

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 5 September 2023

Present:

Members: Councillor J Birdi (Chair)

Councillor F Abbott	Councillor M Lapsa
Councillor S Agboola	Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor N Akhtar	Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor M Ali	Councillor P Male
Councillor R Bailey	Councillor A Masih
Councillor L Bigham	Councillor K Maton
Councillor J Blundell	Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor R Brown	Councillor C Miks
Councillor K Caan	Councillor B Mosterman
Councillor G Duggins	Councillor M Mutton
Councillor J Gardiner	Councillor S Nazir
Councillor S Gray	Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor G Hayre	Councillor E M Reeves
Councillor M Heaven	Councillor G Ridley
Councillor T Jandu	Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor A Jobbar	Councillor P Seaman
Councillor S Keough	Councillor R Simpson
Councillor T Khan	Councillor B Singh
Councillor AS Khan	Councillor R Singh
Councillor R Lakha	Councillor A Tucker
Councillor R Lancaster	Councillor D Welsh

Honorary Alderman J Clifford, H Fitzpatrick, Hammon, Skinner and Skipper

Apologies: Councillor P Akhtar, B Gittins, L Harvard, P Hetherington, A Hopkins, J Innes, A Kaur, E Ruane, T Sawdon, R Thay and CE Thomas

Public Business

44. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 July 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023 were agreed as a true record.

45. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that the City Council agrees to exclude the press and public under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the private report in Minute 59 (Coventry Strategic Energy Partnership) on the grounds that it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and the amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the

Council under a particular contract for the supply of goods or services. The public interest in maintaining the exemption under Schedule 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

46. Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor

1. Recent Tragic Events in the City

The Lord Mayor referred to the shocking and sad events that occurred in the City on Sunday morning and indicated that the Council's thoughts were with everyone who had been affected.

A minutes silence was held as a mark of respect for those who lost their lives.

2. Death of Former Councillor John Mason

The Lord Mayor referred to former Councillor John Mason who recently passed away. John was a Labour Councillor for Woodlands Ward in the late 1990s.

During his time as a Councillor, John served on the Quality Policy Team, Licensing Panel, Events Policy Team, Health and Care Policy Team and the Older People Policy Team. He also served as a Co-opted Member for Health Watch on 5 Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board 5 from 2014 to 2015.

Members paid tribute to John and noted that a letter of condolence had been sent to John's family.

47. Petitions

RESOLVED that the following petitions be referred to the appropriate City Council bodies:

- (a) Objecting to proposals for the Clifford Bridge cycle lane which have been found unsafe discriminatory towards disabled people – 519 signatures, presented by Councillor Abbott.**
- (b) Request to the Council to urgently address the long standing issue of the overgrown hedge at 5 Cassandra Close – 17 signatures, presented by Councillor Blundell.**
- (c) Request to the Council to cut down the trees on Burns Road due to issues with overgrown and unmaintained trees – 9 signatures, presented by Councillor McNicholas.**
- (d) Request to the Council to improve the condition of the pavement and kerbs on Albany Road – 93 signatures, presented by Councillor Simpson.**
- (e) Request to the Council to stop the sale of land at Browns Lane to developers – 1270 signatures, presented by Councillor Keough.**
- (f) Request to the Council to keep the ash tree near Howes Lane in Finham – 151 signatures, presented by Councillor Blundell.**

48. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors AS Khan and B Singh declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the matter referred to in Minute 59 below (Confirmation of Article 4 Direction in respect of Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO)). They withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of the item.

49. **Audit and Procurement Committee Annual Report to Council 2022/23**

Further to Minute 14 of the Audit and Procurement Committee, the City Council noted the Committee's Annual Report that provided an overview of its activity during 2022-2023.

The report included an introduction by the Chair, Councillor Lakha, and indicated that the Audit and Procurement Committee is a key component of the Council's governance framework, supporting good governance and strong public financial management. Over the last year, the Committee has continued to discharge its key responsibility effectively, namely providing independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the Council's financial reporting and governance processes.

The report indicated that during the last year, the Committee had provided oversight of key matters such as the Annual Governance Statement, Internal Audit activity and challenges in meeting the regulatory deadlines for the publication of the Council's accounts. Alongside this, the Committee has considered additional information which provided assurances over the governance arrangements for procurement activity.

