

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COVENTRY

15th January 2013

PRESENT

Lord Mayor (Councillor Sawdon)

Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Crookes)

Councillor Mrs Abbott	Councillor Lakha
Councillor Akhtar	Councillor Lancaster
Councillor Ali	Councillor Mrs Lepoidevin
Councillor Andrews	Councillor Mrs Lucas
Councillor Auluck	Councillor McNicholas
Councillor Bains	Councillor Maton
Councillor Mrs Bigham	Councillor Mrs Miks
Councillor Blundell	Councillor Mulhall
Councillor Caan	Councillor J. Mutton
Councillor Chater	Councillor Mrs M. Mutton
Councillor Clifford	Councillor Noonan
Councillor Duggins	Councillor O'Boyle
Councillor Mrs Fletcher	Councillor Sandy
Councillor Foster	Councillor Sehmi
Councillor Galliers	Councillor Singh
Councillor Gannon	Councillor Skinner
Councillor Gingell	Councillor Skipper
Councillor Hammon	Councillor Mrs Sweet
Councillor Harvard	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Howells	Councillor Thay
Councillor Hetherton	Councillor Thomas
Councillor Innes	Councillor Townshend
Councillor Kelly	Councillor Walsh
Councillor Kershaw	Councillor Welsh
Councillor T. Khan	

Honorary

Alderman Present: J. Gazey
T. Webb
J. Wright

Apologies: Councillor A Khan
Councillor Ruane
Councillor Williams

Public Business

108. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2012 were signed as a true record.

109. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business indicated below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of information defined in the specified Paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the Act as they contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and that in all of the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Minute No.	Subject	Relevant Paragraphs(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
113	Capital Refinancing	3
128	Shelton Square – Investment Acquisition	3

110. Coventry Good Citizen Award – Reg Kimber

On behalf of the Council, the Lord Mayor and his Honour, Judge Griffith-Jones, Honorary Recorder, presented Mr Reg Kimber with the Coventry Good Citizen Award. His citation read:

“Reg Kimber has for many years played a key role in the Whitley Local History Group and in the wider Whitley community. He is consistently encouraging other members of the Group to pursue their interest in local history and is regularly found at fairs and open days sharing his enthusiasm for the history of the area with younger generations.

Reg has lived in Whitley for many years and is a veteran of the Armed Forces, having served in the RAF. He has devoted his retirement to working on and campaigning for a range of local issues in the Whitley area, in particular the memorial to the bomb disposal crew that were killed on Whitley Common in 1940.

For many years the story of this crew had been known in the Whitley area, but no research had been done to piece together the facts around it – so Reg turned detective and researched the background of the brave men and managed to piece together a number of stories from pieces of information that had been left behind. Whilst it was well known that the men had died on Whitley Common, the location had not been previously identified and no memorial existed to commemorate the sacrifice that was made. Reg saw it as a personal crusade to ensure this was rectified and that a fitting tribute was made to those who had lost their lives.

Reg Kimber is a modest man who never 'blows his own trumpet' and only looks for the reward of improving the lives of the people around him. He fully deserves to be recognised as a Good Citizen of Coventry.”

111. Motion Without Notice

In accordance with Paragraph 4.1.35.3 of the City Council’s Constitution, a Motion without Notice was moved by Councillor Gannon and seconded by Councillor Hetherton to re-order the Agenda so that Agenda Items 5 (Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor) and 6 (Petitions) be

moved down the agenda to be taken before item 8, and that Item 19 (Capital Refinancing) be considered, in private, after Item 7 (Declarations of Interest).

112. Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in the items indicated below. The Members withdrew from the meeting during consideration of those items.

- (a) Petitions (Minute 117 refers)
Councillor Mrs Bigham
Councillor T. Khan
Councillor Maton
Councillor Skinner

- (b) Technical Changes to Council Tax (Supplementary) (Minute 123 refers)
Councillor Mrs Bigham
Councillor T. Khan
Councillor Maton
Councillor Skinner

(NB: At this point in the proceedings, the Chief Executive withdrew from the meeting. The Director of Customer and Workforce Services represented the Chief Executive for the remainder of the meeting).

