



Report to
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

16th April, 2014

Report of
Councillor Ann Lucas

Title
Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – ***Coventry Partnership***

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out details of the work of the Coventry Partnership over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Council continues its membership of the Coventry Partnership.

3 Information on Work of Outside Body

3.1 The Coventry Partnership is Coventry's Local Strategic Partnership and was established in 2002. The Partnership continues to bring together Coventry's public, private, community and voluntary organisations and aims to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged communities and the rest of the city through collaboration and joint activity. The Chair of the Partnership rotates on an annual basis. Charley Gibbons, Chief Executive of Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau has been the Chair for the past year.

3.2 The current Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy Executive Strategy for 2011 – 2014 is now in its final year. The Strategy is delivered through a range of Partners and groups which work to identify local priorities by co-ordinating and collaborating with partners to achieve agreed outcomes. The four key objectives of the strategy being:

- To create growth, jobs and enterprise particularly in high manufacturing and green technologies
- To make the city more vibrant.
- To reduce health inequalities.
- To ensure all children and young people met their full potential both educational and opportunities.

3.3 The Partnership has actively looked to address its four key objectives and has co-ordinated and worked jointly with partners on a number of activities and promotions. In the past 12 months this has included: organising ONC Level 3 Accredited Courses on 'Money Mentors' and 'Teaching Others' through the National Skills Academy with 70 people from Partners organisations being trained. The Community Cohesion Awards were held for fourth year and were well attended. The Big Lunch was promoted along with the Armed Forces Community Covenant and attendance at sub-regional groups.

- 3.4 The primary priority for the Partnership during 2013 was the impact of Welfare Reform in Coventry and this will continue as a priority for 2014. During the year a Coventry Partnership Welfare Reform Working Together Group and an Evaluation Group were formed. The Working Together Group aimed to bring partners together raise awareness of the impacts of Welfare Reform and work together to mitigate these where possible. The group worked to develop and clear and consistent messages around the Welfare Reform, ensuring that local people were made aware of the Welfare Reform Changes and, in particular, that those directly impacted understood how they would be affected. The Welfare Reform Evaluation Group has ensured all partners know what the accumulative effects on the most vulnerable groups are in the city.
- 3.5 Joint activities organised throughout the year included: the launch of the “Are we ready?” booklet; articles in Citivision; Disability Road shows on Personal Independent Payments; and Pop-up Shops on Welfare Reform Changes. The most recent pop-up shop was held in January and focused on eligibility for Discretionary Housing Payments.
- 3.6 The Coventry Partnership Conference held on 1st October, 2013 brought together people who are working to reduce the impact of Welfare Reform on local people and the local economy to share their knowledge and skills with each other. Around two hundred delegates attended and there was live coverage on radio and twitter @CoventryWelfare. Several areas of work came out of the conference and these are being taken forward through existing groups within the Partnership.
- 3.7 A Welfare Reform Strategy has been agreed and an action plan will be developed and implemented throughout 2014 as Welfare Reform remains a priority for the Partnership. Work is currently being undertaken to gear up for Universal Credit and the Local Support Service Framework. A baseline mapping process for the city in respect of digital inclusion, money management and employability has started, the lead partner being DWP.
- 3.8 The Coventry Partnership’s work on Welfare Reform has been reported to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee during the year.
- 3.9 Although austerity measures have impacted on partner organisations over the last few years, stronger emphasis is being placed on partnership working. Partners within the Coventry Partnership have adapted to these changes and challenges and have remained flexible, proactive and adaptive to refocus on identified priorities.
- 3.10 A review of the Coventry Partnership was undertaken during the year and it was agreed that the Partnership should move to a more flexible way of working. This includes reducing the number of standing groups and meetings. The Partnership plans to hold three meetings throughout the year, with one of these being a major strategic conference around an agreed priority area. The groups within the Partnership will change according to priorities and activities.

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

- 4.1 The Coventry Partnership brings together organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to work together to improve the social economic and environmental well being of people in Coventry and to strive to improve the delivery of public services. The Partnership is well placed to ensure that a cross-agency response to emerging issues in the City can be developed quickly e.g. Welfare Reform. This is particularly important in areas such as Economy and Jobs, Equalities, Housing and Welfare Reform where the Council is not the lead party in delivering the services.

5 What Financial Contribution Does the Council Make to this Organisation

5.1 Not applicable

6 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

6.1 Council representation on and attendance at the Coventry Partnership for the last year was:

Councillor Ann Lucas	2
Councillor Phil Townshend	
Councillor Lynnette Kelly	
Councillor John McNicholas	1
Councillor John Blundell	2
Councillor Alan Andrews	

List of background papers

Proper officer: Councillor Ann Lucas

Author: Councillor Ann Lucas

Telephone: 024 7683 1103

Other contributors:

Dawn Ford, Coventry Partnership and Communities Manager – Telephone 024 7683 4356

Jenni Venn, Assistant Director Corporate Policy – Telephone 024 7683 3741

Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper

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Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies