

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 8 July 2015

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
(Deputy Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor S Bains
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor P Seaman
Councillor K Taylor
Councillor D Welsh

Other Members: Councillors J Clifford, A Lucas, K Maton and E Ruane

Employees (by Directorate):

V Castree, Resources Directorate
Y Corden, People Directorate
L Knight, Resources Directorate
J Moore, Chief Executive's Directorate
J Venn, Chief Executive's Directorate
A West, Resources Directorate

Apologies: Councillor J Blundell, J Mutton and M Mutton

Public Business

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st April, 2015 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

3. Overview and Scrutiny Management

The Committee noted that reports of the Chief Executive concerning 'Devolution and Economic Growth – A Combined Authority for the West Midlands' had been considered by Cabinet at their meetings on 28th May and 17th June, 2015. The Committee noted that Councillor Duggins, Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee had attended both meetings and agreed that the decisions were urgent and that call-in should not apply.

In accordance with Part 3E, paragraph 19.4 of the Council's Constitution, the reports were presented to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to inform them of the reasons for urgency. The reason for urgency at the first meeting was that effect needed to be given to decisions in relation to this matter at the earliest opportunity. The reason for urgency at the second meeting was that in order to meet the timescales, engagement on this issue needed to commence immediately and could not be deferred.

4. Devolution and Economic Growth - A Combined Authority for the West Midlands, Progress Report

The Committee received a verbal update from the Assistant Director, Policy concerning the latest position on the creation of a combined authority for the West Midlands. Councillor Lucas, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership and Councillor Maton, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act set out the statutory process for the establishment of a combined authority. Initially two or more Councils undertake a review of their area specifically in relation to the effectiveness and efficiency of transport and arrangements to promote economic development and regeneration within the area covered by the review. This includes consultation with residents, businesses and other local organisations. The local authorities then publish a 'scheme' for the proposed authority which is submitted to the Secretary of State. A further formal process of consultation is undertaken before an order is made to be approved by Parliament.

Birmingham and the Black Country declared their intention to set up a combined authority last November and asked Coventry and other neighbouring authorities to consider joining, so there was now a requirement to work to a tight timescale. The intention was that a combined authority would be set up by April 2016.

Local engagement was currently taking place. At the Council meeting on 14th July, the Council would debate and agree to consultation taking place between 1st August and 7th September on the review and draft scheme. The Council would then decide whether to proceed and submit the scheme to the Secretary of State.

Attention was drawn to the launch of the combined authority which took place in Coventry on 6th July and to the support that had been received from the three LEPs.

Councillor Lucas and Councillor Maton outlined their support for Coventry being part of the West Midlands combined authority, particularly in light of the economic and regeneration benefits and the importance of size, scale and ambition. Further information was provided on the position of Warwickshire.

The Committee questioned the officer and Cabinet Members on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- Clarification about the position of a 'metro mayor'
- The importance of effective engagement to get the right message across

- A concern about the strong existing relationship between Birmingham and the Black Country
- Whether it would be better for Coventry to combine with Warwickshire.

5. **Under 18's Conceptions - Current Situation in Coventry**

The Committee considered a briefing note of the Director of Public Health which provided an update on the under 16 and under 18 conception rates in Coventry and outlined the actions being taken which aimed to continue to reduce the teenage conception rates in the city. Councillor Ruane, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Councillor Clifford, Deputy Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services attended the meeting for the consideration of this item. Kerry Beasley and Natalie Hutton, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust, were also in attendance.

The current under 16 and under 18 conception rates in Coventry were higher than both the national and West Midlands average although data from recent years suggested that the city was sustaining a downward trend.

Research had demonstrated that under 18 conceptions were associated with a wide range of complex factors. In 2009 the National Support Team reviewed the practice in Coventry and provided guidance to decrease the number of under 18 conceptions. The briefing note set out the actions now being undertaken in response. Under strategic leadership and accountability, reference was made to the redesigned sexual health service which was recently retendered and to the development of a city wide Sexual Health Action Plan, a copy of which was set out at an appendix to the briefing note.

The key priorities were also detailed. A Sexual Health Programme Board had been established to monitor the delivery of the Action Plan.

Information was provided on relationship and sex education in and outside of school settings; the support available to parents to enable them to discuss relationship and sex; young people friendly contraceptive services and condom schemes; training for health and non-health professionals; targeted prevention for young people at risk; and communicating strong messages to young people.