Private Business

113. Capital Refinancing

Further to Minute 116/12 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a private report of the Assistant Director for Financial Management, which contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) in respect of capital refinancing.

RESOLVED that the City Council approve the Recommendations from Cabinet.

Public Business

114. New Year Honours

The Lord Mayor congratulated Coventry Fireman Rick Stanton, based at Canley Fire Station, who had been awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours list for services to Local Government, particularly the fire and rescue service.

Members noted that the Lord Mayor had written to Mr Stanton, expressing the Council's congratulations.

115. **Death of Former Lord Mayor, Alex Boyd**

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of former Lord Mayor, Alex Boyd last month. Alex had been a Councillor for 22 years representing Holbrooks Ward before retiring in April 2000. He was Lord Mayor in 1993.

Members paid tribute to the work undertaken by Alex and noted that a letter expressing the Council's sincere condolences had been sent to his family.

116. **Death of Sarah Ferguson**

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of Sarah Ferguson. Sarah had been an employee of the City Council since 1999 and was best known to many as a long standing Trade Union representative.

Members paid tribute to the work undertaken by Sarah and noted that a letter expressing the Council's sincere condolences had been sent to her family.

117. **Petitions**

RESOLVED that the following petition be referred to the appropriate City Council body or external organisation:

- (a) Request for refusal of sale of land on Castle Street/Adelaide Street/Harnall Lane East to Whitefriars Housing Group – 39 signatures – presented by Councillor Welsh.**

(Note: Councillors Mrs Bigham, T. Khan, Maton and Skinner withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item).

118. **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

Further to Minute 84/12 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Finance and Legal Services presenting a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2013-2016 for adoption by the City Council. The previous strategy was approved in October 2011. The Strategy underpinned the medium term policy and financial planning process that was fundamental to setting our revenue and capital budgets.

The context in which the City Council developed its MTFS continued to be one of unprecedented financial pressures. The recent recession and the sovereign debt crises that developed out of the 2008 banking crisis meant that economic growth was forecast to be subdued for the foreseeable future. Significant reductions in spending levels would be required up to 2020. In practice, the process of reducing spend has only just started. Although the 2010 government spending review covers the period to 2014/15, the spending totals for 2013/14 onwards would almost certainly be revised downwards.

In addition, the last year had seen a review of the entire Local Government Finance system, with the localisation of 50% of business rates being the headline change. This created significant uncertainty, both in forecasting the level of resources that will be available, but also at a policy level.

Whilst resources fall, the demand for services increases, in particular due to demographic changes, with a greater number of both the very young and older people.

The “perfect storm” of reducing resources, low economic growth, increased demand and government reform makes it crucial that local authorities consider their role and how they need to radically reshape their services, in order to protect the most vulnerable within an environment of scarce resources. Significant national developments impacting on local authorities were detailed in the report.

The City Council’s starting financial position prior to the 2013/14 budget setting as detailed in the report showed a major funding gap increasing to nearly £60m in 2015/16.

The City Councils strategic approach to the demands that it faces included:

- The need to radically reshape services and make significant savings through the extension of the Council’s abc Transformational Review Programme. The emphasis of abc (A Bolder Coventry) would move towards asking fundamental questions about what things the Council needs to consider stopping doing or doing in partnership with others, in particular in high spend areas. Central to this will be the need to actively manage the demand for services.
- The drive for economic growth, working with partner organisations to achieve this. The maximisation of capital investment either by the City Council, funded from borrowing or capital receipts, or via local partners will be fundamental to facilitating growth.
- The development of a City Deal bid for the sub region, as a way of unlocking major projects and initiatives that would stimulate growth;

RESOLVED that, after due consideration of the options and proposals contained in the report and matters referred to at the meeting, the Council approve the Strategy as the basis of its medium term financial planning process.