50. **Home Upgrade Grant 2 and Homes Retrofit Programmes Update**

Further to Minute 24 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability which sought approval to accept £2.8 million of Homes Upgrade Grant 2 (HUG2), awarded by the Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH), which would help to improve the energy efficiency of up to 150 homes. The report also provided an update on progress to domestic retrofit in Coventry to date, highlighting schemes that this funding would align with and compliment.

The Homes Upgrade Grant Phase 2 Scheme would support the retrofit of energy efficiency measures for low-income households and those with low Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings and no gas central heating within Coventry.

The funding was available for up to 100% of both capital and revenue costs associated with its delivery, subject to eligibility criteria being fulfilled. The Council would ensure it aligned and complimented both the existing "Keeping Coventry Warm" scheme, as well as the other domestic retrofit schemes being delivered across the city.

The funding was essential to support some of the most vulnerable residents in the community to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce the levels of fuel poverty across the city. This in turn would lead to:

- Reduction in Coventry's domestic carbon emissions

- Reduction in health related morbidity and mortality associated with living in cold homes
- Reduced demand placed on health and care services
- Improved energy efficiency, reduced bills and increased thermal comfort.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- 1. Approves the acceptance of the Midlands Net Zero Hub's Homes Upgrade Grant 2 allocation to Coventry totalling £2,810,500 to enable the Council to deliver a scheme of domestic retrofit measures to off-gas fuel poor and low-income households in Coventry as set out in the report.**
- 2. Delegates authority to the Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability, following consultation with the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and the Chief Legal Officer, to undertake the necessary due diligence, finalise the terms and conditions of the HUG2 grant, and enter into any legal agreements required to facilitate delivery of the project.**
- 3. Agrees that delegation be given to the Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability to pursue and accept further funding opportunities up to £5 million that may be offered to support further decarbonisation of the city's domestic buildings, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources.**

51. Confirmation of Article 4 Direction in respect of Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Further to Minute 23 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services which sought confirmation of the Article 4 Direction in respect of Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and the undertaking of the necessary legislative steps to implement the Order.

HMOs could provide entry level accommodation but could also bring significant disruption to settled neighbourhoods. In order to ensure that HMOs came forward in ways that integrated with existing neighbourhoods, an article 4 Direction was proposed in the wards most impacted by HMOs currently, and those most likely to be in the future.

In drawing the boundaries of the Article 4 Direction area, officers have been cognisant of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 53 for making sure the area is based on robust evidence and applies to the smallest geographical area possible, whilst also considering the likely impacts on similar dwelling typologies.

The Article 4 Direction had been subject to public consultation alongside the HMO Development Plan Document, with responses to the consultation considered prior to recommendation to confirm the Order, these responses were included in Appendix 2 of the report. Further to the consultation process undertaken from September 2022, authority was now sought to confirm the Article 4 Direction which

would remove the permitted development rights of changes of use from C3 (dwellinghouses) to C4 (houses in multiple occupation) therefore requiring planning permission to be sought.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- 1. Approves the confirmation of the Article 4 Direction and including but not limited the undertaking of the necessary legislative steps for implementation of the Order.**
- 2. Delegates authority to the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to authorise any non-substantive changes to the documents.**
- 3. Notes that if confirmed, the Article 4 Direction will come into force on 30 September 2023.**

Note: Further to Minute 48 above, Councillors AS Khan and B Singh withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of this item.

52. 2023/24 First Quarter Financial Monitoring Report (to June 2023)

Further to Minute 22 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) which advised of the forecast outturn position for revenue and capital expenditure and the Council's treasury management activity as at the end of June 2023. The net revenue forecast position after management action was for spend in 2023/24 of £12.1m over budget. At the same point in 2022/23 there was a projected overspend of £9.5m. The Audit and Procurement Committee would consider this report on 2 October 2023.

The Council continued to face budget pressures within both Adults and Children's Social Care which together accounted for £11m of the underlying overspend. Other smaller but still significant overspends were also being reported in Business Investment and Culture, Transportation, Highways and Sustainability, and Streetscene and Regulatory Services.

The Council's position reflected a number of largely one-off actions that had already been taken to reduce the overspend. As the underlying position was significantly higher than had been experienced in recent years, further urgent action was proposed to address the pressure in order to prevent the 2024/25 position increasing to unmanageable levels.

The Council's capital spending was projected to be £163.6m and included major schemes progressing across the city. The size of the programme and the nature of the projects within it continued to be fundamental to the Council's role within the city. Inflationary pressures were also affecting capital projects. The assumption was that stand alone projects that were already in-progress would be delivered as planned but that future projects that had not yet started may need to be re-

evaluated to determine their deliverability within previously defined financial budgets.

