

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 13 February 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor J Clifford (Chair of meeting, substitute for Councillor N Akhtar)
Councillor R Bailey
Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor R Singh (Substitute for Councillor H Sweet)
Councillor R Thay

Other Members: Councillor R Lakha, Deputy Cabinet Member for City Services
Councillor E Ruane, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing

Officers by Directorate:

Place: S Bennett, C Berry, V Castree

People: D Ashmore, J Harrison, K Lees

Apologies Councillors N Akhtar, H Sweet, T Sawdon

Public Business

20. Chair

In the absence of Councillor N Akhtar, Councillor J Clifford, Deputy Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, chaired the meeting.

21. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

22. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December, 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

23. Housing Action Plan

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which reviewed the Draft Housing and Homelessness Action Plan following consultation in December, 2018 and which provided a summary of the current financial position, governance arrangements and key activities planned for the next few months.

The Draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 focusses on the following four main themes:-

- Preventing homelessness and supporting homeless households
- New housing development
- Improving the use of existing homes
- Support for people and communities

An Action Plan accompanies the Strategy, outlining its priorities and the activities to achieve them and was included in the Briefing Note.

The Briefing Note provided an update on specific areas, including:-

- Operational team performance
- Progress against local plan targets for affordable house building
- Supply of social housing in the City
- Refurbishment and expansion of existing homes
- Modular housing options

In terms of governance, the Scrutiny Board noted that Housing and Homelessness is now considered monthly by the Strategic Housing Board and One Coventry Change Board. The current RAG rating for the programme is RED, taking into account financial risk, timeliness and any other issues. Strategic Housing Board is supported by the Housing and Homelessness Operational Group, which meets fortnightly, with attendance from service heads operational managers.

A timeline was also included in the Briefing Note, which detailed key events between now and May 2019.

The Scrutiny Board noted that the pre-budget report allocates additional resources equating to an annual budget of £8.4m over the next 3 years. In addition, there is grant funding of £2.1m (2017/18 to 2019/20) being used in relation to the prevention duty. Government are currently unclear on the level of this resource after 2019/2020.

The Scrutiny Board questioned the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing and officers on aspects of the Briefing Note, including:-

- The current waiting time for housing assessments
- Creative ways of bring unused property into use (for example empty to let properties)
- Whether a gendered approach was being adopted in relation of homelessness
- How data is collected and how this can be used more effectively in terms of targeting those most in need
- Current figures in relation to the use of Bed and Breakfast, particularly in relation to families.
- The need to ensure there are effective Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) in place, which are monitored regularly.

RESOLVED:-

- 1) That the Scrutiny Board confirm their support for the Strategy contained in the Action Plan, including building and providing new homes.**
- 2) That the Scrutiny Board request regular progress reports against targets set in the Action Plan, including KPI's and that formal quarterly updates at provided at future meetings of the Scrutiny Board.**

24. Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note, together with a presentation at the meeting, which outlined the purpose, content and requirements of the Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), details of which were appended to the Briefing Note.

This SPD is intended to provide technical guidance and support to Policy R6 (Restaurants, Bars and Hot Food Takeaways) of the new Local Plan. This will contribute to delivering one of the overall objectives of the Plan which is to recognise the commercial element of hot food takeaways and their role within community provisions, but to balance that with helping improve the health and wellbeing of Coventry people. The Hot Food Takeaway SPD is aimed at individuals and organisations involved in preparing and submitting a planning application as well as those involved in the determination and enforcement of planning applications.

The SPD is structured around seven requirements for relevant applications and details those requirements, relevant thresholds and measures that may need to be taken to ensure that a hot food takeaway is acceptable in planning terms. The requirements consist of:-

- Concentration of Hot Food Takeaways (drawing on nationally available information linked to population density and prevalence of hot food takeaways within a local catchment area, limiting new hot food takeaways in over concentrated area (details of which, including maps, were provided in the Briefing Note)
- Litter and Waste Disposal – ensuring both customer and commercial waste facilities are provided in an acceptable and appropriate location
- Odour Extraction – to manage issues of odour in so far as it relates primarily to any residential amenity situated above or in close proximity to the hot food takeaway
- Highway Safety – to ensure matters of parking and highway movements are safe and secure
- Opening Times – with a view to potentially limiting these if it helps overcome other issues e.g. proximity to schools; and

- Conservation Area and Listed Buildings – ensuring shop fronts and extraction flumes are appropriately positioned and designs to minimise any relevant impact on heritage assets.

The Scrutiny Board questioned the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing and officers on aspects of the Briefing Note, including:-

- How the data has been compiled and applied
- How the boundaries have been derived
- How the impact of the SPD will be assessed

In particular, the Scrutiny Board sought clarification in relation to Class A5 and whether this included food outlets from which food is ordered, prepared and delivered, rather than being physically “taken away” by the customer. Officers indicated that they would investigate this matter and provide the Scrutiny Board with clarification.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board confirm their support for the Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document.

25. **Waste Services**

The Scrutiny Board received a presentation at the meeting which provided an update on the Christmas Waste Collections 2018.

The presentation covered:-

- Background to the Christmas Collections, which differ each year due to the bank holidays.
- Collection performance and comparison 2017 and 2018, including costs (£171,307 in 2017 and £50,823 in 2018) and complaints/missed bins
- Challenges during the Christmas period particularly in relation to staffing, where there is no contractual obligation for Coventry City Council employees to work during the shutdown week or on the Saturdays and Mondays used to cover Bank Holidays and therefore the reliance on volunteers and agency staff. In 2017 over 50% of staff were provided through an agency. In 2018 there was minimal requirements for agency staff, however the Council was badly let down on Saturday 5 January when agency workers didn't turn up.
- Lessons Learnt in 2018, including the need for better communication of issues using the Council's website and social media and keeping Councillors informed.
- Plans for 2019 including:-
 - Proposed same arrangements as 2018
 - Shut down over Christmas week
 - Suspension of garden waste collections

- All residents to have green bin collected week before and after Christmas
- Provide extra capacity for additional recycling
- Communication Strategy

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on aspects of the presentation including:-

- Communication and the use of social media tools
- The issues relating to the use of agency staff and work being taken with the new agency to prevent the same problems being experienced next Christmas
- Contractual issues relating to City Council staff

The Scrutiny Board expressed their disappointment that the issue of a Communication Strategy had not already been addressed and stressed the importance of ensuring that a Strategy is implemented at the earliest opportunity.

RESOLVED that the update on the Christmas Waste Collection 2018, together with the lessons learnt, be noted and that the Scrutiny Board consider preparations for the 2019 Christmas Waste Collection as part of their Work Programme for 2019/20.

26. Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2018/19

The Scrutiny Board noted their Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2018/19.

27. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.50 pm)