

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 21 November 2018

Present:

Members: Councillor J McNicholas (Chair)
Councillor J Birdi
Councillor J Clifford (Substitute for Councillor Skipper)
Councillor G Crookes
Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor B Singh
Councillor K Taylor

Other Members (By Invitation): Councillor J Innes (Cabinet Member for City Services)

Employees (by Directorate):

Place N Chaplin, G Holmes, K Lees, G McKelvie, D Nuttall,
M Salmon, J Seddon, A Walster

Apologies: Councillor R Auluck
Councillor C Miks
Councillor T Skipper

Public Business

16. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

17. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

18. Air Quality Action Plan for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a briefing note and presentation from the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) that provided the Board with an update on the progress of the Coventry Local Air Quality Action Plan, including consultation materials.

The Cabinet Member for City Services whose portfolio included environment, attended the meeting for consideration of this matter.

A report on the Coventry Local Air Quality Action Plan was considered by the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) at their meeting on 11th July 2018 (minute 4/18 refers) and their recommendations (attached as an Appendix to the briefing note) submitted with the report to Cabinet on 17th July 2018 (their minute 16/18 referred).

Since July 2018, further work had been ongoing to establish the baseline situation in terms of air quality within Coventry, and specifically the Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels measured at the roadside on major routes within Coventry. The legal limit of NO₂ had been set at 40 micrograms (ug) per cubic metre. The baseline air quality modelling information had been submitted to the Government's Joint Air Quality Unit to be verified. Within Coventry, the main areas where Nitrogen Dioxide levels were forecast to exceed legal limits were Holyhead Road, sections of the Ring Road, and some of the main radial routes feeding into the Ring Road, notably London Road, Warwick Road and Walsgrave Road.

Work had also been proceeding on the implementation of an Early Measures Programme funded directly by Government grant worth £2,021,000. This work had focussed on the A4600 corridor, and had included:

- 1) Engagement with major local businesses and schools along the corridor to promote active and sustainable travel as an alternative to the car.
- 2) A programme of community engagement working with local residents to promote active and sustainable travel for local trips.
- 3) The introduction of new technology to support better and more efficient traffic management along the corridor.
- 4) Development of a scheme to improve the efficiency of the Walsgrave Road / Brays Lane junction at Ball Hill. The scheme had been the subject of public consultation, and was currently being reviewed following the receipt of feedback, including a petition, from residents, businesses and schools within the local community.
- 5) Introduction of the try before you buy scheme promoting the use of electric-powered taxis to local taxi operators. To date, around 35 drivers had participated, or were booked to participate, within the scheme and this had resulted in eight drivers making orders for electric taxis that would come into operation during 2019.

The Council was now, based on the baseline evidence, developing a package of measures that would be most effective at reducing NO₂ levels below the legal limit in the shortest possible time. Transport and Air Quality modelling work was being undertaken to identify the most effective combination of measures, whilst a public consultation seeking views on the potential measures was also being undertaken during November 2018.

The potential interventions that were under consideration were:

- 1) City-wide programmes of engagement with businesses, schools and local communities to promote sustainable and active travel, especially for local journeys within the City.
- 2) Working with transport operators, including bus and taxi companies, and local businesses to ensure that buses, taxis and commercial vehicles in use within Coventry were low emission, with engines that were, as a minimum, Euro 6 compliant.
- 3) Upgrading the traffic management and travel information systems operating within the city, including all traffic signals and supporting systems, to latest technology enabling more efficient and proactive management of traffic on the City's network, and allowing strategies to be implemented that deterred traffic from entering air quality problem areas.
- 4) Improvements to the City's walking and cycle networks to encourage walking and cycling for local journeys, especially on those corridors identified as having particular air quality problems.
- 5) Targeted improvements to the highway network to promote more efficient traffic flows and to reduce traffic congestion in areas where particular air quality problems were identified.

The Council was legally required to submit an Outline Business Case (OBC) on the preferred option before the end of 2018. Following feedback from the consultation, including from the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3), the OBC would be submitted to Cabinet for consideration at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Board questioned officers and discussed the following issues:

- The DEFRA PCM model requirements for absolute Nitrogen Dioxide level readings – Coventry roads included and those not required.
- Electric vehicle charging points – consideration of locations, the installation of 39 fast charging points in the City by next year, the residential charging points for longer charges.
- Holyhead Road – difficult to promote the use of alternative forms of transport to many users of this major route who were not making 'internal' journeys.
- Consideration of internal scrapping scheme for older vehicles.
- Emissions level concerns on Lower Radford Road and Foleshill Road that were not included in the requirements.
- Monitoring work being carried out on other roads in the City that were not part of the Plan, supported by other funding streams offered by DEFRA.
- Clean air zones – effects on businesses and Council's desire to carry out other measures as an alternative to implementation of zones.
- Park and ride – future use of electric vehicles.
- The need for the future expansion of charging points in City Centre car parks.

- Achieving compliance with the legal requirement without negative impact on the City.
- West Midlands Combined Authority – Regional discussion needed and the promotion of public transport, in particular bus travel.
- Ring Road not included in the Model – vehicle only route with no footway and no impact on the health of pedestrians.
- Electric vehicle testing - old vehicle removed from road use during 60 day testing period, resulting in a reduction in emission levels on the city's roads.
- No charges for people to come into City Centre.
- Planning Policy - electric charging points to be made part of supplementary planning documents.
- 100 National Express buses to be upgraded to EU Grade 6 level by March 2019
- Installation of electric charging points at Supermarkets.

