

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 26 September 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor R Singh (Chair)
Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor T Jandu
Councillor A Kaur
Councillor T Khan
Councillor B Singh

Other Members Councillor G Duggins (Leader of the Council)
Councillor S Nazir (Deputy Cabinet Member for City Services)

Employees (by Service Area):

City Services and Commercial D Pipe, J Seddon

Law and Governance G Holmes, M Salmon

Apologies: Councillor P Hetherton (Cabinet Member for City Services) – by invitation
Councillor J O'Boyle (Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change) - by invitation
Councillor D Toulson

Public Business

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st August 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

3. Transport Strategy Delivery Plan

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a report of the Director of City Services and Commercial that would also be considered at the meetings of Cabinet on 1st October 2024 and the Council on 15th October 2024, which provided an update on progress achieved since the Coventry Transport Strategy was adopted, including the latest available performance information. The report also sought approval to update the Implementation Plan which accompanied the Strategy to reflect the Council's latest plans. Appendices to the

report provided: the Coventry Transport Strategy Key Performance Indicators Progress Report; and the Coventry Transport Strategy Implementation Plan Update. The Board also received a presentation that supported the progress detailed in the report.

The Coventry Transport Strategy was approved by Council in December 2022 (their minute 83/22 referred). It was a 15-year strategy which set out plans to fundamentally change the city's transport system, including by investing in significant improvements to public transport, walking and cycling and by accelerating the transition to zero emission vehicles.

The Implementation Plan set out the 'pipeline' of specific improvements that the Council intended to deliver over the lifetime of the Strategy. The proposed changes to this included updating the expected timescales for the delivery of various schemes and the addition of a small number of new actions. These additions included reform of the region's bus services and several additional walking and cycling schemes, for which funding had now been secured. The specific changes that Council was being asked to approve were detailed in the Coventry Transport Strategy Implementation Plan Update that was appended to the report.

In considering the report and a presentation by officers, the Board asked questions and received responses on the matters in the following areas:

- The aim by TfWM to expand the use of contactless payments and concerns that passengers who rely on cash payment may not have the opportunity to take advantage of the best ticket options.
- There were currently 140 electric buses in the city which would increase to just under 300 when all buses in the city were electric by 2025.
- That bus timetabling was with bus operators to register plans with TfWM.
- The breakdown of road fatalities by age and location in the city.
- The importance of the cross-boundary travel to work area with Warwickshire and that this should not be overlooked as part of any work the West Midlands Combined Authority were doing as part of their statutory Transport Strategy.
- That the majority of funding provided by the Council for activities covered in the Coventry Transport Strategy was revenue funding provided via the transport levy, which was paid by all the constituent authorities that made up the West Midlands Combined Authority to TfWM. This funding supported various TfWM activities, including maintaining the bus network. Infrastructure schemes, delivered with capital funding were funded through a variety of government funds and private contributions via S106. Very little of this funding was directly from Council budgets.
- Opportunities to promote the innovative projects being delivered to support active travel in the city, such as Very Light Rail, Ring and Ride schemes and West Midlands On Demand.
- Aspirational work to manage freight in the city centre through the City Centre Traffic Management Plan.

Members requested that a letter be sent to TfWM regarding their aim to expand the use of contactless payments, requesting that consideration be given to passengers who rely on cash payment who may not have the opportunity to take

advantage of the best ticket options. They also requested a breakdown of road fatalities by age and location in the city, be circulated to them.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3), having reviewed the report, recommend that Cabinet:

- 1) Agree the recommendations in the report.**
- 2) Find opportunities to promote the innovative projects being delivered to support active travel in the city, such as Very Light Rail, Ring and Ride schemes and West Midlands On Demand.**

4. Local Air Quality Action Plan Update

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a presentation of the Strategic Lead for Policy and Innovation, that provided an update on progress in delivering the actions agreed as part of the Local Air Quality Action Plan (LAQAP).

At their meeting of the Board held on 30th November 2022, the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered an item on the Coventry Local Air Quality Action Plan (minute 14/22 referred). The Board made recommendations to officers and requested a further update on progress. A further progress report was provided on 6th March 2024 (minute 19/23 referred).

In respect of health inequalities, the Council recognised the impact of air pollution on health and wellbeing and was committed to taking action to improve air quality in the city. It was recognised that air pollution had effects on health across the life course, contributing to the development or exacerbation of a range of health conditions, as well as to mortality at a population level. The LAQAP package of measures would support the improvement of public health by tackling air quality problems within the city as well as by promoting sustainable and active travel.

The presentation highlighted the following:

Update on LAQAP delivery and status:

- Spon End / J7 scheme completed 2023
- JAQU report received Dec 23 – identifies Holyhead Rd as sole non-compliant site
- JAQU monitoring has implications for Holyhead Rd / Lower Coundon measures
- Coundon Cycleway substantially complete – extension to UHS to be done

Spon End / J7

- Spon End / J7 scheme completed 2023
- Allesley Old Road / Hearsall Lane signals upgrade completed
- ASE operational on AOR, Hearsall Lane / Spon End
- VMS installed on Pickford Way

JAQU Update

- Stage 1 Assessment Report – Nov 23
- Coventry judged to be non-compliant – Holyhead Rd
- Foleshill Road – compliance achieved [electric buses?]
- JAQU require updated LAQAP to be prepared – work underway on this
- Upper Hill Street re-opening no longer recommended

Holyhead Rd / Lower Coundon

Multiple schemes happening in the Lower Coundon / Naul's Mill area

- Completion of Air Quality obligations on Holyhead Road
- Completion of Coundon Cycleway to Upper Hill Street Bridge
- Lower Coundon Liveable Neighbourhood
- Cycle Contraflow Pilot
- Moseley Avenue Average Speed Enforcement (ASE)
- Uncertainty over Network Rail's proposals
 - Barkers Butts Level Crossing
 - Holyhead Road bridge replacement

In considering the briefing and presentation, the Board questioned officers, received responses and discussed matters as summarised below:

- Success of improvements at Ring Road/Junction7
- Consideration of a Park and Ride facility for the Allesley Old Road area welcome
- Very Light Rail (VLR) – offered an alternative travel option to Park and Ride
- The environmental benefits of electric buses – 140 electric buses on the highway to date. All-electric bus city by end of 2025 with just under 300 vehicles in total.
- Coventry to Leicester rail service – progression could result in the loss of Coundon Road and Hawkesbury level crossings but would enable a faster/strategic rail service
- Holyhead Road – quarterly vehicle surveys undertaken, including Automatic Number Plate Recognition Surveys. Data submitted to DVRA following which the Local Authority were provided with headline vehicle information.
- Monitoring of air pollution met required standards – City Council monitoring equipment was the same as JAQU equipment
- DVLA – consider targeting vehicles that weren't compliant with emissions requirements
- Walsgrave Road – air quality now emission compliant following a number of improvements which included rerouting buses in the area.

Members requested that the DVLA be requested to target vehicles that are not compliant with emissions requirements.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy, and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) noted the content of the presentation and briefing note and had no further recommendations for the Cabinet Member.

5. **Work Programme 2024/25**

The Business, Economy, and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that detailed issues on the Board's Work Programme for meetings of the Board for 2024/25.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the issues on the Board's Work Programme for 2024/25 and that the October meeting had been re-scheduled to 18th December 2024 to enable the Board to have an input into the WMCA Bus Franchising Consultation.

6. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.40 pm)