119. Sexual Entertainment Venues Policy – Consultation Results

Further to Minute 100/12 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Community Services, which set out the results of a city-wide consultation in respect of a nil Sexual Entertainment Venues Policy and proposed a final Policy for adoption.

On 16th November 2011, the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) considered the outcome of consultation on the Council's draft Sexual Entertainment Venue Policy and approved an 'Interim Policy' for a maximum period of 12 months. The Interim Policy contained a guidance upper limit on the number of Sexual Entertainment Venue which it considered appropriate within the Council' administrative area. For the City Centre (defined as within the ring-road), it was proposed that up to a maximum of two Sexual Entertainment Venues be permitted and for the outer City (determined as the remainder of the City outside the City Centre), it was proposed that there be no Sexual Entertainment Venues.

On 14th August 2012, Cabinet approved the extension of this Interim Policy to 31st

March 2013 and a public consultation on a nil policy as a preferred option (Minute 29/12 refers). A twelve week period of consultation therefore took place from 20th August to 11th November 2012.

504 survey responses were received along with a further 13 responses in the form of emails and letters to the Licensing Team. Findings from the consultation were reviewed and categorised for the purposes of analysis. In summary, 53.3% of respondents strongly agreed that Coventry should have a nil policy, 29.8% felt strongly felt that a nil policy was not appropriate and would like to see some provision in the City, and the remaining did not have a strong opinion either way. Full details of the responses received were provided within the report submitted.

As a result of the consultation, it was proposed that a nil policy be established for the City. It was acknowledged that there was an established Sexual Entertainment Venue, which had traded within the City for a long period of time without significant concern and, accordingly, the nil policy would not apply to that venue. In addition, any further application from this existing venue would be judged on its own merits and without reference to the nil policy.

The Streets and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) had considered the report at their meeting on 7th December 2012, and a briefing note detailing their recommendations was appended to the report. In particular, the Board recommended that training should be given to Licensing and Regulatory Committee members on dealing with Sexual Entertainment Venue applications, which should include guidance on the proper application of the nil policy and the correct approach that should be taken to consider any exemptions to that Policy, including the need for giving sound reason for any decision. This recommendation had been supported by the Cabinet.

RESOLVED that, having considered the outcome of the public consultation and the Recommendation from the Streets and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) the City Council approve the following:

- (a) Having regard to the responses to the consultation and other relevant factors, the Interim Policy be confirmed as the final statement of policy going forward subject to Paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3 being replaced with:**
 - i) "The Council has conducted a widespread public consultation on a proposed nil policy for the City. The majority of respondents agreed that there is no locality in Coventry of which it can be said that Sexual Entertainment Venues are appropriate. These considerations among others set out in the policy, have let the Council to the clear opinion that there are no localities in Coventry in which it is appropriate to license a Sexual Entertainment Venue. This does not prevent individuals from applying for a Sexual Entertainment Venue Licence and each application being considered on its merits by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee.**
 - ii) However the Council recognises that there is an established Sexual Entertainment Venue which has traded in the City for a long period of time without significant concern. Accordingly, the nil policy will not apply to the said Sexual Entertainment Venue.**

Rather, any application in respect of the said Sexual Entertainment Venue will be judged on its own merits and without reference to the nil policy.

- (a) That training should be given to Licensing and Regulatory Committee members on dealing with Sexual Entertainment Venue applications, which should include guidance on the proper application of the nil policy and the correct approach that should be taken to consider any exemptions to that Policy, including the need for giving sound reason for any decision.**

120. Coventry Tenancy Strategy 2013-18

Further to Minute 101/12 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Community Services, which sought approval of the Tenancy Strategy 2013-18.

The Localism Act 2011 created a statutory requirement for local authorities to develop a Tenancy Strategy by 15th January 2013, setting out the Council's approach to tenancies in light of recent changes to social housing introduced by the Government. Changes have been made to the types of tenancies that Registered Providers of social housing, usually Housing Associations can offer, the rents they can charge and the way that the Council can meet its duties towards homeless households. The report provided detail of the changes made, particularly in respect of fixed term tenancies, affordable rent and homelessness duties.

