

Exercise of emergency functions

Support for a bus parade and live music event in the War Memorial Park to celebrate Coventry City Football Club winning the English Football League Championship and securing promotion to the Premier League after an absence of 25 years.

1. Part 2M of the constitution of the City Council provides for the Scheme of Functions delegated to Employees including to the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service.
2. Paragraph 3.8(a) of Part 2M of the Constitution enables the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader to make decisions required in an emergency.

Executive Summary

3. In the 84th minute of the EFL Championship match against Blackburn Rovers at Ewood Park on the 17th April 2026, and with Coventry City trailing 1–0, central defender Bobby Thomas rose salmon-like to meet a Victor Torp free kick and head an historic equaliser for the Sky Blues. It was the goal that finally secured the vital point Coventry City Football Club needed to win promotion back into the Premier League after an absence of 25 years. Less than a week later, a 5-1 home thrashing of Portsmouth would mean that the Sky Blues had also secured the league title as well.
4. With memories of that great day in 1987 when the victorious Sky Blues returned from Wembley with the FA Cup and paraded it through the streets of Coventry to an estimated 250,000 fans, the City Council has been keen to similarly mark this magnificent achievement. To that end, officers have been working with the football club to develop plans for an open-top bus parade followed by a live music event in the War Memorial Park to allow the city to celebrate an historic season for the club.

Event Details

5. Precise details about the events are still being agreed. Celebration events on this scale are logistically difficult and expensive. It has been agreed that Coventry City Football Club will be operationally responsible for the parade with support from the City Council and that the City Council will be operationally responsible for the event in War Memorial Park utilising the significant experience of organising the Godiva Festival over many years.
6. The events are being planned within the strict regulatory environment that governs such large-scale public events and in collaboration with key partners including the Police, the Fire Service, Health and Ambulance Services and across a number of key Council departments.

Urgency

7. Due to the very short timescales between the proposed event date, which is 4th May 2026, and the point at which promotion had been secured and the fact that no appropriate Cabinet Member meeting was planned now that the Council has entered the pre-election period, it is proposed that the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, makes a decision to allocated a budget towards the City Council's contribution to the event as no such resource was earmarked as part of the City Council's formal budget for 2026/27 set in February.

Financial Implications

8. The precise costs for both parade and the music event are still to be determined. It is proposed that the City Council allocates a budget of £400,000 from corporate contingencies of which £300,000 is to support the two celebration events with a further £100,00 to support additional 'dressing' in the city centre and on the parade route along with the costs of maintenance and cleaning both before and after the events.
9. Coventry City Football Club will pick up the remainder of costs for the events after taking account of ticket sales, other income and sponsorship which is being sought. It is anticipated that the contribution from the club will be of a similar amount to that being contributed by the Council for the event elements.

Equality Implications

10. The public sector equality duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a "protected characteristic" and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
11. Due to the urgency of the situation, formal assessments have not been undertaken in respect of the decision which are the subject of this note. Ticketing will be undertaken by the football club where it is anticipated that priority will be given to approximately 21,000 season ticket holders with then at least a similar number then being made available to the general public on a first-come-first-served basis. For the event in the park, the normal arrangements put in place for the Godiva Festival will be replicated including

access to rest and welfare facilities, disability viewing platforms and sign language interpretation, etc. In the circumstances, I do not consider that there are any adverse equalities impacts.

Subsidy Control Implications

12. Relevant procurement rules will apply to contractual arrangements noting that some exemptions may need to be applied due to urgency.

Human Rights Act Implications

13. It is not considered at this time that there are any breaches of the Human Rights Act arising from the decision which is the subject of this report.

Recommendation

14. In light of the above I am satisfied that the decision being taken pursuant to this emergency provision constitutes an emergency and I am making the decision that the City Council:

14.1 Approves a budget of £400,000, funded from corporate contingencies, to support the activities set out in this report.

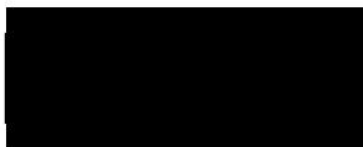
14.2 Delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Resources to negotiate and finalise the terms of the financial arrangements required to give effect to these proposals.

Conclusion

15. have consulted with the Leader of the City Council to confirm his agreement to this course of action.

16. A report will be taken to Council at the next appropriate meeting that will include information about this emergency decision.

Signed:



Chief Executive of Coventry City Council

Dated: 19th April 2026