

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 10.00 am on Friday, 8 July 2016

Present:

Members: Councillor McNicholas (Chair)
Councillor R Auluck
Councillor J Birdi
Councillor R Brown
Councillor M Hammon
Councillor L Kelly (Substitute for Councillor Lucas)
Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor H Sweet

Other Members: Councillor D Welsh (Deputy Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration)

Employees (by Directorate):

Place P Boulton, K Hammond, K Mawby

Resources G Holmes, M Salmon

Others Present: Guy Craddock, Travel West Midlands

Apologies: Councillor Lucas (Substitute Councillor Kelly)
Councillor O'Boyle (Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration) (By Invitation)

Public Business

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests made.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2016 were noted.

3. Public Transport in Coventry

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a briefing note of the Executive Director of Place that provided the Board with background information on the governance, responsibilities and operation of public transport services in Coventry, to inform the select committee meeting on 21st September 2016.

Nationally, public transport included a range of different modes of travel, including heavy rail, tram and light rail, rapid transit systems, bus, taxi and cycle hire. In Coventry, public transport provision was currently primarily concentrated around bus, rail and taxi services, however the focus of the briefing note was the mass passenger carrying modes of transport, namely rail and bus.

Bus and rail services were governed by various pieces of legislation and were planned and operated by a variety of organisations and companies. The briefing note provided an overview of the major elements involved such as legislation, governance and the key bus and rail services provided to the public. It also outlined important legislative changes which may have an impact on the provision of public transport in the future.

The Board questioned officers and discussed the following issues:

- Proposals for the review of bus gates/lanes – the rationale of the review, the impact of closures/reductions on the city’s transport and income stream, the effect on the city’s Primelines, and the sourcing of data on individual City bus lanes to ensure evidence based decisions
- Members sought clarification of the Bus Alliance arrangement, the Movement for Growth Strategy under which Coventry buses operate, the Midlands Engine, Midlands Connect who were investigating future smart card opportunities, the provisions of the new Bus Bill and the obligations of the West Midlands Combined Authority Non-Constituent Members
- West Coast Mainline and HS2 – the City Council’s response to the West Coast Mainline Consultation, wholly supporting the retention of the current service level, without which the economy and jobs in the city would be affected and the potential effects of HS2 on the use of current rail services
- Key bus routes within the West Midlands area - consistency of operation of management locally and across the 28 West Midlands bus operators
- Swift Cards – the use of a pre-credited cards for travel on the West Midlands Rail and Bus Networks
- Contactless Smart Cards – Pilot in Coventry later in 2016, the adoption of this form of payment by the West Midlands by 2020 and nationally by 2022
- Hackney Carriage Vehicles Policy – condition and age of vehicles, owner responsibilities and provision of service in the City
- Bus services consultation and surveys – consultation on service changes and the use of bus surveys

The Board requested that they be provided with the following as background information for their Select Committee meeting on 21st September 2016:

- The Web Link to ‘Select Committees Under Scrutiny’
- The City Council’s Hackney Carriage Vehicles Policy
- HS2 and West Coast Mainline rail proposals for future service and passenger information
- The Coventry Rail Story
- The Air Quality Report with the recommendation from Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

The Board agreed that the Authority's proposal to review Bus Gates/Bus Lanes, including the rationale behind the proposed review/changes and the impact on the City i.e. the benefits expected by a reduction; the effect on the City's Primelines; and income issues, would be the subject of the Board's 2nd November 2016 meeting. For this meeting, Members requested that they be provided with comparable data on other Cities Bus Lane/Bus Gate provision and reviews, as background information. The Board also agreed that Councillor Innes, Cabinet Member for City Services, be invited to attend the meeting to inform the Board of her recent visit to Liverpool where they have removed bus lanes in the City.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) agreed that:

- 1) **The contents of report be noted**
 - 2) **The following be identified as topic areas which require further scrutiny at the Select Committee of the Board on 21st September 2016:**
 - **HS2 and West Coast Mainline – Future Rail Service Provision**
 - **Hackney Carriage Services in the City – Policy for vehicles and service**
 - **Plans for future Bus Services – smart cards, bus alliance, routes, regional issues, movement for growth strategy, Midlands Engine, and Midlands Connect**
 - **West Midlands Combined Authority: i) Public Transport Governance - Roles of the West Midlands Combined Authority, the District and the City ii) £150m resource allocation for transport – proposed use of resource**
 - 3) **The Authority's proposed review of Bus Lanes and Bus Gates be considered by the Board at their meeting on 2nd November 2016.**
4. **Delivering the Jobs and Growth Strategy - Annual Progress 2015/16**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a report of the Executive Director of Place that summarised the progress made to deliver the Jobs and Growth Strategy.

The Jobs and Growth Strategy for Coventry, that supported the vision and priorities of the Council Plan, was endorsed by the Council in May 2014. It articulated how the council would use its resources to make Coventry a city that supported growth, providing jobs and prosperity for local people.

