

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.30 am on**  
**Wednesday, 23 January 2019**

Present:

Members: Councillor T Khan (Chair)  
Councillor N Akhtar  
Councillor A Andrews  
Councillor J Clifford (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor J McNicholas  
Councillor G Ridley  
Councillor R Singh

Other Members: Councillors G Duggins, K Maton and J O'Boyle

Other Representatives: Dr Julie Nugent, West Midlands Combined Authority

Employees:

G Holmes, Place Directorate  
L Knight, Place Directorate  
C Mitchel, Place Directorate  
K Nelson, People Directorate  
D Nuttall, Place Directorate  
B Purdue, Place Directorate  
M Reeves, Chief Executive

Apologies: Councillors D Gannon and M Mutton

## **Public Business**

### **38. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **39. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

### **40. Coventry Tourism Strategy 2019-23**

The Committee considered a briefing note and presentation of David Nuttall, Strategic Lead (European City of Sport, UK City of Culture and Commonwealth Games) which provided an update on progress with implementing the action plan and priorities within the Coventry Tourism Strategy 2019-23, which was approved by Cabinet at their meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2018. Councillor O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration and Councillor Maton, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The presentation set out the current position for tourism in the city which included a £385m spend per annum; supported 6,921 fte jobs which represented 5.9% of local employment; saw 94% of visitors saying they would recommend Coventry to a friend; and 95% of visitors saying they would return. The presentation also highlighted a number of concerns including the reason why 77% of people who had not visited stated that they were not sure what was there; visitor spend was low (£5 per hour for day visitors); nightlife and variety of things to do scored lowest for satisfactions; and there were gaps in the accommodation offer. The presentation highlighted that there was huge potential for tourism growth.

The Committee were informed of the vision for the tourism strategy as follows:

‘By 2023 perceptions and awareness of Coventry as a leisure and business tourism destination will have grown and residents will be even more proud, active ambassadors of their city. The city will be recognised as a host for major events and the city will be attracting more than 10 million visitors a year’

There were seven measures of success for the Strategy:

- i) Development of a successful delivery partnership to manage the DMP
- ii) Increase in overall visitor numbers
- iii) Increase in overnight visitors
- iv) Increase in yield per visitor
- v) Growth in jobs supported via the visitor economy
- vi) Increase in awareness of Coventry as a destination
- vii) Improved perceptions of Coventry as a destination.

The Action Plan had been framed around the following four areas: Partnership, Product, Place and Positioning. The presentation set out the initial priorities for the first six month of operation to June 2019 under these four areas. An update was given at the meeting on the actions to date.

Members questioned the officers on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- The opportunities to involve Councillors with the implementation of the strategy
- Further information about the proposed Destination Partnership Board
- Details about the marketing of Coventry outside of the city and suggestions for promoting Coventry, including at Birmingham Airport
- Relationships with the BBC
- The requirement to have a better offer to attract visitors to the city, especially young people
- Concerns about the night club offer in the city
- How to encourage a busy evening night time culture in the city centre, not just a day time retail offer
- The use of social media and the development of a digital calendar for the promotion of events.

Members discussed the most appropriate Scrutiny forum for the consideration of future update reports on the implementation of the Tourism Strategy.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(1) The content of the presentation be noted.**

**(2) Future reports on progress with implementing the tourism strategy action plan be submitted to meetings of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3), with members of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee being invited to attend as appropriate.**

**(3) Representatives of the Destination Partnership Board, when operational, be invited to attend a future meeting of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3).**

**41. West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Productivity and Skills Strategy**

The Committee considered a report of Dr Julie Nugent, Director of Productivity and Skills, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) which provided an update on the WMCA Productivity and Skills Strategy. Dr Nugent attended the meeting for the consideration of this item along with Councillor Duggins, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership, Councillor Maton, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Councillor O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration.