The Board requested that Officers write to the supermarkets in the City to ask what they could offer in respect of vehicle charging facilities.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Notes the contents of the report.**
- 2) Agrees that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities be invited to a future meeting of the Board to provide an update on what proposals there are for including air quality improvements in planning proposals through the use of supplementary planning documents.**
- 3) Requests that a further progress report be submitted to the Board prior to the submission of the full Business Case to the Government by the end of March 2019.**

19. St Mary's Guildhall

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a briefing note and presentation from the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) that provided the Board with details of current activity and progress in relation to the development of St Mary's Guildhall into a premier heritage, function, events and conferencing venue in the centre of Coventry, and the recommended next steps.

In May 2018 the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) were informed that work to consider the potential for St. Mary's Guildhall to be a high quality heritage, events and conferencing venue was underway (minute 49/17 referred).

A long term sustainable solution was required for St Mary's Guildhall that continued to offer residents and visitors to Coventry the opportunity to visit the Guildhall whilst achieving a commercial outcome that allowed the Guildhall to recover its overheads. There was a desire for the Guildhall to provide a sustainable income stream to the Council. Investment in the Café (the Undercroft at St Mary's) was intended to prevent further decline in the income with ongoing growth, however it was acknowledged that long term sustainability required better

levels of income from conferencing, corporate events, hospitality events and weddings in the Great Hall.

The Guildhall did not currently offer a particularly engaging visitor experience, and did not adequately cater for modern conferencing and event market. To this end, in collaboration with advisors from Coombe Abbey Hotel, specialist heritage architects and consultants had been engaged to review the Guildhall and provide advice and recommendations on works that would be necessary to deliver an exceptional visitor experience, whether it was for casual visitors wanting to engage with the heritage of the Guildhall, events attendees or hosting a conference.

The presentation, a copy of which was attached as an Appendix to the report, set out the progress of the scheme and the outcomes of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 2 concept design and business case review. The Board noted that the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration had been kept informed of the project and its progress. Further political engagement would be undertaken as the RIBA Stage 2 was completed, to fully inform Council on the project outcomes to date, and to understand Council's support, or otherwise, to progress with the project to RIBA Stage 3.

The next steps were to:

- Discuss and confirm Council support and approval to proceed with the project to RIBA Stage 3, and the development of the detailed business case.
- Agree a broader communication and engagement strategy to allow the design to be further developed to consider all heritage and other considerations.
- Generate a project programme that considered feedback from consultation and engagement, prior confirming a proposed scheme for planning and listed building consent.
- Conclude RIBA Stage 3 design and costing, before reconfirming the business case for the scheme.

The Board questioned officers and discussed the following issues:

- The retention of the Minstrels Gallery in the proposals.
- Lift implementation and new toilet facilities welcome together with rooftop terrace, the business concept of the buildings and opening up the Medieval Kitchen.
- Spiral Staircase – investigate opening up the currently blocked off staircase.
- Scheme costs £5.5m to £7.5m, dependant on the extent of the schemes proposals.
- The cost drawn up include the maintenance of the existing building, display of tapestry, Medieval Kitchen, new kitchen building and fit out, and a significant contingency.
- Consultation work - essential.
- Working towards early 2021 for completion/delivery of the project.
- £1.5m already earmarked for Guildhall work.
- Income expectations - £1m - £1.3m anticipated.

- If using a third party operator for the facility, priority access to be maintained for the Council's own Civic Events.
- Programming of scheme phases to enable delivery of project without compromise on usage.
- Car parking provision for the venue and conferencing facilities.
- Aiming for 2021 completion.
- Despite difficult site to access, that would not enable the building to be open whilst work on-going, scheduling of work important to maximise income at all times.
- Next Steps - need to tighten Business case and income expectations, engage in relevant governance, review costs for progression to RIBA Stage 3.

The Board agreed that there should be the inclusion of commercial consideration of the use of this historic venue with the media for TV and films as part of any package of offers, without detriment to the Guildhall Business Plan. They also agreed that consideration should be given to the phasing of the project to ensure delivery of each stage as funding becomes available/is secured. They requested that they be provided with details of the anticipated income benefits for the project, in a graph format.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Continues to support the activity in relation to establishing the business case for the development of St Mary's Guildhall into a premier heritage, function, events and conferencing venue in the centre of Coventry, including all necessary governance regarding Council considering the proposals and whether to proceed with the scheme.**
- 2) Requests the inclusion of commercial consideration of the use of this historic venue with the media for TV and films as part of any package of offers, without detriment to the Guildhall Business Plan.**
- 3) Requests that consideration to be given to the phasing of the project to ensure delivery of each stage as funding becomes available/is secured.**

20. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

21. Work Programme 2018/2019

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered the Work Programme for 2018/2019 and discussed the scheduling of proposed issues for consideration at future meetings of the Board.

Members were reminded that they should meet at 12 noon at WMG, Warwick University, for the meeting of the Board on 5th December 2018.

The Task and Finish Froup on the Climate Change Strategy would commence in the New Year.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the Board's Work Programme for 2018/2019.

22. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.30 pm)