

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 17 July 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor R Brown (Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor A Andrews
Councillor J Clifford
Councillor L Kelly (Deputy Chair)
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor R Singh
Councillor D Skinner

Other Members: Councillors G Duggins (Cabinet Member) and G Lloyd
(Deputy Cabinet Member)

Employees:

L Gaulton, People Directorate
S Gill, Place Directorate
G Holmes, Place Directorate
L Knight, Place Directorate
S Chun Lam, People Directorate
A West, Place Directorate
S Wilkes, Place Directorate
A Williams, Place Directorate

Apologies: Councillor G Ridley
Councillors R Ali, K Caan, J O'Boyle and D Welsh, Cabinet
and Deputy Cabinet Members

Public Business

6. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

7. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th July, 2019 were signed as a true record, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Sandhu in the attendance for the meeting.

8. Climate Change in Coventry

The Committee considered a briefing note and received a presentation of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) concerning the current position of climate change in Coventry. Councillor Lloyd, Deputy Cabinet Member for City Services attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The briefing note and presentation referred to the key drivers for climate change, the 2015 Paris Agreement and the Climate Change Act 2008. The 2015 Act aspired to keep global warming between 1.5C and 2C while the Climate Change Act set legally binding targets on the UK to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 34% by 2020 and net zero by 2050.

Climate models suggested warmer and drier summers along with warmer and wetter winters, with weather extremes becoming more frequent. Such weather conditions were likely to make the working population, vulnerable groups and the elderly more susceptible to heat stress and there would be increased risks of flooding. The briefing note included an appendix which highlighted the impacts of increases of 1.5C and 2C in temperature.

Coventry's Climate Change Strategy published in 2012 set a target to reduce carbon emissions by 27.5% by 2020 and this was achieved by 2014. The Committee were informed that in 2016 the City's emissions were 1.3 million tonnes which was a 35.45% reduction from 2005. To ensure Coventry contributed to the Paris Agreement, the city had a carbon budget of 8.4 million tonnes CO₂ for 2020-2100. If the city continues at its current usage, the entire carbon budget would be used up by 2027.

The report and presentation highlighted the major stakeholders in Coventry who would be integral to the success of addressing climate change in the city along with other key players. The Committee were informed that the Council's role was to provide leadership and setting an example by reducing carbon in the Council's assets and operations as well as implementing low carbon procurement policies. The Council would facilitate stakeholder engagement through raising awareness and stimulating carbon reduction action in developing a new climate change strategy. In addition, planning policy and land-use development conditions would be set so that emissions from the built environment would be reduced. The Council would also act as a central resource portal providing climate change guidance, education, and funding for project implementation.

The Council's current Climate Change Strategy expired at the end of 2020 and work was already underway to ensure that the new strategy reflected the ambition and urgency that was needed to achieve zero admissions. Following the development of the Strategy, it was the intention to produce a city-wide Climate Change action plan. The Strategy would cover the following themes:

Domestic – included improving the thermal efficiency of homes, reducing fuel poverty and encouraging innovation.

Transport – included improvements to public transport and walking/cycling infrastructure.

Industry – included improving the efficiency of buildings/processes, better carbon management in schools and a carbon trading platform for businesses.

Environment – included sustainable procurement, enhanced biodiversity, sustainable food and driving behaviour change.

Education & Skills - upskilling, STEM subjects

Energy – included the development of an Energy innovation Zone, increased use of renewables and feasibility studies for new solutions e.g. mine water for heating/cooling.

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

- What support was available from national government including additional funding for project initiatives
- Was there co-operation with neighbouring local authorities and the West Midlands Combined Authority with respect to Climate Change
- The importance of national Government taking a lead and providing consistency in policy making regarding Climate Change
- The need for investment and subsidies in public transport, with transport becoming cheaper and more readily available
- The options for putting solar panels on the roofs of Council owned buildings
- The opportunities for local residents, businesses and Ward Councillors to be involved in the public consultation
- The importance of everyone being involved with the behavioural shift required to make a difference for Climate Change
- A suggestion that Coventry takes the lead and engages with other cities, passing on best practice for Climate Change
- The importance of teaching local school children what the city is doing to tackle Climate Change
- Ensuring buildings such as schools and offices didn't have their lights left on overnight.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The current position on Climate Change in Coventry be noted

(2) Consideration be given to the inclusion of local residents and businesses in the consultation process along with the involvement/ support of Ward Councillors

(3) A report on the proposed consultation exercise for the Climate Change Strategy be submitted to a future meeting of the Board.

9. One Coventry Plan Annual Performance Report 2018-19

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the One Coventry Plan Annual Performance Report 2018/19 which covered the progress made towards the Plan during the previous year. A copy of the performance report was set out at an appendix to the report. The report was due to be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 27th August, 2019. Councillor Duggins, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

Consideration of the report allowed Members the opportunity to identify any areas that required additional scrutiny.