The report indicated that the Productivity and Skills Portfolio had been an area of focus since the development of the WMCA and was a key part of the first devolution agreement signed in November 2015. Councillor Duggins became the first portfolio lead for Productivity and Skills in June 2016 and had since overseen the delivery of the productivity and skills elements of two devolution agreements (second deal agreed November 2016), the West Midlands Skills Deal (July 2018) and the publication of the Regional Skills Plan in June 2018. These deals had brought new investment to the region, the details of which were set out in the report and included:

The WMCA Skills Deal with Government secured £69m investment for meeting productivity and skills challenges:

£40m Apprenticeship funds

£5m Digital Retraining Fund

£20m planned investment from the WMCA

This was in addition to funding already secured through the two devolution deals: £120m+ Adult Education Budget (annually, from 2019); 5m Construction Retraining Fund; £4.7m Employment Support Pilot; and £2m Career Learning Pilot.

To support the development of the skills strategy, the West Midlands Productivity and Skills Commission was set up in 2017 to: identify the skills and productivity challenges in the region; identify the causes of low productivity and skills; and make practical recommendations to address these. The challenges facing the West Midlands included low productivity; low employment rate; high youth employment and low educational attainment. The Committee were informed that figures demonstrated a more favourable employment and skills situation in Coventry compared to the West Midlands average, although there were pockets of deprivation with correspondingly poor employment and skills profiles.

The report referred to the WMCA Regional Skills Plan which set out the priorities for the next three years to address the challenges highlighted. The development of the plan had involved extensive engagement with key stakeholders and stakeholder groups. The plan deliberately focused on actions – what the WMCA

and key stakeholders could and would do to improve the regional skills base. It aimed for: more people in employment; more people in higher skilled jobs; more skilled employees to support business growth and productivity; all communities benefitting from the region's economic growth; and an agile and responsive skills system that is more aligned to the needs of business and individuals.

The Committee noted that the Plan also fulfilled a key role in commissioning the future delivery of the Adult Education Budget. This would transfer to the WMCA from 2019/20, however, for 2018/9, the region's colleges and adult and community learning providers would set out how they intended to respond to key local and regional priorities. The Plan detailed five key action areas:

- i) Prepare our young people for future life and work
- ii) Create regional networks of specialist, technical education and training
- iii) Accelerate the take-up of good quality Apprenticeships across the region
- iv) Deliver inclusive growth by giving more people the skills to get and sustain good jobs and careers
- v) Strengthen collaboration between partners to support achieving more collectively

The report set out the achievements to date in these five key areas.

Further information was provided on the Adult Education Budget (AEB) which was anticipated to be to be circa £126m for the academic year 2019/10. This was to be confirmed before the end of January 2019. Regional control over the AEB funding policy and rules, through the WMCA, would better enable regional priorities to be met. The WMCA would ensure that this funding supported residents in the region to gain qualifications and employment as well as those in low income jobs to upskill and improve their earning potential. It was intended that the WMCA would work with the region's local authorities, colleges and training providers to ensure that the courses offered provide learners with the right skills and qualifications for the region's growth sectors. It was clarified that the Council and Coventry College would continue to receive the same amount of grant funding in 2019/20 as the previous year, £8.6m.

It was highlighted that the WMCA was committed to collaboration with local areas to ensure maximum impact of devolved powers and funding for local people. Officers from the Council and Coventry and Warwickshire LEP had been closely involved in the development of the WMCA Productivity & Skills agenda and would continue to play a leading role as joint plans were put into action.

Members questioned the officers and representative on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- Further information on where there were gaps in productivity and how issues such as age were being dealt with
- How was gender considered
- Details of where vacancies weren't being filled and the skills gap
- Information about the help for residents with low or no skills
- What was being done for people from the hard to reach communities
- The support for people with no IT skills

- Further details about any evaluations that were undertaken, how could things that worked well in Coventry be replicated across the region
- Was more funding required to make a difference
- Further details about the proposals to address youth unemployment
- Further details about the devolved approach
- The importance of the involvement of local employers/ businesses.

**RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.**

**42. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2018/2019 and Outstanding Issues**

The Committee considered their work programme for the current municipal year. Members were informed that following consideration of the 'LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Outcome of Peer Challenge' report at Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 it had been agreed that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee would monitor progress on the delivery of action plans arising from the Peer Review.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(1) The work programme be noted, including that the two 'if required' meetings scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> February and 17<sup>th</sup> April will now be needed.**

**(2) Progress on the delivery of action plans arising from the Peer Review be included as an item on the work programme.**

**43. Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.20 pm)