

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

8th December, 2010

- Members Present: Councillor Mrs Dixon (substitute for Councillor Foster)
Councillor Mrs Lucas (Chair)
Councillor McNicholas (Deputy Chair)
Councillor M. Mutton
Councillor Noonan (Co-opted Member)
Councillor Ruane
Councillor Sawdon
Councillor Taylor
- Other Members Present: Councillor Duggins
- Employees Present: M. Coult (Chief Executive's Directorate)
M. Salmon (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
C. Steele (Chief Executive's Directorate)
A. West (Chief Executive's Directorate)
- In attendance: Madeline Nelson (PricewaterhouseCoopers)
- Apologies: Councillor Foster
Councillor Lakha
Councillor Lancaster
Councillor Ridley

Public Business

43. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

44. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2010, were signed as a true record.

45. Consideration of Call-ins – Stage 1 – Restructuring of Neighbourhood Management

There were no call-ins.

46. Transformation Partnership Progress Report

Further to minute 22/10, the Committee considered a briefing note of the Transformation Programme Officer that provided a further update, following on from an update to the Committee in September 2010, for Elected Members on the progress made in delivering the Council's abc Transformation Programme.

The Value for Money Partnership (VfM) with PricewaterhouseCoopers was established in October 2007, to achieve the following outcomes for the Council:

- specific service improvements to meet the changing needs of its customers, and the future demand for its services
- sustainable efficiencies and cost reductions to meet the financial challenges it faces,
- ensure members and officers benefit from external challenge and experience from outside the authority, and
- give staff the opportunity to learn new skills.

The Council's Transformation Programme was launched in June 2009, responding to the new challenges faced by the whole of the public sector, and building on the former VfM Partnership Programme launched in October 2007.

Since 2007, a number of VfM reviews had been undertaken and completed, and new fundamental service reviews had been set up. The briefing note provided details of the costs and savings of current partnership projects and a summary of the progress on the current fundamental service reviews for the year one reviews for VAT, Customer First, Administration and Business, Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing, Operational Property, Facilities Management, Catering, Corporate Transport, Personalisation, Printing and Paper, ICT, and Culture Change. Details of the progress made on year two reviews for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Libraries, Waste, Daycare in Children's Centres, Housing Services, Public Safety, and Management Restructuring were also detailed.

The Committee also received a further briefing note of the Transformation Programme Officer, that was tabled at the meeting, that provided an update on the current work streams being undertaken to move forward the Corporate Transport Review, which was part of the Council's abc Transformation Programme.

The review followed the Council's Fundamental Service Review methodology and, following data gathering and analysis for the baseline, which determined the current service delivery method, its strengths and weaknesses, and exploration of alternative ways in which the service might be delivered, three work-streams had been identified and were being pursued and these were:

- reviewing how best the Council's transport fleet (excluding passenger transport) should be organised and managed and whether a single transport unit should be set up to co-ordinate transport needs.
- reviewing the Council's passenger transport needs, and considering how best transport for children, adults and older people might best be delivered in the future.
- Reviewing the Council's "grey fleet" – mileage in employee-owned vehicles. The management of grey fleet travel plays an important part in supporting three key policy areas of health and safety, environmental sustainability and financial efficiency.

The Committee questioned Mike Coult on aspects of the review and noted that rather than follow the previous practice of incurring PwC fees for the development and delivery of specific projects, fees would only be incurred as days were called on to support the Council in developing and/or implementing projects. This was recognition of the changing nature of the relationship with PwC, as the Council was now able to undertake more of the "Review" and "Implementation" of projects with its own staff, and seek support from PwC only for specific service or project management expertise. Members requested that the following matters be

taken forward as appropriate:

- Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to retain an overview of progress on the Programme
- Input on and progress of reviews be sought from and reported to individual Scrutiny Boards and SCRUCO as appropriate
- The low volume of the greeting message at the Contact Centre be investigated.
- A citywide review be conducted, as part of the abc Culture, Leisure and Sport and Libraries Review, on the potential for disposing of small pieces of unused Council owned/maintained land.
- An investigation of the current taxi billing system for children's transport to school be carried out as part of the abc Transport Review, to eliminate inefficiencies.

RESOLVED that the progress on the Transformation Partnership be noted and that an update report on the co-ordination and progress of the abc Transport Reviews be submitted to the Committee in January 2011.

47. Local Area Agreement and Corporate Plan – Half Year Progress Report 2010/11

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, that was also considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 30th November 2010 (their minute 83/10 refers), that provided a review of performance for the first half year 2010/11 against the Local Area Agreement and the Corporate Plan management objectives.