In their Strategy, local authorities must set out the matters to which Registered Providers were to 'have regard' when developing their own Tenancy Policies. There was no requirement for Providers to 'comply' with the Council's Tenancy Strategy.

Public consultation on the options for the Tenancy Strategy was carried out for a period of eight weeks. 44 responses were received to the consultation, which included 11 responses where respondents identified themselves as representing an organisation or group. The report outlined in detail the responses to the consultation and, in summary indicated that 74% of respondents were of the view that the Council should support the use of fixed term tenancies and 72% supported the use of the private rented sector to discharge the main homelessness duty, without requiring the consent of the applicant. In addition, respondents identified several factors which should be considered when setting the level of affordable rent and were of the view that types of properties which should not be let at affordable rents should include supported/sheltered properties, large family homes, and specially adapted properties.

Following the consultation, a Tenancy Strategy for Coventry had been developed and was appended to the report submitted.

RESOLVED that the City Council approve the Coventry Tenancy Strategy 2013-18 attached as Appendix 1 of the report submitted.

121. Caludon Castle School – Proposed Academy Conversion

Further to Minute 102/12 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Children, Learning and Young People, which set out the position agreed with Caludon Castle School in relation to the treatment of risks and liabilities under the PFI

Project Agreement following conversion to an Academy and sought approval to the legal agreements necessary for the conversion to take place.

In December 2004, the Council entered a PFI contract to design, build and operate a new Caludon Castle Secondary School. The contract was awarded to Coventry Education Partnership (CEP). The new school opened in September 2006 and provided places for 1,500 students aged 11-18+ and also housed the Wyken Community Library. Day to day facilities management was provided by Integral UK Ltd and, outside of school hours, extended services were managed by Active Leisure Management (ALM). Facilities available to the local community as part of the floodlit tennis courts, sports hall, dance studio and a large theatre style main hall.

The PFI Contract and Governing Body Agreement, by which the school agreed to financially contribute towards the annual payments, were written assuming that the school would continue to be part of the local authority.

In the summer term 2010, the school was invited to convert to an Academy status by the Secretary of State for Education, because they were rated by OFSTED as an 'outstanding' school. Between June and December 2010, the benefits of Academy status were discussed at full Governors meetings and, at their meeting on the 2nd February 2011, the Governing Body formally resolved to apply for Academy status. Following consultation meetings with parents, the Secretary of State issued an Academy Order on 30th March 2011 which would enable the school to convert to an Academy on an agreed date.

The Local Authority was expected to co-operate with schools seeking to convert and, in addition to the formal agreements, the authority would effectively at its own expense have to agree closure of accounts and financial transfers, and provision of HR support and information (including staff transfer, TUPE and pension data).

The Cabinet noted that the recently completed Wyken Extended Learning Centre built on the Caludon Castle School site did not constitute part of the existing PFI contractual arrangements or conversion proposal and therefore would remain unaffected. The area to the south of the River Sowe, which formerly constituted part of the school playing fields also remained under the control of the City Council and was unaffected.

Under Schedule 1 of The Academies Act 2010 therefore, the Authority was required to grant to the Academy a 125 year lease at a peppercorn rental for land wholly or mainly used by the school in the preceding 8 years. Failure to agree a lease for the playing fields may result in the Secretary of State using a discretionary power under Schedule 1 of the 2010 Act to step in and make a transfer scheme. The Authority was expected by the DfE to agree an Asset Transfer Agreement with the Academy. In the event that the conversion proceeded without the agreement being in place the Council may be exposed to potential liabilities in respect of assets and contracts post-conversion which would have been assumed by the Academy under the model agreement prepared by the DfE.

