

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)**  
**held at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 22 March 2017**

Present:

Members: Councillor J McNicholas (Chair)  
Councillor J Birdi  
Councillor R Brown  
Councillor M Hammon  
Councillor R Lancaster  
Councillor A Lucas  
Councillor T Mayer

Other Members (By Invitation): Councillor N Akhtar (Chair of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4))  
Councillor P Akhtar (Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities)  
Councillor D Welsh (Deputy Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration)

Others In Attendance (By Invitation): Bridget Harper, Coventry Older Voices Representative

Employees (by Directorate):

G Holmes, Resources Directorate  
C Knight, Place Directorate  
M Salmon, Resources Directorate

Apologies: Councillor G Crookes (Shadow Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration - by invitation)  
Councillor Miks (by invitation)  
Councillor H Sweet

## **Public Business**

### **46. Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests made.

### **47. Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016 and 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Further to minute 35/16 headed 'Report Back on Conference/Event - Marche International Des Professionnels De L'Immobilier (MIPIM) 15-18 March 2016':

- 1) The Board referred to the recommendation they had made to the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration relating to attendance at MIPIM March 2017 and whether a response had been received. They requested that the issue be referred to the Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to determine an appropriate course of action.
- 2) Councillor Brown, who attended MIPIM as a member of the Council's delegation at the event, gave a brief overview of his attendance and informed Members that a report back detailing the outcomes of the Council's attendance at the event would be submitted to the Board in due course.

#### 48. **Public Transport Select Committee - outcomes and learning**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), that would also be considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at their meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2017, that detailed the outcomes of the Board's Public Transport Select Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

In preparation for the Select Committee:

- Members of the Board visited the House of Commons on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2016 sat in on the Parliamentary Select Committee on Transport to observe Members questioning witnesses, they also met with Clive Betts MP the Chair of Communities and Local Government and questioned him on the process of a Select Committee in the Houses of Parliament.
- An Advisory Panel of the Board, comprising Councillors Brown, Lancaster, Mayer, and McNicholas (chair), was established to clarify and finalise key lines of enquiry and scope for the meeting.
- Members attended a number of briefings and were provided with background documentation on: Effective Questioning for Scrutiny; Connecting Coventry – Strategic Transport Investment Programme; Coventry Station Masterplan; and Coventry Rail Story.
- Members agreed the key lines of enquiry and the witnesses to be invited to provide evidence and also invited representatives from Coventry Older Voices and Transport Focus (the independent transport user watchdog) to participate in the meeting. Twitter and Facebook would also to be used to encourage public participation.

The Select Committee was set out in 3 sessions at which Members received presentations and information from witnesses and raised questions in response:

- Session 1 - How can train connectivity support economic development and business growth in the city?
- Session 2 - How can we improve the bus service in the city?
- Session 3 - What are the key accessibility issues for public transport in the city, and how can they be addressed?

Members agreed the lessons learned and ways to improve the process as follows:

- i. Specific briefings for Cabinet Members by Select Committee Chair and Officers should be held, especially if the themes of the committee span more than one portfolio.
- ii. Members on the select committee attend briefing sessions, avoid substitutions and fully familiarise themselves with background briefing papers.
- iii. Presentations from witnesses should be to introduce their role only and not provide additional or new information.
- iv. The number of witnesses should be kept to a maximum of three per session.
- v. Questions to witnesses should be given one at a time to allow multiple witnesses to respond, and should be limited to 60-90 seconds.
- vi. Questions to witnesses should be prepared prior to the meeting by members of the committee, based on background briefing information and themed or grouped together.
- vii. Careful consideration of payment to expert witness should be made where there are gaps in knowledge by Council officers.
- viii. Council officers who attend as witnesses should be senior officers with responsibility for implementing and managing policy decisions.
- ix. The select committee should be consist of a half-day to question witnesses with additional time for a plenary session, so recommendations can be identified on the day.
- x. Social media and other traditional communications are used well in advance of the meeting to enable questions from the public to be considered as part of the process.

Members discussed the outcomes of the Select Committee and the lessons learned, including ways to improve the process. They agreed that future Scrutiny Select Committees be encouraged with Cabinet Members being required to attend and that advanced publicity for Committees be maximised to encourage public participation.

The Board expressed their thanks to everyone who had been involved in the Select Committee.