The Council adopted its Corporate Plan 2008-11 in September 2008, aligning its corporate objectives with the Coventry Sustainable Communities Strategy and building the Local Area Agreement indicators into its performance management framework. The balanced scorecard set out the Council's corporate objectives and management objectives. The Committee noted that the Local Area Agreement and the Council's Corporate Plan were now in their third and final year and that the Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy, which provided the long term context for these, was currently being reviewed and was subject to consultation. The revised Strategy would be submitted to the Council and the Coventry Partnership for approval during February and March 2011 and would identify the short-term priorities that would need to be achieved to support the longer term objectives.

The progress reported would inform this review of the Sustainable Community Strategy, Partnership priorities and the Council's revised Corporate Plan which would all be introduced from 2011/12.

In addition, the Government had announced changes to the national performance framework for local government, removing the requirement to monitor and produce Local Area Agreements, abolishing the Comprehensive Area Assessment and replacing the National Indicator Set with a single comprehensive list of all the data that it expected local government to provide to central government. The recent Government announcement means that there would be more freedom locally to set measures and targets that were useful to the Council for assessing and managing progress, as well as reporting transparently to local people.

In respect of the Local Area Agreement, each indicator had its own report card showing performance compared to target. It also showed previous performance and comparative information where this was available. It was noted that there were time delays in reporting on some indicators which meant that it was not possible to report against the current year target. Also included within the report was new and updated information for the 2009/10 reporting year which was either unavailable or which was provisional at the half-year point in December 2009. The data was supported by a brief Performance Story, an explanation of

progress to date and future action that was planned or required to achieve the target.

Each Sustainable Community Strategy Theme had a theme summary, which showed red or green ratings for each of the Local Area Agreement indicators in that theme denoting progress and whether the indicator is meeting its Local Area Agreement target, together with a summary of progress and key issues to be addressed for the theme as a whole.

Finally, there was an overall summary of progress against the Local Area Agreement, highlighting both significant progress and areas requiring action by lead organisations and partners.

It was further noted that the Council had developed Facts About Coventry, a data management system, in conjunction with the Coventry Partnership to improve the quality, timeliness and accessibility of information to support decision-making and performance management. The performance management software formed part of this system and was being developed and improved in response to user feedback. As a result of this feedback there had been some changes to the presentations of the report cards used for the report.

The City Council agreed its new Corporate Plan in September 2008, aligning its corporate objectives with the priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy. The supporting performance indicators were revised to include all national indicators in the Local Area Agreement as well as other national and local indicators that would help to measure progress. Some smaller amendments were made to the management objectives and accompanying indicators.

The summary of progress for Sustainable Community Strategy themes based on the Local Area Agreement indicators provided a partial overview of progress against the Council's corporate objectives. A full report on the Council's management objectives was attached as a second appendix to the report submitted.

The Committee discussed the detail of the report and agreed that future reports to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee should provide an overview of progress and that detailed reports, to include targets and measures, should be submitted to Scrutiny Boards as appropriate.

RESOLVED that the review of the Local Area Agreement and Corporate Plan half year performance be noted and that, when the new performance framework is established, Scrutiny Boards decide what information they need in order to monitor progress.

48. Report Back on Conference – Civic Visit to Volgograd and Moscow, Russia

The Committee received a briefing note of the Governance Service Team Leader that presented the remaining outstanding reports back from Conference Attendance/Foreign Visits and provided Members with an update on arrangements that have been put in place to avoid late reports in future.

Part 5.6 of the Constitution, that set out the Protocol for Approval for Foreign Travel and Conference Attendance for Councillors and Employees and the arrangements for reporting back to Scrutiny on attendance, included a requirement to report back to the relevant Scrutiny Board within two months of attendance.

Following internal checks and a Freedom of Information request in October 2010, it came to light that a small number of reports back from conference attendance and foreign visits were outstanding. The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received three of these at its meeting on the 3rd November, 2010 (minute 39/10 refers). At the meeting, the Committee decided that a more robust process should be put in place to ensure that reports were received promptly in the future and that further specific information on costs and benefits should be included in those reports.

Since that meeting, Management Board and other Officers had been informed that, as decided by this Committee, reports back must include not only the actual costs of the foreign visit/conference attendance, but also the costs originally approved by the Cabinet. In addition, it must include not only information on the benefits of the visit/conference, but also an assessment of whether those benefits matched those originally envisaged. Officers had also been reminded of the timescale by which reports must be submitted to this Committee. The conference approval form had also been amended to ensure future reports back were scheduled in at the time of approval and a copy of the revised form was attached for information in Appendix 1. In addition, the Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee would in future be informed on a regular basis if any reports were not submitted within the deadline, to monitor progress and ensure that there were no further delays.

RESOLVED that the update be noted and that the action taken to avoid the submission of late reports back on conference attendance and foreign visits in future, be endorsed.

49. Report Back on Conference – International Conference: Remembrance as a Commitment for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights

The Committee noted a report back on the attendance of Natalie Heidaripour, City Services and Development Directorate, at the International Conference: Remembrance as a Commitment for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights, which was held in Dresden from 8th to 11th February 2008.

