

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 20 July 2022

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)
Councillor C Miks (Deputy Chair)
Councillor M Ali
Councillor J Innes
Councillor R Lakha (substitute for Councillor R Auluck)
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor R Singh
Councillor CE Thomas (substitute for Councillor L Bigham)

Other Members: Councillor G Duggins, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership

Employees (by Service Area):

Business, Investment and Culture B Willers

Law and Governance S Bennett, V Castree

Public Health and Wellbeing A Duggal (Director), S Lam

Streetscene and Regulatory Services A Walster (Director), C Hickin,

Transformation and Change D Horton Raynor, M McGinty,

Transportation and Highways C Knight (Director)

Apologies: Councillors R Auluck, L Bigham, P Male

Public Business

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

8. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June, 2022 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

9. **One Coventry Plan Annual Performance Report 2021-22**

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which indicated that the One Coventry Plan sets out the Council's shared vision and priorities for Coventry. The Annual Performance Report, which was appended to the report, details performance towards priorities between April 2021 and March 2022. The One Coventry Plan is currently being refreshed (Minute 10 below refers). The report set out performance towards the current One Coventry performance metrics, but also includes the emerging metrics to provide a baseline for the new One Coventry Plan. As before, for each of the priorities, the report sets out the trends, actions taken and performance metrics to provide an assessment of the progress made against previous years and with other places.

The report highlighted Coventry's year in the spotlight at UK City of Culture, which had happened during a period of continued significant national and international challenges, including Covid-19 pandemic related issues and the worst escalation in hostilities in Europe since 1991 with Russia's war on Ukraine, which is one of the reasons behind the rapid rise in the cost of living. The impact of this cost of living crisis on communities is yet to be fully realised, as people right across the City face rapidly rising energy, fuel, food and housing costs. The report highlighted the One Coventry approach, with the Council, partner organisations and community groups right across the City responding to the twin challenges of the Covid -19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis taking on additional duties. The report also indicated that there will continue to be more indirect impacts as residents and communities who previously have never needed local authority support face difficulties.

The One Coventry Plan 2016-2024 is measured using 75 metrics, of which 32 metrics improved; 8 stayed the same; 18 got worse; can't say for 10 metrics; and progress is not available for the remaining 7 metrics. This means, 69% (40/58) of directional metrics (excluding cannot say or not available) improved or stayed the same. As with last year, several metrics are not available this year. This is because there is limited data on school performance because of exam cancellations last summer.

Many of the Council's key priorities have an equality dimension or address an inequality caused by economic or social circumstances. Consequently, the report also sets out how the Council addresses these equality and health inequalities and also includes emerging metrics against the proposed new One Coventry Plan 2022-2030. Where available, this report detailed the current performance and the direction of travel for those metrics over the past year. This is intended to establish a baseline for comparison in future years.

Following a comprehensive presentation, the Committee asked questions, sought assurances and made comments on a number of issues including:-

- Crime rates in the City and comparatives with other Cities in the West Midlands and pre pandemic levels
- Staff sickness levels and the reasons for this
- Tree planting statistics in the City and work being undertaken by Tree Wardens
- The definition of "Healthy Life Expectancy"
- The impact that industrial action has had on household waste collection commercial and recycling rates, together with flytipping
- Recent disappointing Ofsted inspections at 2 primary schools in the City
- The evaluation of the City of Culture year, which will take place in 2024 and work being undertaken in that regard
- Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) rates in the City and how these are measured by the Office of National Statistics
- New job creation figures in the City

- Information in relation to the number of children in the City who do not have access to a computer and internet at home and the impact that this has on educational outcomes
- The impact that poverty has on inequalities
- The amount of money spent by the Council on agency workers and options to create an in house employment agency
- Data on staff profiling (it was noted that this information was currently being compiled for a separate report)
- How air quality is monitored and how this data is used to inform decision making
- In relation to Domestic Abuse, the success of the “Ask Angela” scheme and how this could be extended to cover retail premises and increasing publicity as to where those experiencing Domestic Abuse can access support
- Policing figures in the City
- Data in relation to road casualty statistics, including information on motorbikes/motor scooters/electric scooters
- Dropped kerb installation rates in the City

