

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 11.00 am on
Wednesday, 18 January 2017

Present:

Members: Councillor R Lancaster (Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor G Crookes
Councillor D Gannon
Councillor L Kelly
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor R Singh (Deputy Chair)

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson

Other Members: Councillor K Maton

Employees (by Directorate):

D Cockroft, Place Directorate
A Coles, Place Directorate
J Essex, People Directorate
G Holmes, Resources Directorate
C Knight, Place Directorate
L Knight, Resources Directorate
K Nelson, People Directorate
A West, Resources Directorate

Apologies: Councillors M Mutton (Cabinet Member)

Public Business

46. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

47. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that approval be given to exclude the press and public under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the consideration of private report in Minute 52 below headed “Friargate Update Report” on the grounds that this report involves the likely disclosure of information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as it contains information relating to the financial affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

48. **Education Service Redesign**

The Committee considered a report and presentation of the Executive Director of People which set out the proposed Education Service redesign. The report was due to be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 24th January, 2017. Councillor Maton, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills attended the meeting for the consideration of this item. Sybil Hanson, Church of England Co-opted Member for Education matters also attended.

The report indicated that the Council had a strong education partnership with the Coventry Family of Schools, putting the needs of children and young people at the heart of everything it did. This was captured in the vision for education services: “As champions of children: Successful partnership working enables children, young people and adults to access high quality education and learning, develop resilience, make positive life choices and contribute to a vibrant Coventry city; and to lift the cloud of limitation for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and enable their entitlement to an ordinary life.”

Coventry’s overall performance had continued to improve and the city now had a higher percentage of pupils in good or outstanding schools (88%) than the national average. This local improvement was set in the context of a very challenging financial environment for both the local authority and for schools.

The redesign of Coventry’s Education Services, in collaboration with Coventry schools, was aimed at enabling services to be fit for purpose for Coventry children and young people, offering services that schools valued and dealt with grant cuts in a managed way.

Management proposals were outlined at the start of a consultation on 3rd October, 2016 and the consultation ended on 23rd November, 2016. This provided the opportunity for staff and other stakeholders to feedback views. The proposals for implementation outlined in the report took account of this feedback. There had been strong collaboration with schools on the development of the model throughout and the final proposals were discussed with the Primary and Secondary Executive Headteacher groups who gave full support and agreement to the outline proposals.

Appendix A of the report set out detailed descriptions of the teams and services in scope, alongside the original proposals. Appendix B, provided a summary of consultation feedback, the corresponding management response and the final proposals and recommendations for implementation, which reflected the outcome of the consultation process.

The proposals summarised in the report were in relation to the Hospital Education Service (including Pregnant School Girls Unit); Coventry Extended Learning Centre; Coventry Performing Arts Service; Work Related Learning Team; School Improvement; Minority Group Support Services; Special Educational Needs (SEN) Statutory Assessment and Provision Team; Educational Psychology; SEN Early Years Foundation Team; Social Emotional Mental Health and Well-being Team; Complex Communication traded offer; and the Sensory Team offer.

The presentation set out the financial strategy for the Coventry Education system; highlighted the timeline for the process; informed of the consultation outcomes; and detailed the new model including the proposals consulted on, the changes made following consultation and the recommendations for implementation. Attention was drawn to the staffing implications for each area. Overall the original proposal had a reduction of 74.49 FTE, the revised model had reduced this to 51.77 FTE.

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

- Support for the consultation process which was recognised as a good practice model
- Support for the redesigned education service
- Details of the service for pregnant school girls
- Whether flexibility is built into the system and whether the services will be evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis
- How Special Educational Needs and Disability services are affected, specifically links with health partners around support for children being assessed for autism
- The outdoor education service
- How the proposed changes to the Minority Group Support Service will affect schools with high proportions of community languages spoken.
- A request for the Committee to be kept updated on any further changes as a result of the evaluation, especially those services traded with schools.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The recommendations to Cabinet be endorsed.

(2) Scrutiny to be kept updated of any further changes as a result of evaluation, especially those services traded with schools.

(3) The Committee's thanks and appreciation be conveyed to Kirston Nelson, Director of Education, Libraries and Adult Education and all the team involved in the successful consultation process which informed the development of the new Education Service model.

(4) Members of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to be invited to the Skills Summit to be held in Coventry during April 2017.

49. Any Other Item of Public Business - Coventry Station Masterplan Update

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Place, which provided an update on the Coventry Station Masterplan. The report was due to be considered by Cabinet and Council at their meetings on 24th January, 2017.

The report indicated that the Coventry Station Masterplan programme was set to deliver transformational improvements to Coventry Railway Station. The Coventry Station Masterplan was developed in response to a 2014 study that looked at the city's future rail needs. It was initially approved at Cabinet in March 2015, funded by Local Growth Deal. Since then, the scheme had developed extensively in terms of design and scope to meet the needs of an aspirational and growing city. This report submitted detailed the current proposals that had been developed over the last 18 months, in partnership with the rail industry and other stakeholders.

