

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 6 September 2017

Present:

Members: Councillor R Brown (Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor J Clifford (Deputy Chair)
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor R Singh
Councillor K Taylor

Other Members: Councillors G Duggins, J O'Boyle and D Welsh

Employees (by Directorate):

V Castree, Place Directorate
D Cockroft, Place Directorate
N Hart, People Directorate
L Knight, Place Directorate

Apologies: Councillor A Andrews and D Gannon

Public Business

10. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Mal Mutton and McNicholas declared interests in Minute 12 below headed 'City Centre Redevelopment including Friargate, City Centre South, Station Master Plan, Leisure Centre and 50m Pool' in so far as the discussion related to the Canal Basin. They remained in the meeting during the consideration of this item.

11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th July, 2017 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

12. City Centre Redevelopment including Friargate, City Centre South, Station Master Plan, Leisure Centre and 50m Pool

The Committee received a presentation and briefing note on Friargate and other City Centre developments including City Centre South, the Station Master Plan and the new leisure centre. The presentation also featured the new 50m pool. Councillor Duggins, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership and Councillors O'Boyle and Welsh, Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The presentation set out the importance of regeneration and the redevelopment of the city centre which would create rates income, attract increased investment, attract new jobs, attract and retain skills and attract new visitors and customers as well as increasing the attractiveness of Coventry as a destination. Detailed information was provided on the financial implications of the regeneration which involved a total spend of £276m with additional funding from the private sector.

The station masterplan involved a new station building to complement the existing listed building with 5 retail units in this new building. There would be a 640 space multi-storey car park and a new bus interchange on the Central 6 side of Warwick Road. Work had started on site in March 2016 to construct the pedestrian link under Warwick Road.

Attention was drawn to the potential 14 office space buildings for the Friargate development with shops, restaurants and bars. There was space for 2 hotels, up to 400 new homes, vastly improved public space and 15,000 new jobs once complete. Business rates income was estimated at £23m. Further information was provided on the first completed Friargate building and the plans for the second building.

The presentation provided an overview of the City Centre South development which along with the retail offer included student and residential accommodation and a 5 screen cinema. A timeline for the development was provided. To date the public sector funding had been confirmed and terms were being agreed for the anchor store. Completion of the development was anticipated for October 2022.

Contractors were currently on site for the new leisure attraction in New Union Street, demolition works had been completed and the opening of the new facility was anticipated for 2019. Additional information was provided on the new 50m swimming pool at the Alan Higgs Centre. The timeline for the new pool was set out which indicated an opening date of May 2019.

Reference was made to other developments in the City Centre including the student housing scheme, residential apartments and an extension to the Premier Inn at the Belgrade Plaza; a further five restaurants in phase 2 of the redevelopment of Cathedral Lanes, new student units at Bishopsgate and Millenium View; and the redevelopment of the former Co-op building.

Members raised a number of issues in response to the presentation and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- The importance of growing and developing the City Centre to increase Business Rates to fund services in the future and the current uncertainty around the final detail of this due to it's omission from the Queen's speech.
- The amount of purpose built accommodation being built in the City Centre and opportunities to increase revenue to the Council from these blocks, the rate of university growth and whether family homes were being freed up in residential areas – the Committee were informed that this was to be an agenda item for a future Committee meeting later in the municipal year and had been included on the Committee's work programme
- The benefit to the City of student spend power, particularly in improving the City's retail and leisure offer

- The timescales for the opening of the City Centre Destination Leisure Facility and new 50m pool and the closure of the facilities at Fairfax Street
- Potential implications for the city of a new water park at the Belfry
- Further redevelopment of Cathedral Lanes and the improved street scene between it and Salt Lane Car Park
- The Cooperative building and plans to break the market with high-end apartments
- Concerns that Historic England may list further parts of the City Centre significantly altering some of the redevelopment plans, reference being made to what happened to the Round Cafe
- Why the Canal Basin was not included in the presentation as it had still not fulfilled it's potential with current businesses looking to relocate elsewhere
- Whether there was sufficient capacity within the organisation to support all these projects and ensure that negotiations with developers were of a high quality and would take place in a timely way
- Whether Coventry was being sufficiently marketed as a great place to base a business
- Opportunities for future developments using WMCA money
- Details about the risk registers for these new developments
- The suggestion that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) be asked to look at options to develop the Canal Basin and improve access, as this project was not referred to during the presentation.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The content of the presentation be noted.

(2) Cabinet be requested to take the opportunity to explore the options to raise additional finance from student accommodation in the city by:

a) Building on the work being done in Lambeth to look at charging Council Tax at 'student' properties outside of the university term time

b) Working with other University Cities, for example Liverpool, to lobby for a change in legislation so that Student Accommodation Management Companies become liable for Business Rates and Corporation Tax.

(3) The Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership be supported in his approach to address the challenges to the City Centre redevelopment which may arise as a result of any additional buildings in the City Centre being listed by Historic England.

(4) The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration be requested to review the list of current development projects in the City, along with the relevant timelines to ensure that the City Council has sufficient staff capacity and resource to allow projects to be delivered on time and with high quality outcomes for the city.

(5) The options to develop the Canal Basin, including improved access, be referred to the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) for investigation.

13. Civic Visit to Dresden 27th to 29th April 2017

The Committee received a report of Councillor Lindsley Harvard, Lord Mayor in 2016/17, concerning his civic visit to Dresden from 27th to 29th April, 2017. The Lord Mayor was invited to represent the City of Coventry at the re-opening of The Kulturpalast Civic Centre 'Palace of Culture' and the inaugural performance of the Dresden Philamonic Orchestra concert.

RESOLVED that the report of the Lord Mayor's civic visit to Dresden, accompanied by the principal private secretary to the Lord Mayoralty, and the positive outcomes of the visit be endorsed.

14. Civic Visit to Kiel 16th to 19th June 2017

The Committee received a report of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Tony Skipper, concerning his civic visit to Kiel from 16th to 19th June and the associated Kieler Woche (Kiel Week) celebrations. Kiel Week was the largest summer festival in northern Europe and the largest sailing sports event in the world, comprising both sailing and cultural events. Attendance provided the opportunity to raise Coventry profile at a European and International level.

RESOLVED that the report of the Lord Mayor's civic visit to Kiel and the associated Kieler Woche (Kiel Week) celebrations be endorsed.

15. Outstanding Issues

The Committee noted that all outstanding issues had been dealt with in the Committee's work programme.

16. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2017/2018

The Committee considered their work programme for the current municipal year. The Chair, Councillor Brown, informed of his meeting with Andy Street, West Midlands Mayor on 12th October and of his intention to invite him to attend a future Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee meeting.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The work programme be noted.

(2) Consideration be given to scheduling Selective Licensing for the Private Rented Sector and Student Accommodation and University City Development on the work programme timetable.

(3) The Chair's intention to invite Andy Street, West Midlands Mayor, to a future meeting of the Committee be noted.

17. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.40 am)

