

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 13 January 2016

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor J Mutton
Councillor M Mutton

Other Members: Councillors F Abbott, J Clifford and K Maton

Employees (by Directorate):

A Baker, People Directorate
C Hickin, People Directorate
G Holmes, Resources Directorate
L Knight, Resources Directorate
I Lahel, People Directorate
S C Lam, People Directorate
R Limb, People Directorate
I Merrifield, People Directorate
J Moore, People Directorate
A Quigley, People Directorate
M Reeves, Chief Executive

Apologies: Councillors N Akhtar, R Auluck, A Lucas, K Taylor and
D Welsh

Public Business

50. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

51. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th December, 2015 were signed as a true record.

Further to Minute 44 concerning 'Nuckle – Arena Railway Station', Members sought clarification as regards to the opening date for the Arena and Bermuda Park railway stations. In addition, attention was drawn to the Local Plan, in particular Appendix 1, which had been approved by both Cabinet and Council the previous day, and included a proposal for a new railway station at Woodfield School site, Stoneleigh Road as part of the wider Nuckle project.

RESOLVED that officers be requested to provide a further written update on the latest situation regarding the opening date for the Arena and Bermuda

Park stations and an explanation about the proposal for a new railway station at Woodfield School site.

52. Council Plan - Progress at Half Year 2015/16 - Including Equalities

The Committee considered a report and received a presentation of the Executive Director of People which set out the progress made against the Council Plan in the first six months of 2015/16. A copy of the performance report was set out at an appendix. The report had already been approved by Cabinet at their meeting on 5th January, 2016. The Council's equality objectives were aligned to the Council Plan priorities and, where available, the report included analysis to show the impact on protected groups in the city. Councillor Abbott, Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise, whose portfolio included Equalities attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The Council Plan setting out the strategic direction and priorities for the next ten years was approved by Council in January, 2014 and refreshed in July, 2015 to reflect the Council's vision to be a top ten city where everybody could share in the benefits of growth, including the City's most vulnerable residents.

The report provided a high-level summary and gave an overview including, where applicable, contextual information to describe what was happening in Coventry and how this compared with elsewhere. Where headline indicators had been reported previously, progress had been compared with previous years; where the indicator was new this would form the baseline against which to measure future progress.

Of the 64 headline indicators 33 had improved (52%); 7 stayed the same (11%); 7 had worsened (11%). 4 did not have a target (6%) and progress could not be determined for the remaining 13 (20%). This was expected at half year as a number of indicators were updated annually. Progress had been made in the context of continued cuts to government grants meaning that by 2015 the Council had £200 less to spend per person as compared to 2010.

In relation to the Council's equality objectives, as a Marmot city, Coventry recognised that health inequalities resulted from other areas of social deprivation. The measures for the wider determinants of health were embedded in the Council Plan helping to make sure that all service areas contributed to reducing health inequality in the city.

The presentation provided further information on the 64 headline indicators which had been categorised as 18 for globally connected, 33 for locally committed and 13 for delivering priorities with fewer resources. Information was also provided on the 59 equality indicators.

The Committee questioned the officers on a number of issues relating to the presentation and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- Whether there was likely to be future indicators for digital connectivity ie for residents and businesses
- What was required for Coventry to become a Top 10 City

- Concerns about the statistics relating to schools and recycling and a request for the reasons why the figures have dropped
- In the present financial climate and the increasing need for reliance on business rates to deliver key services post 2020, what was the current and future position regarding the business rate base
- Concerns about the lack of reference in the report to Coventry being an Age Friendly city and the need to consider the older generation as well as students when planning for changes in the city centre and elsewhere in the city
- A reference to the significant numbers of calls being made to the Contact Centre regarding missed bin collections and whether this was impacting on the statistics for recycling
- Whether the fly tipping figures were affected by a lack of reporting of incidents by residents in certain areas
- Clarification about why specific reference to Asian Bangladeshi had been included in the education figures for Key Stage 4 and a concern relating to the details for the statistics for early years as to why the figures for Asian Pakistani were lower than those for Asian Bangladeshi and Asian Indian
- Concerns about the early years figures for boys and the Key Stage 2 and 4 details for Looked After Children – it was clarified that the education statistics would be looked at in greater detail by the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board (2).
- A comment that the reduction in the number of employees at the City Council was viewed as a positive.

RESOLVED that:

(1) Having considered the progress detailed in the half year performance report, the Committee noted that the Education statistics were due to be considered by the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board (2) at their meeting on 25th February, 2016 including the figures for Looked After Children and Coventry – A Top 10 City was due to be considered at the Committee meeting scheduled for 24th February, 2016.

(2) Officers be requested to send details of the 59 Equality indicators, as highlighted in the presentation, to Members of the Committee.

(3) Officers be requested to circulate further details regarding the Education headline indicators, including comparison figures for other local authority areas, to Members of the Committee.