Coventry Station had experienced the highest growth in rail passengers in the last 5 years outside of London. It was one of the busiest stations on the West Coast Mainline, after London and Birmingham New Street, but since opening in 1962 it had seen little investment or updating. It was given Grade II listed status by English Heritage in 1995, due to its modern architecture. Apart from the generally tired nature of the existing buildings, there were genuine capacity issues and it was essential that a fitting gateway to the city be created to underpin the redevelopment at Friargate and the wider city regeneration. It was also vital that a station be created that supported continued growth in patronage to underline the City's case for the retention and enhancement of rail services post HS2. The Station Masterplan was an integral part of the City Centre Area Action Plan and the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, and was central to the City Council's economic regeneration and improving connectivity to the wider region, including UK Central and HS2.

The City Council, working with Friargate LLP, had established a collaborative approach between Network Rail, the Department for Transport, the wider rail industry and Coventry and Warwickshire LEP to develop proposals to meet these objectives. As a consequence of this work the scope of the scheme had extended and the total programme had increased to £82.4m, which included £11.8m contingency which was good practice for rail schemes.

Coventry Station Masterplan would deliver extra capacity, accessibility and a better first impression of Coventry, within the station through the following new infrastructure:-

- A second footbridge connecting all four platforms and extended platform canopies;
- A second station entrance building, facing outwards onto Warwick Road and providing step free access to platforms;
- A 644 space multi-storey car park;
- A bus interchange connected directly to the station building via a new access tunnel under Warwick Road;
- Highway improvements;
- Bay platform (NUCKLE 1.2)

The highway improvements would provide the bulk of the infrastructure required to deliver the Friargate Masterplan and make provision for future Rapid Transit services via the railway station. A detailed summary of the scheme changes and enhanced programme from March 2015 to date was set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Coventry Station Masterplan works would be delivered in conjunction with NUCKLE 1.2, its 'sister' scheme, which would provide a new bay platform to enable service between Coventry and Nuneaton of two trains per hour, and provides extra capacity for additional services to support major events at Coventry Arena. The relocation of the existing Coventry to Nuneaton service into the bay platform would also improve performance and provide reliability benefits to longer distance services through the main station platforms.

The report set out all the detailed financial implications associated with the scheme and all the land ownership issues. Subject to funding approval, it was expected that all works would be completed by 2021.

Members were concerned that they had not had opportunity to scrutinise the issues contained in the report, especially significant financial implications. Members therefore requested that any further updates on progress come to Scrutiny as a matter of course.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The recommendations to Cabinet be endorsed.

(2) Cabinet be recommended to:

(i) Include Scrutiny in the reporting process relating to the Coventry Station Masterplan.

(ii) Ensure that the finances of the Masterplan are carefully monitored, including any additional proposed income streams.

50. Any Other Item of Public Business - Connecting Coventry - Strategic Transport Investment Programme

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Place, which set out a strategic transport investment strategy 'Connecting Coventry' and the opportunities for achieving this including working with Midlands Connect, Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). The report was due to be considered by Cabinet and Council at their meetings on 24th January, 2017.

The report indicated that Coventry was a dynamic and rapidly growing city where transport investment was essential to keep pace with continuing change. In 2004 the city's population was under 300,000. It had grown steadily since to 345,000 and was forecast to reach over 415,000 in the next 20 years. In the proposed next Local Plan period up to 2031 it was forecast that investment and development in Coventry would create 50,000 jobs, with a consequential growth in housing to meet the needs of the growing city.

The Council had been very successful in obtaining funding and delivering schemes from a number of sources for investment in the city's transport infrastructure, with £150m of improvements delivered over the last 5 years. There was now an opportunity to continue to build on this success. However in order to maximize the economic potential of the city and to take full advantage of developments such as High Speed Rail (HS2), it was essential that the Council

looked to get investment both directly within the city and also in strategic cross boundary transport schemes that support Coventry's growth aspirations.

The principal objectives of this strategy included improving the resilience of the road network (so the strategic road network did not come to a halt when a motorway had to be closed); ensuring connectivity to HS2 and job opportunities around the new station and linking key developments and employment sites to HS2 including Friargate and Jaguar Landover; and an expansion of railway capacity and reconnecting Coventry to the East Midlands by rail. A summary of the strategy was set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

One major opportunity to help deliver this strategy was the £247m strategic transport package agreed as part of the WMCA Devolution Deal package approved by Council in May 2016. Although an outline package of schemes was included at the time, it was for the City Council to determine which schemes went forward for funding. The WMCA had an 'assurance framework process' which all schemes would have to go through, the main purpose of which was to ensure that all schemes across the region were aligned to the policies of the adopted West Midlands transport strategy entitled 'Movement for Growth'. The main aims of this strategy were to drive job creation and growth and were in line with the City Council's own priorities.