In addition, given that Caludon Castle School was funded under the Private Finance Initiative, the Authority would also need to enter into a School Agreement. This was, in effect, the new Governing Body Agreement covering the Academy contribution to the Unitary charge payment that the Authority pays to CEP. In the event that the Authority did not enter into a School Agreement with the Academy the worst case scenario for the Local Authority was that the DfE allowed the conversion to take place, the current Governing Body Agreement ceased and the Council would lose the school contribution which would

leave it with a significant affordability gap on the scheme. There was no national precedent for this and the official DfE line was that they would prefer the City Council and school to resolve issues locally. It was unclear as to when/if the DfE would be likely to 'step in' and force a resolution. A number of other legal Agreements would also need to be agreed as part of the conversion and these were detailed within the report.

Negotiations had taken place with the school over the treatment of risks post conversion and the final agreed position was set out within the report submitted. In summary, whilst the Council had looked to ensure that as much risk as possible would be the responsibility of the School, there were some risks that the school were unable to accept and would remain with the Council, in particular indexation.

Through the negotiations, the school had also agreed to continue its work in supporting educational improvement across the City and a Memorandum of Understanding had been prepared which was to be included within the School Agreement. It was estimated that the Council could benefit from the Academy and its expected Teaching School Status to the value of £105k per annum.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- 1) Agree to enter into the following legal agreements in respect of the proposed Academy conversion of Caludon Castle School, as set out in Appendices 3 to 8 of the report submitted:**
 - **125 year Lease Agreement at a peppercorn rental;**
 - **Asset Transfer Agreement**
 - **School Agreement**
 - **Principal Agreement**
 - **The Deed of Amendment for PFI Project Agreement**
- 2) Authorise the authorised signatory within Finance and Legal Services to issue the Certificate under the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 to confirm the Council's power to enter into the Deed of Amendment to the PFI Project Agreement and grant an indemnity from the Council to the authorised signatory against any claim arising from signature of the certificate.**
- 3) Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources), Cabinet Member (Education), Director of Children, Learning and Young People and Director of Finance and Legal Services to agree any minor amendments to the documents in 1) above arising from further consideration by Coventry Education Partnership, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Department for Education and Caludon Castle School.**

122. Approval of Community Support Grants Policy

Further to Minute 104/12 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Finance and Legal Services, which sought approval of a Community Support Grants Policy.

The Government set out reform plans for the Social Fund in December 2010 in the

White Paper "Universal Credit: Welfare that Works". The changes would result in abolition of the current system of discretionary payments. The Government proposed that there would be a combination of new locally based provision that would replace Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for general living expenses and a new nationally administered advance of benefit facility that would replace alignment Crisis Loans and Budgeting Loans. The locally based service would be devolved to Local Authorities in England and to devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, and would come into effect from 1st April 2013.

The Social Fund was established under the Social Security Act 1986 as part of a wider range of reforms to the social security system. It was currently administered by Jobcentre Plus, providing interest free loans, grants and payments through both a regulated scheme and a cash limited discretionary scheme. Crisis Loans were interest free loans available to anyone (whether on benefit or not) who could not meet their immediate short-term needs in an emergency or as a consequence of a disaster. Repayments were made directly from benefit where possible although separate arrangements were made for people not on benefits.

In 2011/12 there were 15,140 Crisis Loans awarded in Coventry, at a cost of £939,300. The average award was £62 and were granted for one of four reasons; items or services; rent in advance, general living expenses; and alignment payments to cover living expenses up to the first payment of benefit or wages. The Cabinet noted that it was the general living expenses element that was being localised and this equated to 11,240 applications, 8,390 awards and a total spend of £446,400. .

The report indicated that from April 2013 Crisis Loan Alignment Payments were to be replaced by a new national scheme and Budgeting Loans would be replaced by Budgeting Advances. Both of these schemes would be administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Community Care Grants were non-repayable grants awarded for a range of expenses including household equipment. They were intended to support vulnerable people to return or remain in the community or to ease exceptional pressure on families. Eligibility was conditional upon receipt or imminent receipt of an income related benefit. In 2011/12, 1,600 Community Care Grants were awarded within the City at a cost of £813,300, with the average award being £500.

