

Council – 13 January 2026
Recommendation from Cabinet
16th December 2025

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on
Tuesday, 16 December 2025

Present:

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

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 J Gardiner
Councillor S Gray (Substitute for Councillor E Reeves)
Councillor P Male
Councillor G Ridley

Other Non-Voting
Members:

Councillor R Lakha
Councillor G Lloyd

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executive	J Nugent (Chief Executive)
City Services	M Adams (Interim Director of City Services), M OConnell
Finance and Resources	B Hastie (Director of Finance and Resources), P Helm, T Pinks
Innovation	C Knight (Director of Innovation)
Law and Governance	J Newman (Director of Law and Governance), M Salmon, C Taylor

Apologies:

Councillor G Duggins
Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor L Kelly
Councillor E Reeves
Councillor R Singh

RECOMMENDATION

Public Business

42. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

46. Coventry Very Light Rail

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Innovation, that would also be considered at the meeting of Council on 13th January 2026, on the Coventry Very Light Rail research and development project

The Coventry Very Light Rail (CVLR) demonstration in the city centre during Summer 2025 was a major success. The mission was to create a tram system that could be installed quickly and at less than half the cost of conventional tram systems: the ground-breaking track was installed in just over eight-weeks and proved that the Council were on target to achieve the target installation cost of circa £10m/km.

The purpose of the report was to seek approval for the construction of an 800m twin track City Centre Demonstrator (CCD) that would operate in a live traffic environment from Coventry Railway Station to Coventry University Technology Park (see Appendix 1 to the report for the route plan). The demonstration phase built on everything learned in the summer and would help to lay the foundations for the first commercial route by:

1. Operating the CVLR vehicle with live traffic – including the installation of an autonomous ready vehicle control system integrated with the city's traffic signal control system.
2. Providing rides for the public and stakeholders to demonstrate how the vehicle has evolved since the On Road Test (ORT) in June 2025 and to take feedback on the system.
3. Demonstrating at scale, using the learnings from the ORT, the speed of installation and affordability of the CVLR track.
4. Expediting the design and delivery process.
5. Utilising learning to inform the business case and design of Coventry's first commercial route and, more widely, to continue to stimulate national and global commercial interest.

The 800m route was intended to form part of the proposed first commercial route (subject to business case approval) running from the railway station to the West Midlands Investment Zone (Greenpower Park), with potential to extend northwards from the railway station through the city centre to connect to Pool Meadow, University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) and to a Park and Ride at Ansty Park. The 800m demonstrator section would be delivered using allocated grant funding from the City Region Sustainable Transport Funding (CRSTS) and was scheduled to be constructed by March 2027. Further funding would be sought from the Transport for City Region (TCR) fund, which replaced CRSTS from 1 April 2027.

As an added benefit, in October 2027 the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) World Congress was being staged at the NEC. This provided an excellent opportunity to showcase, to a global audience the benefits of CVLR using it to carry delegates to the National Transport Design Centre (on the Technology Park) to showcase Coventry's ground-breaking transport innovations.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends that Council approves:

- 1) The installation of the CVLR slab track and a short period of operation, of the City Centre Demonstrator (CCD) from Coventry Railway Station to Coventry University Technology Park in a live traffic environment will follow the release of the next phase of approved funding by the DfT.**
- 2) Delegated authority to the Director of Innovation, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, the Director of Finance and Resources, the Director of Regeneration and Economy, and Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to operate CVLR in a live traffic environment subject to risks being appropriately mitigated.**
- 3) Delegated authority to the Director of Innovation to secure the necessary Statutory approvals to construct CCD.**
- 4) Delegated authority to the Director of Innovation, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, the Director of Finance and Resources, the Director of Regeneration and Economy, and Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to enter into all necessary legal agreements for the CCD.**
- 5) Delegated authority to the Director of Innovation, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, the Director of Finance and Resources, Director of Regeneration and Economy and Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to agree the award of contract(s) and for the Council to enter into all necessary contracts, including but not limited to constructing and operating the CCD.**

- 6) Delegated authority to the Director of Innovation, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, the Director of Finance and Resources, the Director of Regeneration and Economy, and Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to enter into the appropriate lease agreements for associated infrastructure required to deliver a modified, enhanced CVLR system and its potential to facilitate the construction of conventional tramways to prove out the advanced slab track capabilities.**
- 7) Delegated authority to the Director of Innovation, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, the Director of Finance and Resources, the Director of Regeneration and Economy, and Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to, subject to the necessary funding being secured, initiate the business case work for a commercial route in Coventry.**