

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 20 September 2023

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)
Councillor R Thay (Deputy Chair)
Councillor M Ali
Councillor P Male
Councillor C Miks
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor E Ruane
Councillor R Singh
Councillor R Thay
Councillor CE Thomas

Other Members (Invited): Councillor J O'Boyle (Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change)

Councillor G Duggins (Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership)

Employees (by Service Area):

Law and Governance C Taylor, A West

Transportation, Highways and Sustainability C Knight, R Palmer, B Willers

Apologies: Councillor G Ridley

Public Business

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

8. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th July, 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

9. One Coventry Climate Change Strategy - Engagement and Consultation

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received a Briefing Note and presentation of the Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability and the Strategic Lead - Green Futures, informing Members about the engagement process and

consultation feedback to the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy, and next steps with regards to finalising the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The draft Climate Change Strategy was launched in February 2023, setting out the Council's ambitious vision and foundations for creating a sustainable net zero city of the future. It was developed based on the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives pathways to sustainability.

The consultation ran from 15 February to 7 July 2023 which was extended to enable the team to engage with the major public events over the summer. The team sought to understand the views of the people of Coventry on the Strategy, pathways and key themes within them, to identify which issues were most important to people and find out if anything should be added or amended. Data and feedback was captured via a survey on the Council's Lets Talk Platform, during focused pathway group sessions, via email and letter correspondence, drop in sessions held at libraries and shopping centres and at events.

1421 people or organisations engaged with the consultation which took place face to face at various drop ins, events and focus groups, via online meetings, webinars and online surveys. Over 500 written responses were received, with over 1856 comments from individuals and representatives of organisations providing feedback on the Strategy. This was a low response rate in a city of 345,000 but was a typical response rate for a consultation on a strategy. However, given the importance of this issue and the fact that behaviour change was one of the key actions required to help reach net zero, further engagement would be required going forward to raise awareness and encourage positive action to be taken.

The majority of respondents that took part in the survey were between 35-64 years (58.6%) which was larger than the 2021 Census figure of 36%. Only 4.5% of respondents were aged 24 and under which was lower than the Census figure of 15% of the population aged between 16-24 years old.

71.5% of respondents that took part in the survey identified as 'White British', higher than Coventry's total 'White British' population of 66.6%. Responses from Asian groups which made up 16.3% of the city's total population only made up 4.3% of surveys received.

The highest responses from wards were from Earlsdon (9%), Binley & Willenhall (8%) and Wyken (7%). The areas with the least responses were Upper Stoke (2%) and Foleshill (3%).

Feedback received from the consultation was summarised as follows:

- 81% of respondents considered it 'very important' or 'fairly important' to think about sustainability and tackle the impacts of climate change.
- 19% of those engaged felt it was 'not very important' or 'not important at all'.
- There was no consistent agreement regarding feedback on the aspects of tackling Climate Change that were most important to people however, fair green future received the most 1st place and 7th place rankings and nature based interventions were also important for respondents.
- The most comments received relating to pathways were regarding fair green futures, low emissions, nature based, circular economy and adaptation and resilience respectively.

Recommendations for further development of the Climate Change Strategy included:

- Considering how to widen the level of participation and engagement of under-represented groups, develop links to the Independent Climate Change Board and create opportunities for involvement in projects within the Action Plan.
- Continued engagement with key stakeholders and special interest groups.
- Noting comments received and amending the Strategy and Action Plan accordingly.
- Noting progress in the City Council's work with the Climate Change Board and focusing on key priorities to seek agreement from Cabinet for the approval of the final Strategy and Action Plan.
- Considering the need to establish clear targets for 2030 and 2050.

Full consultation reports and feedback would be published on the Council's website and the draft Strategy would be updated to reflect feedback received. The revised Strategy and Action Plan would take into account the recent appointment of the Council's Strategic Energy Partner and would also include recommendations from the Independent Climate Change Board. It was anticipated that the final Strategy and Action Plan would be published early in the new year.

The Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change welcomed the One Coventry Climate Change Strategy – engagement and consultation, confirming his support for the recent strategic energy partnership with EON and encouraging the Committee to provide further ideas for wider consultation to achieve net zero in as shorter time as possible.