From April 2013 the Council would provide Crisis Grants to support those in crisis situations. Support Grants would be provided for those in receipt of certain benefits who require financial support in order to meet exceptional costs which would support the applicant to live more independently and/or to prevent unnecessary intervention from social services.

The Council has significant flexibility in designing a local policy of discretionary assistance and this presented an opportunity to rationalise existing funding streams and establish a single corporate approach to the assessment of clients needs. There was also the opportunity to explore collaborative working arrangements with partners in the third sector.

The creation of the Council's local policy took account of the need to have a functional provision in place from 1st April 2013 which had the resilience to meet expected demand. The Council could then focus more confidently on years two and beyond to

establish a more sophisticated delivery model which fully utilised collaborative working.

Although there was no statutory duty for local authorities to make any provision, given the demand levels for financial assistance, it would be irresponsible not to provide some form of provision. Having considered the reasons cited by the DWP for changing exiting provision, it was not considered appropriate to replicate the existing DWP system. It was therefore proposed that funding be used to support vulnerable residents by establishing a local Community Support Grants Scheme delivered within the Council's Benefit Service. The scheme would offer two forms of support; Crisis Grants and Support Grants. These would be based on customer need, avoiding cash where at all possible. Non-cash alternatives for goods or services would be provided in order to prevent abuse or misuse of the system and to ensure that awards were spent in the way that they were intended. Applicants would be residents of Coventry to prevent people claiming fraudulently across the country, although consideration would be given to those fleeing domestic violence or resettling to the City. During the first year, the scheme would be constantly evaluated in order to form a longer term model that could be implemented from the second year.

The report had also been considered by the Health, Social Care and Welfare Reform Scrutiny Board (5), at their meeting on 12th December 2012, and a briefing note detailing their comments was appended to the report submitted. In particular, the Scrutiny Board requested that the Cabinet note that the Policy should be kept under review following its implementation and that the Scrutiny Board's Welfare Reform Sub-Group would continue to work with employees and other key stakeholders around the wider implications of the Welfare Reform changes to the City and the local response to them. The Cabinet welcomed and concurred with the comments made by the Scrutiny Board.

RESOLVED that the City Council note the consultation responses, Equality and Consultation Analysis and other information in this report; approve the proposed Community Support Grant Scheme Policy as set out in Appendix A of the report; and delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Legal Services to make final detailed changes to the Scheme and to implement the scheme from 1 April 2013.

123. Technical Changes to Council Tax (Supplementary)

Further to Minute 105/12 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Finance and Legal Services, which sought approval to implement technical changes to Council Tax for second homes and empty properties from April 2013.

The Local Government Finance Bill 2012 received Royal Assent on 31st October 2012 and made provision for a number of technical changes to Council Tax to take effect from 1st April 2013.

On 10th July 2012, whilst the Bill was still in draft form, the Cabinet had approved a number of recommendations in respect of these technical changes, including the application of an immediate 100 per cent council tax charge for unfurnished empty properties (Minute 13/12 refers). This change was projected to increase Council revenue by up to £1.5 million per annum.

As the period between lettings is frequently short, applying a full charge immediately would generate additional council tax bills, often for relatively small amounts,

which would increase the cost of collection and potentially impact on collection rates. To address these issues the Government has confirmed that Billing Authorities would have complete discretion over the level of discount to apply to empty homes and the period for which the discount should apply.

It was proposed that a 100 per cent discount for a period of up to two weeks for empty properties to allow landlords a short period to arrange new tenancies and reduce administration costs to the Council. This would reduce the projected additional revenue to the Council by approximately £120,000.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- 1) Approve the implementation of technical changes to Council Tax for second homes and empty properties from April 2013, as approved by Cabinet on 10th July 2012.**
- 2) Approve the adoption of a 100 per cent discount for a period of up to two weeks prior to the levy of a full Council Tax charge on unfurnished empty properties.**

(Note: Councillors Mrs Bigham, T. Khan, Maton and Skinner withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item).

