local Democracy and Construction Act 2009 (2009 Act), as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, and grants the power to Combined Authorities to designate a highway in its area as a Key Network Road (KNR), or remove that designation, with the consent of its constituent authorities and its Mayor. The explicit designation of Roads in Schedule 1 causes the WMCA two main issues.

- a) The WMCA now has the power to designate KNRs, but Schedule 1 only allows the WMCA to use its powers over the roads already specified as Combined Authority Roads.
- b) The ability to designate roads as KNRs is blocked as their designation as Combined Authority Roads would remain as provided for in the 2017 Order.

The WMCA is the only Mayoral Combined Authority where this situation is in place, and following consultation with the Department for Transport it has been agreed that the removal of Schedule 1 is the most appropriate way in which to rectify this issue.

In practical terms, this change will not impact upon the way in which the Key Network Roads in Coventry (which comprises most “A” class roads and some “B” class roads) is managed, with the City Council remaining responsible for the day-to-day management of these roads, including matters such as setting speed limits, determining parking restrictions and other traffic management regulations, and monitoring traffic conditions and taking appropriate action to address any incidents or emerging priorities.

Given the timescales and the relatively technical nature of the amendments being proposed by the WMCA, this report sought delegated authority to be granted to

the Director of Regeneration and Economy following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change in relation to the decision to submit the proposal to the Secretary of State and the subsequent decision regarding the laying of the Order.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1) Delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration and Economy, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to consent to the submission of the proposal to amend the 2017 Order to the Secretary of State, following the WMCA Board meeting on 12 September, on the basis that any WMCA powers relating to the Key Route Network within Coventry will only be applied in full agreement with the City Council.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration and Economy, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change to consent to the laying of the draft Order once it has been received from the Secretary of State.**

24. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

25. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 2.25pm)