The materiality of the emerging financial pressures, both revenue and capital had renewed the imperative to maintain strict financial discipline and re-evaluate the Council's medium-term financial position. This would be a priority across all services as the Council developed its future budget plans in the coming months.

Cabinet had agreed to:

1. Approve the Council's first quarter revenue monitoring position and endorse the proposal for officers to seek to identify further ongoing service options to mitigate the position in conjunction with Cabinet Members as appropriate.
2. Approve the revised forecast capital outturn position for the year of £163.6m incorporating £14.0m rescheduling from 2022/23 outturn, £29.7m net increase in spending relating to approved/technical changes, £0.4m underspend and £38.9m of net rescheduling of expenditure into future years.
3. Recommend that Council receive and note the decisions of Cabinet as outlined in recommendations 1 and 2 above.

RESOLVED that the City Council received and notes the decisions of Cabinet as outlined in Recommendations 1 and 2 above.

53. **Coventry Strategic Energy Partnership**

Further to Minute 25 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a joint report of the Director of Business, Investment and Culture and the Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability, that detailed proposals for a Coventry Strategic Energy Partnership.

A corresponding private report detailing confidential financial matters was also submitted for consideration (Minute 59 below refers).

One of the Council's top three priorities for the city in the One Coventry Plan was 'Tackling the causes and consequences of Climate Change'. The Council's Draft Climate Change Strategy and accompanying Net Zero Routemap, published earlier this year, set out ambitious vision for the city's journey to net zero to create a more sustainable and prosperous future for local people. To achieve this, major long-term planning and investment was required to decarbonise our city through a wide range of environmental and social projects.

The Council had a critical role to play as a leader, asset owner and source of local knowledge, but didn't have sufficient capital, resource, or expertise to deliver net zero in isolation. Therefore, an industry Strategic Energy Partner (SEP) was to be procured to work with the Council to initiate, develop and deliver an extensive programme of projects that would generate significant environmental, social and economic benefits to the city and help deliver its net zero goal.

The report indicated that this partnering would bring up to £2 billion investment to Coventry which would deliver huge benefits for the city's communities and businesses.

The fifteen year strategic partnership would see the Council working with the industry partner to initiate, develop and deliver innovative strategies, business models and plans that would drive the city towards net zero. The use of five year strategic plans complemented by annual specific action and budget business plans would ensure alignment and pace of decarbonisation progress.

The strategic partner was expected to have both internal resources and access to capital investment but also the experience and capabilities to leverage third party funding to support projects. The successful strategic energy partner would be obligated to develop five anchor projects and progress the development of at least three further decarbonisation projects each year for the fifteen years.

Procurement was due to conclude in August 2023 with contracts entered in September 2023. Coventry would be only the second city in the UK to secure a SEP and the opportunities it would offer were significant, with up to £2 billion investment and delivery of key anchor projects such as a 30MW solar farm, solar energy into schools, decarbonisation of our fleet, depots and estate and provision of energy security across the city to make the city more resilient. This ambitious partnership would further cement Coventry's aspirations to lead the UK's green industrial revolution.

Creation of social value was a key aspect of the partnership, demonstrating best practice within projects, and also broadening the scope of social value beyond the partnership was a critical success factor. The partnership was designed and contracted to incentivise such positive outcomes in our community with allocation of both resource and funding from the partners and the Council.

To facilitate the SEP, the Council were required to provide 2.5 full time equivalent posts (FTEs) to manage the SEP for the duration of the partnership. The 2.5 FTEs would be funded from existing budgets and resources. The SEP team would be co-located with the industry partner, with a requirement for the Council to provide 4 desks within Council offices for the team.

RESOLVED that the City Council acknowledges and notes the decisions of Cabinet to:

- 1. Award the Strategic Energy Partner contract to the Preferred Bidder (as detailed in the corresponding Private Report) for the delivery of the Strategic Energy Partner Project.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Business, Investment and Culture and the Director of Transport, Highways and Sustainability, following consultation with the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer), the Chief Legal Officer, the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, to undertake the necessary due diligence, finalise and complete the process of entering into the contract with the Preferred Bidder.**

3. **Note the role of the Coventry Shareholder Committee in the governance arrangement associated with the delivery of the Strategic Energy Partner project as set out in paragraph 1.8 of the report.**

54. **Amendments to Appointments 2023/24**

The City Council considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer which sought approval to changes to appointments to the Audit and Procurement Committee and the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1).