53. Update on the Perpetrator Programme as Part of the New Domestic Violence and Abuse Services (DVA) Commissioned Services for Coventry

Further to Minute 29/15, the Committee considered a briefing note of the Executive Director of People which provided an update on the Perpetrator programme provided by Fry Housing Trust including child perpetrators and referral times. Councillor Abbott, Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise attended the meeting for the consideration of this item along with Sarah Marsden and Eileen Havern, Fry Housing Trust.

The briefing note indicated that the new commissioned Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) service was commissioned on 29th September, 2014 and replaced existing contracts. A key component of the new service was the introduction of the formal perpetrator programme 'Brighter Futures' which had been developed by Coventry University and was a pro-active approach to managing DVA in the city. The Committee were informed that Coventry was one of a small number of authorities who commissioned a specific service for perpetrators with a contracted spend of £68,000 per annum.

Brighter Futures was a solution focussed perpetrator programme which lasted 10 weeks, run mainly through group sessions. The University had worked closely with Fry Housing to train and develop their staff to deliver the programme.

The programme was also open to people under the age of 18 but only 2 aged 16-17 had accessed the service. 230 children had been referred to social care where the perpetrator had accessed the service. Between April and September, 2015 119 people had accessed the programme, of which 54 had completed. There were approximately 40 people waiting to access the course. The briefing note provided further details about the participants.

Information was provided on the initial outcomes for the programme to date. As part of the contractual requirement, Fry Housing was to obtain feedback from perpetrators. In summary, there were high reports on positive feedback/changes; perpetrators having a greater understanding of DVA; and victims were reported to feel safer.

The following measures were proposed to further develop the service:

- Prioritising the waiting list based on assessed risk through referring agencies
- Regional work to look at work with perpetrators
- Look at training professionals from other organisations to deliver the programme
- Training in appropriate languages/ interpreters.

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

- Work with the Statutory Agencies
- Further details about the initial outcomes for the programme. There was an acknowledgement about the difficulties and complexities of obtaining feedback for outcomes
- Details about the support available for perpetrator's victims
- Further details about availability, waiting times and prioritisation
- The liaison and work with new communities in the city
- Clarification about 1:1s, group sessions and the need to provide catch up sessions
- A breakdown of where referrals came from and if there were hotspots
- Clarification that the numbers given for completing the programme were low because clients were still engaged on the programme
- What actions were taken to prevent perpetrators from dropped out of the programme
- What was the national situation as regards to perpetrator programmes

- Potential funding opportunities which would allow for programme expansion
- The importance of information sharing to secure outcomes was highlighted, any future funding bids would be determined on outcomes.

RESOLVED that the progress update on the Perpetrator Programme provided by Fry Housing Trust be welcomed and officers be requested to keep Members updated regarding the considerations of the Police and Crime Commissioner about a potential regional Perpetrator Programme.

54. Update on Combined Authorities

Martin Reeves, Chief Executive and Councillor Maton, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment provided an update on the latest position regarding the West Midlands Combined Authority (CA).

The Committee were informed about recent meetings between the Cabinet Member and local businesses, held to explain the concept of the CA and to listen to their key concerns. The supportive views from businesses were highlighted along with their concerns relating to skill shortages and business rates. Attention was drawn to the requirement for funding to improve the local skills base.

The Committee were updated about the position relating to other authorities in the West Midlands area who had not signed up to the CA. There were no major changes to the timetable and it was now all about delivery.

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

- The impact of the slowing down of the Chinese economy
- Further details about the position of other authorities.

RESOLVED that the latest update be noted.

55. National Children and Adult Services (NCAS) Conference, Bournemouth, 14th to 16th October, 2015

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of People concerning her attendance, along with Councillor Clifford, Deputy Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services and Pete Fahy, Director of Adult Services, at the National Children and Adult Services (NCAS) Conference which was held in Bournemouth from 14th to 16th October, 2016. Councillor Clifford attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The report detailed the benefits of attending which included understanding the leading and emerging developments across social care and where these could be applied to Coventry. The costs of attendance were highlighted.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The attendance at the 2015 NCAS Conference as being a valuable use of officer and member time be endorsed.

(2) Due to the unique scale and scope of the NCAS Conference, it be agreed that the City Council continues to send an appropriate delegation (to include at least one Cabinet Member or their Deputy) to future conferences.

56. Outstanding Issues

The Committee noted that all outstanding issues had been included in their Work Programme, Minute 57 below refers.

57. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2015/2016

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

RESOLVED that:

(1) The Work Programme be noted.

(2) Consideration be given to moving the item 'Coventry Strategic Objectives Plan for Children and Young People who are Missing, at Risk of or Experiencing Sexual Exploitation' from the meeting on 10th February, 2016 to another date to allow for the attendance of Councillor M Mutton, Chair of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2).

(3) Welfare Reform to be considered at a future meeting in the new municipal year.

58. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.00 pm)