In considering the Briefing note and presentation, the Committee questioned and received responses from officers in respect of the matters summarised below:

- Majority of responses being from private organisations. Few responses received from public sector organisations.
- Feedback from some private organisations ie. from banks and building societies was still to be received.
- Engagement undertaken with the Citizen's Assembly (a group that met on a regular basis regarding retrofit). It included the four main four housing associations.
- Social housing being an easier target for retrofit than privately owned housing.
- Challenges relating to retrofit for SME's renting building space in the city.
- Future communications with the housing and transport sectors regarding Council's expectations.
- Using paid social media channels to engage with the younger people in the city.
- Resources being limited within the communications and transformation teams, so targeted engagement being used.
- The climate change newsletter had recently been launched.
- Council systems being more user friendly and accessed more easily by the public. For example, how to submit a Tree Protection Order.

- Queries regarding how actions arising from the Scrutiny Co-ordination meeting held on 6 April 2022 relating to consultation and engagement had been addressed.
- The feedback system.
- Improved consultation and engagement by using Councillors to engage with residents.
- Issues of data sharing between council departments due to GDPR.
- Engagement with the freight sector and the proposal for a multi fuel hub as part of a wider regional network.
- What net zero would look like for Coventry.
- Wider engagement with businesses.
- Sourcing funding for retrofit.
- Amount of engagement with housing developers.
- Recycling targets within the strategy.
- The challenges around retrofit to private rented properties and how the Local Plan connects with the strategy.
- Engagement with young people in the city had been undertaken and further joined up engagement would be undertaken in schools.
- How the Local Plan fits into the strategy regarding retrofit.
- Recognition of the difficulties of improving the EPC in private rented properties.

Members of the Committee requested the following:

- Information relating to Tree Protection Orders applied to trees when land was sold.
- Engagement comparison figures for other Local Authorities.

The Cabinet Member thanked officers for their work on the Climate Change Strategy.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1) Note the consultation feedback for the draft Climate Change Strategy.**
- 2) Support the recommendation process for further developing the Climate Change Strategy.**

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend to the Cabinet Member that:

- 1) The comments made during the meeting are reflected as part of the developing engagement programme.**
- 2) If resources are available to make use of paid social media to target young people.**
- 3) Ensure the Climate change programme engages with schools and young people.**

- 4) **Ensure the programme involves Councillors as a route to engagement with local communities.**

10. **Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received a Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator regarding the Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23. The Constitution required that Scrutiny report annually to inform Council of its work.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1) **Accept the content of the draft report at Appendix 1.**
- 2) **Recommends that Council considers the Scrutiny Annual Report at its next available meeting.**

11. **Complaints Policy and Procedure - Task and Finish Group**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received a Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator regarding the Complaints Policy and Procedure – Task and Finish Group.

As part of their annual summary of complaint statistics, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman included the Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, as an opportunity to “to encourage effective ownership and oversight of complaint outcomes, which offer such valuable opportunities to learn and improve”. A copy of this letter had been appended to the report.

The annual letter and report are considered in detail by the Leader at his Cabinet Member meeting, as well as Ethics Committee and Audit and Procurement Committee.

Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and other scrutiny members were invited to be involved in the review of the Complaints Policy and Procedure to ensure that the process is easy to access and understandable for everyone involved, particularly members of the public.

The task and finish group would meet 2-3 times during the autumn with the intention of making recommendations to the Cabinet Member in the new year.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1) **Establish a Task and Finish Group to be involved in a review of the Council Complaints Policy and Procedure.**
- 2) **Identified the following Members to take part in the Task and Finish Group, together with a representative of the Opposition Group:**
 - **Councillor N Akhtar**
 - **Councillor M Ali**
 - **Councillor R Singh**

- **Councillor CE Thomas**

12. **Scrutiny Management**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee were informed that Councillor N Akhtar, Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, attended the meeting of Cabinet on 29 August 2023 for consideration of an item relating to “Coventry Strategic Energy Partner”.

Councillor Akhtar agreed that the decision was urgent and that call in should not apply.

In accordance with the Constitution, this matter was reported to inform the Committee of the reason for urgency which is:-

“The procurement timeline currently shows the date by which the Council will enter into contract with the preferred bidder as being 12th September 2023. In order to achieve this, the notification letter to all the bidders stating the award of the contract to the preferred bidder and commencement of the mandatory 10-day standstill period needs to commence on 1st September 2023. Failure to issue these letters on that date would mean a delay to the ability of the parties to enter into a contract on 12th September 2023 and therefore could also delay the implementation of the Joint Venture arrangements.”

13. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues - 2023/24**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered their Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee notes the Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2023/24 with the inclusion of the following items:

- **Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) – Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to be held prior to Cabinet consideration of this item.**
- **Strategic Energy Partnership.**
- **One Coventry Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (early 2024).**

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

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.55am)