The report outlined the schemes that it was proposed to take forward as part of this package, which were summarised in four programmes:

- Coventry South – major highway and rail proposals to facilitate growth, especially around Jaguar Land Rover and the University of Warwick and to provide connectivity to HS2 and UK Central;
- City Centre – a major increase in capacity at Coventry Railway Station (this is subject to a separate Cabinet Report on the 'Coventry Station Masterplan' and improvements to selected ring road junctions);
- Coventry North – road capacity improvements to the North West of the city and on the A444 and M6 junction 3;
- Rapid Transit – investment in the development of Very Light Rail and subsequent implementation.

The report set out the detailed financial implications associated with the schemes.

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

- Progress with light rail
- Links with UK Central, the HS2 hub
- Other opportunities for light rail in the city
- A concern that members hadn't had the full opportunity to scrutinise the issues contained in the report and that further updates on progress should come to Scrutiny as a matter of course.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The recommendations to Cabinet be endorsed.

(2) Cabinet be requested to:

(i) Include the following aspiration for the city in the report: ‘That a light rail link be provided to the UK Central HS2 hub as soon as possible and that links be developed to the other major destinations in the city including the hospital’

(ii) Ensure that Scrutiny is included in the reporting process relating to Connecting Coventry – Strategic Transport Investment Plan.

(3) Arrangements be put in place for Members of the Committee to attend a fact finding visit to Warwick Manufacturing Group.

51. Any Other Item of Public Business - Friargate Update Report

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Place, which provided an update on the Friargate development and sought approval to sub-lease part of the Friargate building. The report was due to be considered by Cabinet and Council at their meetings on 24th January, 2017. There was also a corresponding private report detailing confidential aspects of the proposals (Minute 52 below refers).

The report indicated that in 2013, the Council approved starting the Friargate Business District to regenerate the City, transform the Council and deliver savings, through the purchase of the first building on Friargate for occupation by the Council. The Councils operational office buildings would be reduced and agile and flexible working arrangements introduced to support productivity and efficiency gains from Council staff.

The importance of having a second tenant was recognised and approval had been given to negotiate with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) to help secure them as the second tenant on Friargate.

The RICS were the institution governing Chartered Surveyors globally and both strategically important nationally and as a second tenant to the Friargate scheme were likely to provide confidence to other potential private sector tenants. The RICS currently had major offices in London and Coventry. The Coventry office was becoming obsolete and the RICS had been looking to relocate to new offices for a period of years. Many of the options under consideration were outside Coventry.

In 2013 discussions commenced between the Council, Friargate Coventry LLP and the RICS to secure the national HQ of the RICS as the second occupier of Friargate and build further space for letting to other occupiers.

In the absence of a second building under construction at Friargate there was an opportunity for the Council to negotiate terms directly with the RICS in order to sublet space in its building at Friargate and secure the RICS as the second tenant on Friargate rather than losing this strategically important business occupier to both Friargate and potentially the City.

If these negotiations proved successful this would require the Council to retain operational building capacity within its existing building portfolio for a quarter of the staff (470) intending to move to Friargate, whilst further discussions continued in order to try and secure early delivery of Building 2.

To that end the opportunity had now arisen for the Council to make a formal application to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to secure up to £50m to bring forward development opportunities around Friargate to supplement the £100m already secured from the WMCA for City Centre South.

The report proposed that authority be delegated to officers (in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member) to make such variations to the Collaborations Agreement (and other associated documents) that may be required to achieve the objectives set out in the report submitted. The delegation would be limited only to the extent required to secure the sub-leasing of part of the Council's building at Friargate to the RICS.

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

- Leasehold, freehold, landownership and details
- Contingency if the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) do not take up the offer
- Support for the project from the West Midlands Combined Authority
- Progress on discussion with potential tenants
- Financial implications for the Council
- Timescales for developments

- A concern that members hadn't had the full opportunity to scrutinise the issues contained in the report and that further updates on progress should come to Scrutiny as a matter of course.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The recommendations to Cabinet be endorsed.

(2) Cabinet be recommended to ensure that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is included in the reporting process relating to Friargate.

52. Any Other Item of Private Business - Friargate Update Report

Further to Minute 51 above, the Committee considered a private report of the Executive Director of Place that set out confidential aspects of an update on the Friargate development and sought approval to sub-lease part of the Friargate building. The report was to be considered by Cabinet and Council at their meetings on 24th January, 2017.

Members questioned the officers on a number of issues and responses were provided.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The recommendations to Council be endorsed.

(2) Cabinet be requested to ensure that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee will be provided with assurances about any future rolling programme process for building developments on the Friargate site.

NOTE: Minutes 49 to 52 above were considered by the Committee as items of urgent public and private business, the reason for urgency was to afford the Committee the opportunity to consider the issues and, if appropriate, make recommendations to Cabinet before their consideration of these items at their meeting on 24th January, 2017.

(Meeting closed at 1.30 pm)