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

- 1) Recommends that Transport for West Midlands(TfWM):**
  - i. Involves Elected Members and local residents in their planned Car Parking at Stations Review.**
  - ii. Considers how to better involve local people in planning the delivery of services, beyond existing processes.**
- 2) Recommends that the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration commissions a bus-user and non-user survey, just for Coventry, to identify specific local issues and concerns in order to promote buses as a mode of transport and increase usage.**
- 3) Recommends that the Cabinet Member for Adult Services:**
  - i. Considers developing a travel training programme for older people to support independence and address social isolation**

- ii. **Supports the Transport theme group of the Age-Friendly Coventry initiative.**
- 4) **Recommend that the Cabinet Member for City Services undertakes a review of Council vehicle usage, particularly during school hours, to see whether the vehicles could be used to support the transport requirements of vulnerable, ill and elderly people in the City.**
- 5) **Acknowledges the positive relationship the Council has with TfWM and the benefits of this relationship to the City.**
- 6) **Requests the Chair writes to everyone involved with the Select Committee to thank them for their work.**
- 7) **Agrees that the following items be added to their work programme for the next Municipal Year:**
  - i. **Multi-modal ticketing, for different modes of transport and for travel cross-boundary, especially with our Combined Authority partners beyond the TfWM area.**
  - ii. **Ways to address the effect congestion and road works have on public transport.**
  - iii. **Air quality, reducing emissions and greener fleets.**
  - iv. **How to promote and incentivise bus as a mode of transport, including addressing safety concerns.**
  - v. **Outcome of the bus lane review.**
  - vi. **Developments in rapid transport and very light rail.**
- 8) **Agrees to a Select Committee on Accessible Transport wider than public transport for the next Municipal Year.**
- 9) **Agrees that relevant Cabinet Members be required to attend all future Scrutiny Select Committees.**
- 10) **Agrees that advanced publicity for future Scrutiny Select Committees be maximised to encourage public participation.**

#### 49. **Very Light Rail**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) that sought to identify recommendations following the Board's visit to Warwick Manufacturing Group to look at developments being made in Very Light Rail.

As part of the Coventry Strategic Transport Investment Programme, approved at Cabinet and Council on 24th January 2017 (their minutes 102/16 and 100/16 respectively refer), it was agreed:

- To work with development partners and key stakeholders to develop the concept and feasibility of Very Light Rail as an urban rapid transit system;
- Dependent on the outcome of the above to seek to develop a Very Light Rapid Transit network appropriate for Coventry, subject to full feasibility and business case development.

Members therefore requested more information on Very Light Rail to consider the potential and possibilities for the City and a visit was planned for 13th March 2017 to Warwick Manufacturing Group to give Members an opportunity to ask questions of the organisations at the heart of new developments in this area.

Members questioned officers and the Deputy Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration and discussed the following issues:

- The importance of selling the concept to the public and the role Elected Members could have in promoting the benefits compared to alternatives and ensuring cross-party support for the project.
- Making sure that the project kept moving to make best use of funding available.
- The potential impact on the current transport system in the City.
- The cost saving compared to other mass transit systems.
- The development of the track being the most important area to get right.

The Board resolved to establish a Scrutiny Working Group to work alongside the Officer Working Group already in place, to support and monitor the development of this work. They requested that references to Very Light Rail in future reports and briefing notes be amended to Ultra-Light Rail.

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

- 1) Based on the visit to Warwick Manufacturing Group, the following recommendation be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration:**

**The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration is recommended to develop a partnership between the City Council, Warwick Manufacturing Group and a Rail Track provider, to further develop Ultra- Light Rail for the City.**

- 2) Agrees that a Scrutiny Working Group be established, to work alongside the Officer Working Group already in place, to support and monitor the development of this work.**

## **50. Progress on Green Space Strategy Task and Finish Group**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) that informed Members on the progress of the Green Space Strategy Task and Finish Group.

At their informal meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at which the Board determined their Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2016/2017, Members agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to support the development of a refreshed Green Space Strategy for the City.

The Group comprised Councillor Auluck (Chair), Councillor Hammon and Councillor McNicholas and they met four times between September 2016 and January 2017. During this time Members considered the current Green Space Strategy, what the key issues may be for a refreshed Green Space Strategy,

which departments and areas of the Council should contribute to the development of the Green Space Strategy (including Elected Members) and the commissioning process for a consultant to develop and refresh the Green Space Strategy. The scoping document for the Task and Finish Group was attached as an appendix to the Briefing Note and a further appendix set out the timetable for the process.

As the scope of the Group's work went beyond the end of the Municipal Year 2016/2017, for consistency, the Group supported the continued involvement of the current Membership of the Task and Finish Group for the Municipal Year 2017-2018 for the completion of the work.

The Board noted that the tendering process for the commissioning of a consultant was currently taking place with an anticipated award of the tender by 7<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

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

- 1) Notes the progress of the Green Space Strategy Task and Finish Group.**
- 2) Supports the involvement of the current Members on the Task and Finish Group in the development of the Green Space Strategy into the Municipal Year 2017-2018.**

**51. Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

**52. Work Programme 2016/2017**

**RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes that they have completed the business scheduled on the Board's Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2016/2017.**

**53. 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.

(Meeting closed at 11.10 am)