The Committee questioned the officers and Cabinet Member on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- A concern about the support provided for vulnerable young people at The Foyer
- Concerns that Grace Academy didn't promote the C-card and how relationship education is being taught
- A request for Ward Councillors to be informed of the situation in their Ward including potential hot spots
- The importance of educational opportunities and raising low aspirations
- A request for information on Local After Children and details relating to different ethnic groups
- The partnership work with the two local universities
- The support being given to Looked After Children to enable them to gain apprenticeships or to continue studying after leaving school.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The review of the current data available regarding teenage pregnancy in Coventry be noted and the actions outlined in the briefing note, aimed at continuing to reduce the teenage conception rate in Coventry, be endorsed.

(2) Officers to explore the possibility of making more local data relating to Wards and hotspots available to Members, subject to data protection and confidentiality requirements.

(3) Officers to explore the possibility of identifying more detailed data where it helps understanding and targeting of actions, including Looked After Children and ethnicity, subject to data protection and confidentiality requirements.

(4) A briefing note be circulated to Committee members providing an update on the current position at The Coventry Foyer including how concerns raised are being addressed.

6. Coventry Strategic Objectives Plan for Children and Young People Who Are Missing, at Risk of or Experiencing Sexual Exploitation

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of People on the 'Coventry Strategic Objectives Plan for Children and Young People who are Missing, at Risk of, or Experiencing Sexual Exploitation'. The report was approved by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People at his meeting on 30th June, and Councillor Ruane attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The report provided an update on the Coventry Strategic Objectives Delivery Plan for children and young people who were missing, at risk of, or experiencing child sexual exploitation (CSE). The CSE Delivery Plan was a multi-agency plan which was monitored by the CSE Steering Group, who received regular updates on progress against the delivery plan. A copy of the plan was attached as an Appendix to the report. A key aspect of the plan was to proactively identify children and young people who could be vulnerable to this and other types of harmful behaviour so that interventions that negated or minimised risk could be provided.

The report also provided an update on the new CSE Team that went 'live' in April and was based in Christchurch House with the Referral and Assessment Service and MASH. For the first six weeks the team had focused on team induction. Following consultation with young people, the team had been named 'Coventry Horizon'. Team members were working well together and were very enthusiastic and motivated. A team manager commenced employment in June.

The Committee questioned the officers and Cabinet Member on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- The importance of informing Ward Councillors about issues and potential hot spots in their area
- The importance of Councillors attending training sessions

- The position concerning Looked After Children and how the situation was handled when children returned after they had been missing including finding out if they had been exploited
- The importance of involving all communities to reinforce the message that CSE was not acceptable under any circumstance and that everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding children
- What support was provided to the Roma community to ensure children and teenagers attended school
- What was happening to taxi drivers who operated in Coventry but were licensed by another authority, would they be offered CSE training
- DBS checks for Councillors
- Monitoring of the RAG targets and timescales included in the CSE Delivery Plan.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The report submitted to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People meeting on 30th June, 2015 be noted.

(2) A progress report be submitted to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee meeting scheduled for 10th February, 2016 including an update on timescales and a comparison of the RAG ratings included in the CSE Delivery Plan.

7. Civic Visit to Dresden, 12 to 15 February, 2015

The Committee considered a report of the former Lord Mayor, Councillor Hazel Noonan, concerning her civic visit to Dresden, Germany from 12th to 15th February, 2015 with representatives from Coventry Cathedral. The purpose of the visit was to represent Coventry at a number of ceremonial events as part of the 70th anniversary of the destruction of Dresden. HRH The Duke of Kent and the Archbishop of Canterbury were also in attendance.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The report be noted.

(2) The report on this and other similar visits be highlighted as part of Coventry's City of Culture bid, in light of the evidence of Coventry's strong international twinning and cultural links.

8. Scrutiny Work Programme 2015/16

The Committee considered a briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator appended to which was the 2015/16 work programme for all the Scrutiny Boards and the Committee itself. The issues included had been identified at the first informal meetings of the current municipal year.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the content of the initial work programme and Scrutiny Boards be requested to give priority to significant issues.

9. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2015/2016**

The Committee considered their Work Programme for the new municipal year.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be updated as follows:

(1) Marmot and the Council Plan Half Year Performance and Equalities to be considered at the meeting on 13th January, 2016.

(2) An update on Child Sexual Exploitation to be considered at the meeting on 10th February, 2016.

(3) City Centre First and City Centre Disposal and Coroner's Office to be removed from the outstanding items on the work programme list.

10. **Outstanding Issues**

The Committee noted that all outstanding issues had been included in the Work Programme for the current year.

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

There were no other items of public business

(Meeting closed at 12.00 pm)