RESOLVED:-

- 1) **That all of the metrics in the report that have not been met be considered by the appropriate Scrutiny Board as part of their Work Programme**
- 2) **That Cabinet be recommended to review the spend on agency staff and officers be requested to explore the viability of creating an income generating Coventry City Council employment agency**
- 3) **That the following be recommended to be amended in the One Coventry Plan Annual Performance Report 2021-22 report:-**
 - a. **Information on how many children in the City do not have access to a computer and the internet at home**
 - b. **Additional information on air quality monitoring to highlight the robustness of the process**
 - c. **Within the road casualty statistics, information on motorbikes/motor scooters/electric scooters**
 - d. **The inclusion of a reference to poverty in the inequalities section**
- 4) **That the following actions be undertaken:-**
 - a. **That officers be requested to the Office of National Statistics to ask that students are not included in unemployment data**
 - b. **That information on jobs created by sector be circulated to the Committee**
 - c. **That an explanation as to why sickness absence at Coventry City Council is higher than national comparator data be provided as part of the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) ‘s consideration of this matter**
 - d. **That information on rates of recycling for commercial waste and how this may have been impacted by industrial action be circulated to the Committee.**

- e. **That information on the data set used to define “Healthy Life Expectancy” be circulated to the Committee**
- f. **That in relation to Domestic Abuse, officers consider extending the “Ask Angela” scheme to retail premises and increase publicity as to where those experiencing Domestic Abuse can access support**

10. **One Coventry Plan 2022 - 2030: Engagement Approach and Emerging Themes**

The Committee considered a Briefing Note of the Chief Partnerships Officer, together with a comprehensive presentation at the meeting, which indicated that the City Council are refreshing the Council Plan to ensure it reflects the Council’s aims and ambitions. It is intended that as many opportunities are provided for everyone who lives, works or studies in the City to share their thoughts on the new Plan and help in delivering something truly impactful.

The presentation covered:-

- An introduction to the One Coventry Plan, which will provide Coventry City Council’s vision and objectives until 2030
- Engagement opportunities:-
 - Survey – online and paper copies
 - Short survey - to capture quick feedback when interacting face to face
 - Workshops – online and in person
 - White boards – to leave comments at libraries and family hubs
 - Promoting and engaging when residents access frontline services
 - Attending community events to talk to people
 - Getting out and talking to people to find out what’s important to them on what the Coventry of 2030 should look and feel like
- Engagement promotion:-
 - Press release
 - Internet news
 - Articles on social media
 - Screens in Broadgate, Council House, Friargate, Family Hubs and outside Transport Museum
 - Posters and hard copy surveys at libraries family hubs and other frontline service locations
 - Existing stakeholder network groups
 - Community events
 - Workforce – Intranet, Staff app, One Coventry Newsletter and team meetings

The views of the Committee were sought on the proposed engagement, together with any recommendations on other ways to engage with residents or promote the One Coventry Plan engagement with constituents and local networks.

The Committee asked questions and made comments on a number of issues including:-

- Work being undertaken with hard to reach groups via religious settings
- Approaching care homes in the City
- Managing residents expectations in relation to what can be achieved
- Use of social media, including paying for adverts on Facebook

- Leafletting every home in the City and providing pre paid responses to encourage engagement
- Engagement with Councillors and information available on the intranet
- How the new Plan will be performance monitored yearly
- Engaging the media, particularly the local press
- Encouraging and strengthening engagement with the over 65's
- Work being undertaken with partner organisations, including the NHS
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RESOLVED:-

- 1) **That the Committee agree to play an active role in enabling those who live, work or study in the City to have their say on the Once Coventry Plan and note the approach to engagement**
- 2) **That officers be requested to consider the following additional ways to increase engagement:-**
 - a) **Include engaging with communities via religious settings and care homes**
 - b) **Paying for the use of social media adverts, including Facebook**
 - c) **Leafletting all homes in the City and consider a pre paid response**
 - d) **Engaging more with the local press, particularly public broadcasting companies**
 - e) **Using database information held by the Council (within the constraints of GDPR)**

11. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2022/23

The Committee considered their Work Programme and Outstanding Issues for the Municipal year.

RESOLVED:-

- 1) **That where there are Ward specific issues on an agenda, it is appropriate to invite Ward Councillors to attend the meeting for the consideration of that item**
- 2) **That the impact of Climate Change on Council services be included on the Work Programme**

12. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.30pm)