124. Shelton Square – Investment Acquisition

Further to Minute 107/12 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of City Services and Development, which sought approval for the acquisition of property at Shelton Square and the City Arcade.

A corresponding private report detailing financially confidential aspects of the proposals was also submitted to the meeting (Minute 128 below refers).

In 2009 and 2010 Cabinet agreed that the location for future retail development in the city centre would be focused on the City Centre South area culminating in an outline planning consent for a development being obtained in 2012. An opportunity had now been presented to the Council to make a strategic property acquisition in this area.

The seven adjoining retail investment properties predominantly front onto the southern side of Shelton Square, with two of the retail units having frontages onto City Arcade. The City Centre South outline planning consent shows the retail units are located within the area identified for a future anchor store and were therefore a key site required in the current scheme.

The properties were being sold by a liquidator on behalf of a property company in administration and a quick decision regarding the purchase was required if the Council wished to secure them. The Cabinet noted that former directors of the property company in liquidation were also in negotiations with the liquidator with a view to buying back the asset.

The retail investment properties comprised ground floor sales area with first floor ancillary storage. Betfred bookmakers occupied two adjoining units with the five other tenants having single units. The other tenants were Greggs Plc, H&T Pawnbrokers,

Warren James jewellers and two local traders Pawelek Polish Delicatessen and Alan Tyndall trading as Antics a model shop. The signing of new leases to both Greggs and Alan Tyndall would be a condition of the purchase.

The acquisition of these properties would secure the control of the asset, reduce the development risk and increase the deliverability of the city centre development area at a cost which would be less than if it had to be acquired using Compulsory Purchase Orders in the future. In addition, the Council would also benefit from a short term income from the properties.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- 1) Approve the acquisition of the leasehold interest in 1-11 Shelton Square and 1a City Arcade.**
- 2) Delegate authority to the Director of City Services and Development and the Director of Finance and Legal Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member (City Development) to complete all the necessary legal documents in connection with the purchase.**

125. Appointment to Outside Body – Local Enterprise Partnership: Local Transport Body

The City Council considered a report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services which sought approval for the appointment of a deputy representative to the City Council's Lead Member, Councillor Kelly, on the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership: Local Transport Body.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership: Local Transport Body has been established to deal with devolved Government funding for the 2015-2019 period for Major Transport Schemes. Membership proposals for the Body require that an Elected Member from Coventry City Council be appointed to represent it on the Local Transport Body. It was also necessary to identify a deputy in the event that the representative cannot attend meetings of the Body.

At the meeting of the Council on 4th December 2012, Councillor Kelly was appointed as the City Council's Lead representative. The Council was now required to appoint a deputy representative to the Lead Member.

RESOLVED that the City Council appoint Councillor J. Mutton as the deputy representative of the City Council on the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership: Local Transport Body.

126. Question Time

There were no written questions.

The following Members answered oral questions put to them by other Members as set out below, together with supplementary questions on the same matters:

No	Question Asked By	Question Put To	Subject Matter
1	Councillor Blundell	Councillor Mrs Bigham	Future location of Godiva Festival
2	Councillor Crookes	Councillor Mc Nicholas	HS2
3	Councillor Taylor	Councillor Townshend	War Memorial Park Green Flag Assessment
4	Councillor Hammon	Councillor Townshend	War Memorial Park Car Park
5	Councillor Hammon	Councillor Kelly	Future use of Drapers Hall

127. **Statement by the Leader**

There was no statement.

Private Business

128. **Shelton Square – Investment Acquisition**

Further to Minute 124 above, the City Council considered a private report of the Director of City Services and Development, which contained details of financially confidential information in respect of the proposed investment acquisition at Shelton Square and City Arcade.

RESOLVED that the City Council

- 1) **Approve the acquisition of the leasehold interest in 1-11 Shelton Square and 1a City Arcade.**
- 2) **Delegate authority to the Director of City Services and Development and the Director of Finance and Legal Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member (City Development) to complete all the necessary legal documents in connection with the purchase.**

(Meeting closed at 4.30 pm)