

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Tuesday, 14 March 2023

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor A Hopkins (Substitute for Cllr M Ali)
Councillor S Keough (Substitute for Cllr P Male)
Councillor C Miks (Deputy Chair)
Councillor R Singh

Other Members: Councillor G Duggins, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership

Employees (by Service Area):

Law and Governance: V Castree, G Holmes

Public Health and Sport R Chapman, A Duggal

Transformation and Change D Horton-Rayner, M McGinty, V Millar

Interim Chief Executive K Nelson

Partners Present: P Hendrick (West Midlands Police)
K Mason (CGL)

Apologies: Councillor M Ali (Substitute Councillor A Hopkins)
Councillor R Auluck
Councillor J Innes
Councillor P Male (Substitute Cllr Keough)
Councillor G Ridley

Public Business

46. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

47. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Arising from Minute 43, relating to the Draft Climate Change Strategy, the Chair agreed to follow up with the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services regarding unused allotment plots.

48. **One Coventry Plan 2022- 2030**

The Committee considered a Briefing Note, which outlined that the current Council Plan, the One Coventry Plan, was initially agreed in 2014 for a ten-year period (ending in 2024) and was last refreshed in 2016.

In 2021, work began to refresh the Council Plan to reflect the emerging priorities for the Council and the city. From February to September 2022, extensive engagement was undertaken with the Council workforce, partners and the wider public regarding the delivery of the priorities outlined in the draft Plan. This engagement created the opportunity to understand more about how the priorities could be meaningfully delivered in a way that builds on our achievements and recognises the challenges faced by the city.

The refreshed One Coventry Plan 2022-2030 provided the strategic direction for the Council and the One Coventry vision of “working together to improve our city and the lives of those who live, work and study here”. It set out the Council’s priorities and focused on enabling people to live their best lives in a vibrant and prosperous city. The report sought approval for the adoption of the refreshed priorities, provided an overview of the engagement approach taken, an update on the findings and a summary of how local people’s views had impacted the development of the One Coventry Plan.

The Leader of the Council introduced the item and highlighted the importance of holding ourselves and the partnership to account for the delivery of the plan. Work was underway to develop a performance management framework which would support collective accountability across the One Coventry partnership.

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

- How partners would be held to account – The One Coventry partnership was built on two principles – 1) putting people at the heart of everything we do. 2) recognising collective responsibility
- The Committee welcomed an improved engagement process with more people engaged
- Responses to the on-line survey were not spread across Wards but other activity had taken place across the city, where Ward information was not collected, to maintain the flow of the conversation.
- Services would be reviewed to ensure that they reflected the three main priorities in the plan, including a revised proposal for media and communications support.
- A Strategy would be developed to identify how each service area could contribute to the plan on a daily basis. The intention was to develop strategy tool kits to enable conversations between front line staff and residents to happen.
- Issues of fewer community groups responding to the consultation, reflected a decline in community groups generally post pandemic and provided opportunities to take learning from the three community prototypes.

- The ultimate aim was to reduce demand for statutory services, but it was acknowledged that this would take time
- Comments that referred to climate change would be included in the feedback on the Climate Change Strategy consultation
- It was recognised that social media wasn't accessed by everyone, so there had been a presence across all libraries and Family Hubs in the City. There was the possibility of using WhatsApp as an engagement tool in future.
- The stakeholder list in the Equality Impact Assessment was not exhaustive but had included housing providers

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the engagement feedback received be noted
- 2) The following comments/ recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for consideration:-

That Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- a) Welcome the increased engagement that was undertaken on the One Coventry Plan and improved response rates as a result of this work
- b) Acknowledge the limitation of the response by Ward data collected as part of the engagement and welcome a response from officers that this would be built upon in future engagement opportunities
- c) Welcome a planned review of Council media and communication methods to facilitate community engagement and the delivery of the One Coventry Plan
- d) Suggest that officers explore if QR codes be included in future to link to WhatsApp group to increase engagement
- e) Welcome the collective responsibility that will deliver the One Coventry Plan which spans the Council and our partners
- f) Welcome the ability for the Council to challenge and hold partners to account through the One Coventry Partnership
- g) Agree that Scrutiny receive regular updates on progress of the delivery of the One Coventry Plan

- 3) That the recommendations to Cabinet be supported

49. **Drugs and Alcohol Strategy**

The Committee considered a Briefing Note, together with a presentation at the meeting, which informed the Committee about the progress being made on the local response to the National Drugs Strategy "From Harm to Hope" including the:

- Coventry needs assessment
- Governance structures
- Current service commissioning arrangements
- Plans for development of a multi-agency Drugs and Alcohol Strategy for Coventry

The representative from West Midlands Police explained to the Committee that drugs and alcohol were the main drivers for violence in the city and that there was

a need to make Coventry a hostile environment for people to bring drugs in. There were a number of challenges but there were also opportunities, such as the service violence plan and the One Coventry Plan.

The representative from Change Grow Live outlined adult drug and alcohol treatment services. There were three key areas of focus – getting 20% more people in treatment, continuity of care and reducing drug related deaths. There had been additional funding however recruitment had been a challenge as there was a shortage of professional staff and short-term funding didn't make the jobs attractive in the long term. However, there was an ambition to deliver across the partnership as the aspirations could not be delivered in isolation.

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

- Drugs and alcohol being a main driver of pressures on public services
- Additional resources within the police service would enable more levels of command.
- The importance of a partnership approach, including parenting support, schools and early intervention, as well as addressing the gang issues.
- Alcohol liaison services at hospital supported people and CGL have hospital in-reach services to develop those links.
- Steps are being taken to address cannabis farms, protecting the vulnerable and exploited and breaking the gangs controlling the system. Work with community safety team to close properties and the use of 2014 community safety act which could deter landlords and encourage due diligence when letting properties.
- The importance of getting an early flow of intelligence from members of the public.
- That drugs and alcohol on the university campuses was not a significant issue and the partnership with between the police and the universities was solid.
- Nitrous oxide, the impact of it and the need for the legislation to be updated. Concerns that people were driving under the influence and dangerous behaviour as a consequence.
- The links with modern day slavery. A new coordinator post in Legal Services to coordinate the intelligence.
- Steps being taken to address issues around specialist recruitment for drug and alcohol services
- The difference between data and intelligence. Intelligence allowed immediate action, longer term analysis of data helped scope strategic thinking on how to deliver interventions and crime enforcement bit.
- Education would be a key priority in terms of what is available for schools to work with and working to engage in agenda
- Groups who don't want to engage with services and front line staff to have those conversations and start that process of engagement. Self-referrals are the highest percentage for people accessing treatment.
- The involvement of the third sector as important partners.
- The role of the Night Time Economy, working with Regulatory Services and the police to make sure that the city centre feels a safe place to visit at night.

- The importance of having culturally sensitive services to address the stigma of drug and alcohol abuse in certain communities.
- Partnership manager encouraging more exposure to treatment services and work with rough sleeper team – CGL looked at different ways to grow the workforce – lot about growing our own.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the partners who attended the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the requirements set out in the National Drug Strategy be noted
- 2) That the findings of the local needs assessment be noted
- 3) That the regional and local governance structures be noted
- 4) That the comments outlined above made by the Committee be considered by officers and that a further item on the Drugs and Alcohol Strategy be added to the Work Programme for next municipal year.

50. **Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2022/23**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee noted their Work Programme for 2022/23.

51. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.20 pm)