

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 19 February 2014

Present:

Members: Councillor C Fletcher (Chair)
 Councillor J Clifford (Deputy Chair)
 Councillor F Abbott
 Councillor J Blundell
 Councillor T Khan
 Councillor K Mulhall (substitute for Councillor Skipper)
 Councillor R Sandy
 Councillor S Thomas

Employees:

L Hughes, Resources Directorate
L Knight, Resources Directorate
B Lee, Chief Executive's Directorate
J Moore, Chief Executive's Directorate
F Nicholls, Chief Executive's Directorate
K O'Hara, Chief Executives Directorate
C Parker, People Directorate
A West, Resources Directorate

Apologies: Councillors T Skipper and K Taylor

Public Business

64. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

65. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th February, 2014 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

66. Overview and Scrutiny Management

Cabinet Member (Public Services) Item of Urgent Public Business – Petition and Consultation Results Daventry Road Improvement Scheme

The Committee received a copy of a report of the Executive Director, Place that had been considered by the Cabinet Member (Public Services) at her meeting on 10th February, 2014 relating to a petition and consultation results concerning the Daventry Road Improvement scheme. The Committee noted that Councillor Clifford, the nominee of the Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, had attended the Cabinet Member meeting and agreed that the decision was urgent and that call-in should not apply. In accordance with paragraph 4.5.3.1 of the

Council's Constitution, the report was presented to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to inform them of the reasons for urgency. The reason for urgency was that the works must be completed before 23rd March, 2014 when Warwick Road was due to be closed for approximately 12 months in connection with the Friargate development. Quinton Road would be one of the routes vehicles would use to avoid Warwick Road while it was closed. Therefore having planned works taking place on this route while the closures were in place could cause major disruption and be against the public interest, as well as causing reputational damage to the City Council. Although the Daventry Road scheme was originally planned to be completed in plenty of time before this date, due to the design and consultation process taking longer than expected, and then the petition being received, there wouldn't be enough time to complete the scheme before 23rd March if the decision was delayed by the call-in process.

67. **Empowering Communities through Asset Based Working**

The Committee considered a briefing note of the Director of Public Health which detailed how communities could be empowered through Asset Based Working (ABW). Information was provided on what ABW was and what could be achieved through adopting this approach. Particular reference was made to the impact of ABW on health and health inequalities and a description of the work being undertaken in the city to embed this approach to service delivery was provided. A number of case studies of experiences of ABW in Coventry and elsewhere were set out at an appendix attached to the briefing note.

The asset based approach to health sought to recognise and use a community's assets in order to improve local health and wellbeing. Assets had been defined as the existing 'capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential' in a community, as well as physical assets such as buildings. The focus of the approach was to use and build on the local assets as a way of finding new potential solutions to the issues that were most important to a community.

Traditional approaches to improving people's lives through public services had been experts or providers to implement a policy, intervention or programme and for users or recipients to utilise the service providers. The asset-based approach changed this altogether, encouraging new relationships on a more equal footing. Empowering communities through co-production necessitated that professional staff were willing to share power and this could prove difficult and required a change of culture that some could find challenging.

The briefing note referred to the Marmot report on Health Inequalities which provided evidence of the links between social networks and health outcomes. The extent to which people participated in their community had the potential to contribute to their well-being and as a result to other health outcomes. The Board were informed that other research had shown that social relationships were more important indicators in the odds of reduced mortality than smoking, excessive drinking and obesity.

Arising from the Marmot report, it was jointly agreed between the Primary Care Trust and the City Council that a particular focus on Asset Based Approaches to empower communities should be jointly progressed. Through the Coventry Health

Improvement Programme, an evidenced based tool 'the 10 ways to feeling good and well' had been developed for use as an engagement tool.

The Coventry Asset Based Approaches Multi-Agency Partnership Group was set up in 2011 and had overseen two pilots projects: The Foleshill Moving Forward resident led group had been established and in Bell Green the 10 ways tool was being used to engage with residents to talk about well-being.

ABW was now a priority in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and had been included in the Council Plan and Elected Members were being encouraged to engage in ABW with their constituents.

The Committee questioned the officers on a number of issues and responses were provided. Matters raised included:

- Were the success of the case studies a result of fortuitous circumstances
- What were communities recommended to do to make their voices heard
- Clarification about the techniques to ABW engagement and how to communicate with a troubled family
- How to manage the expectations of communities
- Why wasn't the approach embedded a number of years ago
- How would outcomes be measured
- An understanding of all the benefits to individuals
- Further examples of successful ABW

The Committee discussed how they could become more involved with ABW.

RESOLVED that:

(i) The content of the report be noted.

(ii) Members to be kept updated about what is happening in their Wards in relation to Asset Based Working and Members to discuss their suggestions for using this approach to Ward matters with appropriate employees.

(iii) Asset Based Working to be taken into account on appropriate issues included in Scrutiny Boards' work programmes as well as in the work of future Task and Finish Groups.

(iv) Report authors be encouraged to consider using the Asset Based Working approach when writing reports.

(v) The Chair, Councillor Fletcher, to inform all members about who to contact to be able to get a better understanding about Asset Based Working.

68. Evaluation of Approaches to Enabling Communities Through Asset Based Working, Including Evaluation of the Community Development Service

Further to Minute 67 above, the Committee considered a joint briefing note concerning the strategic work programme aimed at enabling and empowering communities through using asset based approaches, in particular it provided an overview of how the impact of this work programme could be evaluated.

The work programme was embedded in the Council Plan and was being integrated into the kickstart work streams, as appropriate. The programme had got a number of different elements which together should collectively impact on community health and well-being which should over time lead to a reduced dependency on public services. The key elements included

- A learning and development programme for frontline council and partner agency staff to promote their understanding of asset based approaches and support their use.
- Providing small levels of public health investment in community led projects that help to promote mental well-being and community resilience.
- Establishing the Community Development Service (CDS) to work with Coventry's most challenged communities bringing together community members with public sector and other local agencies to solve the issues most important to that community.

At a programme level evaluation needed to be undertaken to answer a number of different questions. For each element within the programme an evaluation was required to help distinguish the separate contributions each was making to overall outcomes so providing a better understanding of what worked and how investment should be directed in the future.

The briefing note detailed how the CDS would operate to ensure that communities were able to take more pride and responsibility for their own neighbourhood and could engage with other public sector services in producing solutions to their important issues.

The principles of evaluation at a city wide level were set out along with the evaluation of the CDS. Evaluation of community development approaches was complex because of the inter-connectivity and complexity of neighbourhoods. Locally sensitive data including stories from communities would be required.

Successful approaches to asset based working would be expected to produce improved health and social outcomes and would eventually result in improved performance in relation to all the wider determinants of health such as educational achievement and crime reduction. However, it would take many years for such impacts to become apparent.

The Committee questioned the officers on a number of issues and responses were provided. Matters raised included:

- The length of time it would take before benefits could be realised
- The importance of good communication to be able to ask people about their experiences and receive appropriate feedback
- How can communities be challenged
- The issue of having sufficient resource to support communities, with some communities requiring greater help than others
- The importance of the long term sustainability of people and projects.

RESOLVED that:

(i) The suggested approach to evaluation be approved and regular progress reports be submitted to future meetings of the Committee.

(ii) Any evaluation undertaken is designed appropriately to be meaningful to the community.

69. Outstanding Issues

The Committee noted that all outstanding issues had been included in the Work Programme for the current year.

70. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2013/2014

The Committee considered and noted the Work Programme for 2013–2014.

71. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.50 am)