

**Agenda Item 11
Council – 24th March 2026**

**Recommendation from
Cabinet Member for
Policing and Equalities -
23rd March 2026**

**Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities held at
9.30 am on Monday, 23 March 2026**

Present:

Members: Councillor AS Khan (Cabinet Member)
 Councillor P Akhtar (Deputy Cabinet Member)
 Councillor J Lepoidevin (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

Finance and Resources: E Dewar

Law, Governance and J Newman (Director of Law, Governance and Safer
Safer Communities Communities), F Cartwright, L Knight, J Redfern, A Wright

Public Business

51. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

**55. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution - Contracts and Finance
Procedure Rules**

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities considered a report of the Director of Law, Governance and Safer Communities, that sought approval of proposed amendments to the Council’s Constitution.

The Constitutional Advisory Panel, at its meeting on 25th February 2026, considered proposed amendments to the Constitution in relation to changes to the Contract Procedure Rules, Part 3G and the Financial Procedure Rules, Part 3F.

The Council’s Constitution sets out how the Council carries out its business and makes decisions. It is a living document and is reviewed and updated from time to time to ensure that it meets changing legislative requirements and reflects changes in practise within the Council.

The proposed amendments to the Contract Procedure Rules as set out in Appendix A are to align to the introduction of the Local Government (Exclusion of Non-Commercial Considerations) (England) Order 2026.

In respect of the Contract Procedure Rules (Part 3G), the Government have introduced a new voluntary policy that permits in-scope contracting authorities such as Coventry City Council to reserve competitions for below-threshold contracts. Such reservations can be made for:

- a) Businesses based within the local area or United Kingdom; and/or
- b) Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and/or Voluntary and Community Social Enterprises (VCSEs).

Previously, authorities were prevented from reserving below-threshold contracts by reference to the location of contractors as a consequence of section 17(5)(e) of the Local Government Act 1988. To bring the policy about, legislation has been made that disapplies the restriction, but only in specific circumstances.

While the policy is voluntary, when in-scope authorities do opt to use it, they must adhere to the provisions set out in the Local Government (Exclusion of Non-Commercial Considerations) (England) Order 2026 and ensure that notice requirements are followed in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and Procurement Regulations 2024.

The option to reserve competitions for below-threshold contracts should be considered on a case-by-case basis and shall be made only where sufficient market intelligence exists in order to deliver value for money through a competitive procurement exercise, and not as a way to de facto directly award contracts.

The proposed changes to the Contract Procedure Rules can be summarised as follows:

- Inclusion of Reserving Competitions for Below-Threshold Contracts at Rule 20 of the Contract Procedure Rules (Part 3G).
- In accordance with paragraph 2.8 above and new Rule 20.5 of the CPRs, Directors - in conjunction with the Head of Legal and Procurement Services - shall ensure that a Preliminary Market Engagement Notice is published and market engagement held prior to the reservation of any below-threshold contracts in the subsequent Tender Notice.

The Constitutional Advisory Panel agreed that all of the proposed amendments, as detailed in Appendix A, should be recommended to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities for approval.

In relation to the Financial Procedure Rules (Part 3F), the report indicated that the Council periodically receives grant allocations from central Government that are paid directly into the Council's bank account. In these circumstances, there is often no requirement to sign a funding agreement and, in some cases, no discretion for the Council to reuse the funding.

Where such grants must be accepted at pace, the current constitutional arrangements do not explicitly set out a clear approval route, creating a degree of ambiguity in what is effectively an unavoidable transaction.

Appendix B of the report introduces a process within the grant income and expenditure provisions of Part 3F of the Constitution in order to address this. The amendment confirms that where:

- a) a grant allocation is received by the Council from central government,
- b) no agreement is required to be signed, and
- c) acceptance is not discretionary,

approval of the grant (irrespective of value) will be delegated to the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer), or in his/her absence, the Head of Finance.

The proposed amendment strengthens financial governance by clearly identifying the accountable decision-maker; reflects the practical reality that some grants must be accepted without delay or choice; and retains flexibility where speed is required, while ensuring Section 151 oversight. The change does not reduce transparency or accountability and sits alongside existing reporting and monitoring arrangements.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities recommends that the Council:

- 1. Approves the proposed amendments to the Contract Procedure Rules, Part 3G of the Constitution as detailed in Appendix A to the report and delegates authority to the Director of Law, Governance and Safer Communities to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution.**
- 2. Approves the proposed amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules, Part 3F of the Constitution as detailed in Appendix B to the report and delegates authority to the Director of Law, Governance and Safer Communities to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution.**