

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) held
at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 25 March 2026

Present:

Members: Councillor A Jobbar (Chair)
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor P Male
Councillor K Maton
Councillor CE Thomas

Other Members: Councillor R Brown, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance
and Resources
Councillor L Kelly

Employees:

Children and Education: J Essex
Finance and Resources: E Dewar
Law and Governance: E Jones, C Sinclair
Procurement and Commissioning: R Amor
Apologies: Councillor J Innes

Public Business

38. Declarations of Interest

The Chair, Councillor A Jobbar, declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the matter referred to in Minute 41 (Home to School Transport). He withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

39. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2026 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

40. Update on Savings Delivery and Policy Investment Decisions in 2025-26

The Board considered a briefing note and presentation which provided an update on savings delivery and policy investment decisions in 2025/26.

The Council had identified savings of £36.8m to be delivered in 25/26 as part of budget setting in 24/25 and 25/26. Part of this had been delivered before the 25/26 period leaving a balance of £31.1m being monitored in year.

The Board noted that the Leadership Board received regular reports updating progress against both the savings and policy investments. Any variations would feature as part of the quarterly budgetary control position, so these figures did not represent additional pressures to what was already reported as part of quarterly budgetary reporting. An update of savings delivery and delivery of the policy investments was also presented at the meeting.

The Board questioned Officers and received responses on a number of matters including:

- In respect of the summary table, a question on whether the forecast represented full delivery and compared with forecasting in the previous year.
- The methodology used.
- Whether targets were unrealistic or overly ambitious and if so, the impact that would have on operating efficiently.
- Whether questions on specific areas should be directed to the relevant Scrutiny Boards.
- Comment on the difficulty of achieving savings after staff reductions, noting that staff may struggle to maintain capacity.
- The definition of 'technical savings'
- Requested that references to 'road defects' be made clearer as their understanding was that the scope also covered potholes.
- Details of the remaining projects that had not delivered savings including Shopmobility where alternative options were being explored.

In respect of the last point, Members requested that Officers provide further information on the specific issues relating to Shopmobility.

RESOLVED that the Board note the content of the briefing note and presentation.

41. Home to School Transport

As the Chair had declared a pecuniary interest in this item and left the meeting for its duration, Councillor L Kelly took the Chair for its consideration.

The Board considered a briefing note which provided an update on the progress and impact of the home to school travel assistance efficiency review, with particular reference to the financial impact of changes made during the 2025/26

municipal year to the contracting and commissioning arrangements for taxis and private hire vehicles.

The briefing note indicated that the Council had a statutory duty to provide home to school travel assistance for qualifying children of statutory school age to access education.

The Council's budget report in February 2024 had allocated a savings target against a SEND Travel Assistance Review. One of the workstreams within this was to undertake a value for money review, focussed on the procurement of taxis and the e-auction process.

An efficiency review of transport provision from September 2024 placed emphasis on the commissioning of taxi services aiming to broaden the provider base and strengthen the management of costs and contractual arrangements. Full details of commissioning processes and activity were set out in the briefing note.

The Board questioned Officers and received responses on a number of matters including:

- How PIP payments were used by families
- Suggestion that potential financial incentives for families to help transport children to school
- Impact of high taxi costs
- Cross-border complexities for SEND pupils
- The length of advance notice provided, especially for preschool transitions
- Scale of the internal fleet and whether buses were used for adult services.
- Fuel inflation and the capacity to absorb shortfalls.

In response to questions, the following information was provided and noted by the Board:

- For over-16s, a vehicle may be provided without a driver; forthcoming White Paper proposals may review funding levels but offered no clear solutions as yet.
- Emphasised that as a statutory service, the Council cannot ask children to contribute financially.
- Cross-border responsibilities differed depending on whether families choose to attend out-of-county schools.
- Specialist schools would naturally lead to more cross-border arrangements, often at lower cost due to route efficiencies.
- A framework cap example was provided: the highest cap is £8 and the lowest £2.
- Transporting carers and specialist equipment depended on individual arrangements.

RESOLVED that the Board noted the contents of the briefing note and presentation and thanked Officers for their work.

42. **Work Programme and Outstanding Issues**

The Board noted the Work Programme.

There were no outstanding issues.

43. **Any other items of Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.25 am)