

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 9 December 2015

Present:
Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar (Deputy Chair)
Councillor S Bains (substitute for Councillor T Khan)
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor J Mutton
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor K Taylor
Councillor S Walsh (Substitute for Councillor R Lakha)

Other Members Present:- Councillor Maton, Cabinet Member for Business
Enterprise and Employment
Councillor J Clifford

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executive's: M. Reeves

Resources: S Bennett, V Castree, G Cowley, D Horton-Rayner,
A West

Representatives of the: M. Buxcey, J Gurney, G Kibble, A Markey, D Patten
Welfare Reform Working T Rees
Together Group

Apologies:- Councillor T Khan, Councillor R Lakha,
Councillor D Welsh

Public Business

43. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

44. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st October were agreed and signed as a true record.

RESOLVED that, further to Minute 38 relating to “NUCKLE – Arena Railway Station” officers be requested to provide a written update on the current situation, including timescale, to all Members of the Committee by 18 December, 2015.

45. **Welfare Reform Update**

The Committee considered a Briefing Note which provided information on Welfare Reform which had been produced by the Welfare Reform Working Together Group, made up of a number of agencies from across the City, representatives of whom attended the meeting.

Attached to the Briefing Note were information relating to:-

- The membership and remit of the Welfare Reform Working Together Group
- Welfare Reform report of the Working Group which contained information under each section on suggested actions to mitigate effects of the reform
- A Welfare Reform timeline
- Case studies on the impact of welfare reform changes on individuals, including the impact of those in work
- A Council Tax Support and Welfare Reform Factsheet containing data on the number of people who have felt the changes and hotspots of areas in the City most affected
- A Report of a Survey into the Impacts of Welfare Benefits Reform, November 2015 by Wendy Eades that covered upcoming challenges and changes, including information on implementation of Universal Credit
- Welfare benefit related highlights in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement November 2015.

The Committee questioned officers and representatives of the Working Together Group on aspects of the Briefing Note, particularly in relation to:-

- Identifying families in Coventry who will be most affected by the reform and providing those families with information
- Sanctions, how those sanctions are imposed and appealed against and information and guidance provided to people about sanctions
- The impact of the welfare reform measures on young people, particularly Care Leavers and Looked After Children

The Chair, Councillor Duggins, on behalf of the Committee, thanked all of the representatives for their attendance at the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:-

- 1) **Notes the content of the Briefing Note and presentation**

- 2) **Supports the continued work of the Welfare Reform Working Together Group**
- 3) **Requests that the Working Together on Welfare Reform Group:-**
 - i) **Closely monitors the impact of the welfare reforms, particularly in relation to the impact on young people, including Looked After Children and Care Leavers**
 - ii) **Produces an information leaflet on sanctions, similar to the model produced by Newcastle**
 - iii) **Invites representatives of MIND to join the Working Together Group**
- 4) **Recommends to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources that appropriate information and publicity in relation to Welfare Reform be sent out with all Council Tax bills**

46. **Update on Combined Authorities**

The Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, Councillor Maton, together with Martin Reeves, Chief Executive, provided a comprehensive update at the meeting on the West Midlands Combined Authority (CA).

The Committee questioned the Cabinet Member and Chief Executive on aspects of the update including:-

- The Constitution of the CA
- Opportunities for the City to expand and improve transport links as a result of the CA
- Timescales for its implementation and review

RESOLVED that the update be noted

47. **Outstanding Issues**

The Committee notes that all outstanding issues had been included in the Work Programme.

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

The Committee noted their Work Programme for the current municipal year.

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

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.05pm)