The report indicated that One Coventry described the Council's objectives, key strategies and approaches. The Plan was for the period 2014 to 2024 and was last refreshed in 2016. It built on the Council's long-standing principles (being globally connected, locally committed, and working together to deliver priorities with fewer

resources) and set out new ways of working to help the Council face the challenges of increasing demand and reduction in funding.

The annual performance report sets out the progress made towards the One Coventry Plan. For each objective, this report set out the trends, actions taken, and performance metrics, to provide an objective assessment of the progress made against previous years and other places. Agreed indicators were used to show progress made towards the priorities. This was supported by a range of measures such as equality and perception measures that helped explain the trends and story behind the headlines. Indicators were selected from key strategies and aligned to directorate priorities and equality and health inequalities objectives.

Further information including infographics, open data, maps and a publication schedule were available online. This year, progress had been made towards developing a Citywide Intelligence Hub, a one-stop data platform providing a “single source of truth” of data and evidence about Coventry.

Of the 75 headline indicators, 42 indicators improved; 10 stayed the same; 15 indicators got worse; 7 indicators couldn't be determined or there was no clear direction of travel; and progress was not available for 1 indicator. This meant that, at the end of the year, 78% of directional indicators had improved or stayed the same. This compared to 71% in 2017/18 and 75% in 2016/17.

The Committee noted that the progress had been maintained in the context of continued and sustained reduction in the overall resources available to the Council, with resources from the Local Government Finance Settlement had fallen by £113m in the period between 2010/11 and 2018/19.

The report also set out how the Council was addressing equality and health inequalities. Appendix 2 to the report set out the Council's performance management framework which detailed how the Council planned and organised its resources to achieve its vision and priorities.

Councillor Duggins, Cabinet Member referred to the Climate Change strategy and to City of Culture and to the likelihood of additional performance indicators relating to these areas being included in due course.

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

- Support for the informative document which allowed the opportunity to revisit performance in key areas
- An acknowledgement of Coventry being second only to Cambridge in the number to patent registrations
- A request for further details about numbers of job seekers, fly tipping and street cleansing on a ward by ward basis
- Suggestions to include ethnicity information on the life expectancy number 10 bus route diagram and the inclusion of a gender analysis of business leads in future annual performance reports
- A suggestion of using discreet cctv at fly-tipping hotspots

- Support for including new performance indicators on the Climate Change strategy and the City of Culture in the report in due course
- Support for the increase in footfall in the city centre and an acknowledgement of the likelihood of a further increase due to the opening of The Wave
- Concerns about the private rental sector housing market, in particular the high rents which could also lead to fuel poverty and the aspiration for vacant student homes to be used by local families
- Whether landlords were making a profit which was having a negative effect on accommodation standards
- A suggestion that the two local universities be requested to consider selling surplus properties to local families rather than buy to let investors.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The Council's performance, as set out in the performance report, be noted

(2) Cabinet be requested to consider the following matters for future performance reports:

i) Consideration be given to including information on fly-tipping and street cleansing on a ward by ward basis on the online tool

ii) Consideration be given to including ethnicity information on the life expectancy no 10 bus route diagram in future annual performance reports

iii) In relation to Supporting Local businesses, consideration be given to the inclusion of a gender analysis of business leads in future annual performance reports

iv) The intention to include City of Culture and Climate Change in future annual performance reports be noted

(3) The Cabinet Member for City Services be requested to consider the concerns raised regarding local hotspots for fly-tipping, in particular when on privately owned land, and the use of cctv

(4) Further consideration to be given to the issues raised relating to the private rental sector housing including high rents, fuel poverty and the freeing up of student homes for local families, in conjunction with the current work on selective and additional licensing.

10. Scrutiny Annual Report to Council 2018/19

The Committee noted their Annual report for 2018-2019, which was to be submitted to the meeting of the City Council on 3rd September, 2019. Key focuses for the year had included looking for the opportunities that City of Culture 2021 could provide and the challenges associated with housing and homelessness. The report provided details of the activities and outcomes of the work of this Committee along with those of the five individual Scrutiny Boards

11. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2019/2020 and Outstanding Issues

The Committee considered their work programme for the new municipal year.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The work programme for 2019/20 be noted

(2) The following items be included on the Scrutiny work programmes (minutes 8 and 9 above also refer):

Fly-tipping

Selective Licensing

Climate Change Consultation

(3) A meeting date be determined for the item on 'Improving Consultation and Engagement with Residents'.

12. Any Other Items of Public Business - West Midlands Scrutiny

The Board noted an update from Councillors Brown and Kelly on their recent attendance at the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny meeting held on 15th July, 2019 and on the appointment of Councillor Kelly as Vice-Chair for 2019/20.

The Board also received an update on the West Midlands Scrutiny Network event held the previous day which took place at Friargate and was chaired by Councillor Brown.

Concerns were raised about attendance and quoracy issues at such meetings and the need for further work to be undertaken to ensure a successful scrutiny function.

(Meeting closed at 12.15 pm)