The report summarised the progress made to deliver the Strategy, which was now in its second year and was performing at or above target for all measures, for the twelve month period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

The Economy and Jobs service, part of the City Centre and Development Division, had directly contributed to creating 1,694 new job opportunities against a target of

1,000 set for the year. £323m of business investment had also been secured for the benefit of the city, with the Council's services directly supporting 398 businesses to grow and develop.

The number of people engaging with the Council's Employment Team had far exceeded targets set with over 6,800 workless, unemployed and vulnerable adults and young people accessing employment support in the past 6 months. 1,844 people who had engaged with the services provided had progressed into work. This was a significant achievement. The majority of these individuals were engaging through the Council's city centre Job Shop located in Bull Yard.

The Board questioned officers and discussed the following issues:

- European Funding Support – concerns about projects currently funded, future funding proposals, bidding for resources, timescales for changes and the effects on projects
- Business Rates – consultation and propose changes to the rating system. Scrutiny to have input to Consultation.
- Performance Targets - outcomes and future target setting
- New data base – to capture more detail about clients, providing better intelligence. Future reports to include data from the new data base.
- NEETS – Employment opportunity take-up by NEETS and difficulties in tracking young people, particularly 16-19 year olds
- 'Better-off' assessments – ensuring clients select best employment options and discourages poorly paid/extremely short term employment options
- Zero Hour Contracts – Officers confirmed that the City Council does not operate any zero hour contracts, does not encourage businesses to operate zero hour contracts, does not recommend zero hour contracts to clients and always offer to find alternatives and provide 'Better Off' calculations to discourage take-up of these contracts
- Apprenticeships – Links with employers offering/encouraging the offer of apprenticeships, Shared Apprenticeship in place, Council apprenticeships

The Board requested that European Funding issues be considered by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and that they be provided with the following:

- The notes of the Local Government Association Business Rates Seminar be circulated to Members of the Board. Item to go to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee over the Summer
- Information on apprenticeship take-up in the City
- Information on the letting and use of the 20, 50,000 square foot industrial units at Lythalls Lane
- Information on Office for Low Emission Vehicles

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) agreed:

- 1) That the progress made by the Jobs and Growth Strategy for Coventry in Year 2 from April 2015 – March 2016 be endorsed**

- 2) That Scrutiny be involved in the City Council's Response to the Business Rates consultation and that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee be requested to consider this matter, with Members of the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) and Business, economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) invited to attend for this item.
- 3) That the following recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration:
 - i) That consideration be given to an increase in resource to the Economy and Jobs Services Service to enable them to maximise their outcomes
 - ii) That targets for the Economy and Jobs Service be reviewed on a six monthly basis to take account of the changing climate for jobs and growth
 - iii) Data from new database be included in next report on clients progress
- 4) That a six month progress report of the Economy and Jobs Service be submitted to the Board in January 2017

5. **Work Programme 2016/2017, Select Committee and Task and Finish Groups**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that sought to formally establish the Board's task and finish groups, agree the work programme and timescales, and to adopt a Select Committee approach for consideration of public transport issues, for the ensuing year.

At the informal meeting of the Board on 8th June 2016, Members considered areas of work and the approach they would like to take to scrutinise the issues identified. The issues included: Public Transport; Tourism and Marketing; European Funding; Digital for Business; and Refreshed Green Space Strategy. They also agreed to receive reports on the MIPIM 2016 Conference; Progress on Selective Licensing; Progress on the Jobs and Growth Strategy.

They established a proposed work programme and timescales and agreed that they wanted to look at several items in more depth through task and finish groups and a select committee. They agreed that Task and Finish Groups would be established for: Tourism and Marketing; European Funding; Digital for Business; and Refreshed Green Space Strategy; and there would be a select committee approach to Public Transport.

Following a presentation and briefing note on the Digital Coventry Strategy at the meeting of the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) on 6th July 2016, the Board had agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to have input to and shape the Digital Coventry Strategy. Members of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) agreed that, as they were also proposing to establish a Task and Finish Group for digital issues, these should be a combined Group of both Boards.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) agreed to:

1) The establishment the following task and finish groups with memberships as follows:

i) Greenspace Strategy – Councillors Auluck (Chair), Hammon and McNicholas

ii) European Issues – Councillor Dr Auluck, Lucas (Chair) and Ridley

iii) Tourism and Marketing – Councillors Dr Auluck, Hammon and McNicholas (Chair)

2) That proposals to establish a task and finish group to consider ‘Digital for Business’ now be a joint task and finish group with Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1), who have already established a similar Group, with membership as follows: Councillors Brown, McNicholas and Ridley from Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) and Councillors Kelly and Thay already appointed to the Group by the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) (Chair to be confirmed)

3) A select committee approach to consider public transport issues.

4) The work programme, attached as an appendix to the briefing note.

5) Receive recommendations from the task and finish groups for the appropriate Cabinet Members, at subsequent meetings.

6. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

7. Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved

There were no other items of public business.

For future meetings, this item would be used to monitor progress on agreed actions and recommendations of the Board.

(Meeting closed at 12.25 pm)