

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 3.00 pm on Wednesday, 4 November 2015

Present:

Members: Councillor T Khan (Chair)
Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor M Auluck
Councillor P Male
Councillor K Mulhall
Councillor B Singh
Councillor D Skinner
Councillor R Thay

Other Members: Councillor F Abbott
Councillor R Lancaster

Employees (by Directorate): C Dear (Chief Executive's Directorate)
V De-Souza (People Directorate)
K Fawcett (Place Directorate)
A Maqsood (Place Directorate)
M McGinty (People Directorate)
M Metcalf (People Directorate)
J Moore (People Directorate)
G Paddan (Resources Directorate)
H Shankster (People Directorate)
A Smith (Resources Directorate)
A West (Resources Directorate)

Apologies: Councillor J Innes

Public Business

13. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared.

14. Minutes

The minutes of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) meeting held on 16 September 2015 were signed as a true record; subject to the inclusion of apologies from Councillor Skinner and with reference to Minute 9 (Twelve Month Implementation Report) the following: ' KPI data, client data to be supplied and information on internal inspections'.

15. **Community Development Service - Impact and Priorities**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Executive Director of Place on the Community Development Service (CDS) which was established in 2014, following a consultation on the future of neighbourhood working in the City in 2013. As a result of this process £820k was saved. Since its creation a further three posts had been deleted as a contribution towards Council savings requirements.

The same report was due to be considered by the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Cooperatives and Social Enterprise on 20 November 2015 and any comments made by the Scrutiny Board would be considered by the Cabinet Member.

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

- Number of redundancies within the Council since the budget cuts
- The areas that have been targeted – there are 700 different groups/activities listed on the directory. Reaching the deprived areas
- Sharing experiences and connecting people to self-serve – empowering communities
- A breakdown of usage over a five month period
- Funding and accessing funding with support from the Council and other organisations
- Feedback and evaluating the impact on the organisation; providing data for a better understanding. Demonstrating the success – examples of groups who have benefitted from the community grants

The Scrutiny Board discussed the case studies provided and requested that a briefing note be made available to Members of the Board detailing action that has been taken from the feedback from citizens who have attended the community events.

RESOLVED, that the Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise.

16. **Active Citizens, Strong Communities Strategy: Progress Update and Priorities**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Executive Director of People on Active Citizens, Strong Communities Strategy. The report provided an update on progress made towards making Coventry a 'social enterprise city', which has been supported in principle by the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise.

The main aim of the report was to consider key learning that has emerged from a number of pilot engagement programmes and other opportunities for strengthening implementation. Members raised questions in respect of the Ignite

Programme and the development of an Early Action Resilience Centre, which would provide a City-wide resource to share learning and support good practices. It was noted that some of the deprived areas were the most active in terms of helping and supporting.

The Scrutiny Board discussed the strategy and questioned officers on the following:

- Opportunities for all groups in the community
- S106 money allocation and bids – e.g. Ignite Programme
- Helping entrepreneurship and growing social enterprise and supporting organisations
- The Council's role as a key facilitator
- Support in affluent areas as well as in areas of deprivation
- The work of the Community Development Service and the Active Citizens, Strong Communities Strategy are very closely linked and it was helpful for the two to be reported together – to maximise opportunities for partnership and networking
- Delivering more for less – following the recent cuts

The Scrutiny Board noted that work has been undertaken across the City to provide support in respect of applications for external funding/bids and web based presence to provide information for the community.

RESOLVED, that the Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise.

17. **Coventry Homefinder Policy - 12 months review**

The Scrutiny Board received a report of the of the Executive Director of Place, which provided an update of the first 12 months of operation of the new Policy, along with analysis of the effects of the changes on the Homefinder Register and the allocation of available properties.

The Coventry Homefinder Policy Review – 12 months from implantation document appended to the report which provided statistical analysis and the effects of the Policy changes. Members sought clarification from officers on the following:

- 10% of properties reserved for current tenants – in future existing tenants to have the opportunity to move whilst also ensuring that those in housing need are prioritised and housing associations would be able to assist their tenants
- Allocation of properties – choices for families in terms of area and size of property
- Assisting customers with IT needs - to enable them to bid for a property
- Impact on homelessness and temporary accommodation. Concern raised on the number of evictions from private sector – global impact

- The night shelter, homelessness and the work of the Salvation Army
- Housing needs of the armed forces

The Board acknowledged the work undertaken and supports the Head of Housing and his Team.

Councillor Thay abstained on recommendation 2, as he is a member of the Whitefriars Housing Group.

RESOLVED, that the Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise.

18. **Outstanding Issues**

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

19. **Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Board considered the Work Programme for 2015-16 and noted that the following items had been added:

- 1) Residents' Parking Schemes - March 2016
- 2) Waste collection policy – to be combined with a visit to the recycling plant - January 2016
- 3) School Crossing Patrol – January 2016

Resolved that the items added to the Work Programme be noted and the Christmas Waste collection information to be circulated to Members before Christmas.

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

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 5.10pm)