At the Annual General Meeting of the Council on 18 May 2023, appointments were made to Council bodies for the Municipal year 2023/24 based on political group proportionality requirements.

At the request of the Conservative Group, changes are proposed to Conservative Group appointments on the Audit and Procurement Committee and the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1).

RESOLVED that the City Council, with immediate effect:

1. **Appoints Councillor G Ridley to the Audit and Procurement Committee in place of Councillor T Sawdon.**
2. **Appoints Councillor P Male to the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) in place of Councillor T Sawdon.**

55. **Question Time**

Councillors Brown, Hetheron, O'Boyle, Sandhu, Seaman and Welsh provided written answers to the questions set out in the Questions Booklet, together with oral responses to supplementary questions asked at the meeting.

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	Questions asked by	Question put to	Subject matter
1	Councillor Tucker	Councillor Sandhu	Dangerous state of some schools with existing RAAC
2	Councillor Tucker	Councillor Caan	Raising funds for childhood cancer
3	Councillor Agboola	Councillor Welsh	Support for food hub in Willenhall
4	Councillor Agboola	Councillor K Caan	World suicide prevention day
5	Councillor Simpson	Councillor Lloyd	Accidents on Moseley Avenue and traffic calming measures
6	Councillor Masih	Councillor Lloyd	Traffic calming measures on

			Westwood Heath Road
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56. **Statements**

There were no Statements.

57. **Debate - Closure of Ticket Offices at Coventry's Train Stations**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Tucker and seconded by Councillor Miks:

“Following the end of the extended consultation concerning the closure of ticket offices at Coventry’s train stations by the Rail Delivery Group, Coventry City Council:

- reiterates its opposition to these closures
- condemns the exclusion of many older and disabled passengers from our rail network and the job losses that will inevitably follow these closures
- believes that only a publicly accountable railway system can provide the level of service we deserve

This Council calls upon the Department for Transport and train operators to abandon the proposal to close ticket offices at railway stations across the country”.

RESOLVED that, the Motion as set out above, be unanimously adopted.

58. **Debate - Setting Targets for Household Waste Recycling, Composting and Reuse to Demonstrate Commitment to the Circular Economy**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Male and seconded by Councillor Simpson:

“This Council agrees to set itself an ambitious target for household waste recycling, composting and reuse in order to demonstrate its commitment to the circular economy.”

The following amendment was moved by Councillor Lloyd, seconded by Councillor O’Boyle and, in accordance with the Constitution, accepted by Councillor Male:

After the words “This Council”, delete the words “agrees to set itself an ambitious” and insert “continues to do all that it can to”

At the end of the Motion insert
“by continuing to

- Promote recycling through regular contact with residents.
- Employ a waste education team to promote recycling.

We have achieved the most sustainable Godiva Festival from a recycling point of view this year and we will be announcing an increase in materials that can be recycled in household bins before Christmas as a direct result of our investment in the regional MRF.”

The amended Motion now to read:-

“This Council continues to do all that it can to target household waste recycling, composting and reuse in order to demonstrate its commitment to the above and the circular economy by continuing to,

- Promote recycling through regular contact with residents.
- Employ a waste education team to promote recycling.

We have achieved the most sustainable Godiva Festival from a recycling point of view this year and we will be announcing an increase in materials that can be recycled in household bins before Christmas as a direct result of our investment in the regional MRF.”

RESOLVED that the amended Motion, as set out above, be adopted.

59. Coventry Strategic Energy Partnership

Further to Minute 53 above and Minute 28 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a private report of the Director of Business, Investment and Culture and the Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability which outlined the commercially confidential matters relating to proposals for a Coventry Strategic Energy Partnership.

RESOLVED that the City Council received and notes the decisions of Cabinet to:

- 1. Authorise the award of the Strategic Energy Partner contract to Bidder A as the Preferred Bidder for the delivery of the Strategic Energy Partner Project.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Business, Investment and Culture and the Director of Transport, Highways and Sustainability, following consultation with the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 officer), the Chief Legal Officer, the Cabinet Member for Job, Regeneration and Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, to undertake the necessary due diligence finalise and complete the process of entering into the contract with the Preferred Bidder.**
- 3. Note the role of the Coventry Shareholder Committee in the governance arrangement associated with the delivery of the Strategic Energy Partner project as set out in paragraph 1.8 of the report.**

(Meeting closed at 4.50 pm)