Attendance had provided an opportunity to meet with a range of educationalists, and academics involved in education work around the themes of peace, reconciliation and remembrance. It further developed links with partners in Dresden, developed knowledge and ideas focussing on human rights and citizenship and assisted in making contacts with potential international partners. It also enabled the promotion of the City of Coventry and the new gallery at The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum that explored Coventry's links to peace and reconciliation through the history of the City and its communities, in an international arena.

50. Report Back on Conference – Japanese Association of Language Teachers Aspects of Storytelling Conference

The Committee noted a report back on the attendance of Kusumika Chatterjee, Children, Learning and Young People Directorate, at the Japanese Association of Language Teachers - Aspects of Storytelling Conference, which was held in Japan from 14th October to 5th November 2008.

Attendance had provided an opportunity to gain experience in teaching English in a totally non-English speaking country and to prepare for teaching students visiting Warwick University from Hiroshima University.

51. Report Back on Conference – PeaceJam International Conference

The Committee noted a report back on the attendance of Balbir Sohal and Jane Manton, Children, Learning and Young People Directorate, at the PeaceJam International Conference, an international education program, which was held in Los Angeles, California from 10th to 15th September 2008.

Attendance had provided an opportunity to meet the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, to network with a diverse group of young people and adults and to developing knowledge and ideas about how peace can be explored. Other positive outcomes included positive experiences for the young people that had attended which had assisted in directing their futures and that Coventry had been selected to host the UK National Peace Jam Slam in October as part of the Holocaust Memorial Day educational programmes.

52. Report Back on Conference - International Study Visit - Reggio

The Committee noted a report back on the attendance by officers of the Children, Learning and Young People Directorate, at the International Study Visit, relating to the approach to young children's learning, which was held in Reggio Emilia, Italy from 14th to 21st November 2008.

Attendance at the Visit had provided the opportunity for discussions with international partners and for Coventry Early Years Staff to identify partnership working. The experiences and observations of the visit would influence future approaches to children's services and scope for discussion on approaches and individual learning paths.

53. Report Back on Conference – European Framework 7 Bid – TRUS – Hybrid Bus Project

The Committee noted a report back on the attendance by Nick Richards and Miles Mackie of the City Services and Development Directorate, at the European Framework 7 Bid – TRUS – Hybrid Bus Project Partner Meeting, relating to the development of a hybrid low carbon bus for trial in Coventry along bus route number 34, which was held in Dusseldorf, Germany on 29th November 2007.

Although the bid was not successful, attendance at the Meeting assisted in building a better understanding of partner needs and priorities which had been put to new bids. The European Partnership had agreed to maintain contact should any future bid opportunities arise.

54. Report Back on Conference – Interaction Trust the Difference Leadership Programme

The Committee noted a report back on the attendance by Balbir Sohal of the Children, Learning and Young People Directorate, at the Interaction Trust the Difference Leadership Programme, relating to strengthening leadership in contexts where difference lead to tension and threatened peace within communities, which was held in Tanzania, Africa on 15th to 18th December 2008.

In addition to equipping leaders with the tools to facilitate conversations across cultures and within communities at risk of conflict and the strengthening of relations and networks between the UK and Africa through joint learning work, attendance at the Programme had resulted in both developing a partnership with CVOne and also the Parenthesis Project. This literacy Project involved producing the 'Biggest Book in the World', a book of stories from Coventry children and communities that would be available to go on tour to Coventry schools.

55. Report Back on Conference – Visit to Brussels, Belgium to Sign the Covenant of Mayors

The Committee noted a report back on the attendance by Councillor Lee, former Cabinet Member (Climate Change, Housing and Sustainability) in 2008/2009, at the Signing Ceremony of the Covenant of Lord Mayors Scheme, a European Commission initiative which engaged local authorities and their citizens in tackling climate change, which was held in Brussels, Belgium on 10th February 2009.

Commitment to tackling climate change at European level enabled the City Council to gain considerable credibility, regionally, nationally and EU-wide as being one of the first UK cities to sign up to the Covenant and demonstrated commitment to tackling the issue. Coventry would also be part of a permanent network with other cities in the UK and the EU to share information and apply good practices to improve energy efficiency significantly in the urban environment. There was also the potential for accessing additional low-cost funding from the European Investment Bank to support ground-breaking energy efficiency and sustainable energy investment programmes.

56. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2010/2011

The Committee noted the Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2010/11, including the addition of a progress report on the abc Transport Reviews to be submitted to the January 2011 meeting of the Committee.

The Committee also noted that issues relating to the Comprehensive Spending Review may be added to the Work Programme in the New Year.

57. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

58. Meeting Evaluation

The Board evaluated the meeting. Comments given by members, which included that the meeting had been well structured and had provided informative discussions, would be used to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of future meetings.