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Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 11 March 2015

Present:

Members of the Board: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor R Bailey
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor J Birdi
Councillor R Brown
Councillor K Mulhall
Councillor T Skipper
Councillor H Sweet
Councillor S Walsh
Councillor D Welsh

Other Members Present Councillor Brown, Deputy Cabinet Member, Business,
Enterprise and Employment
Councillor Clifford

Employees (by Directorate):

Place: M. Checkley, D.. Shiner, J. Venn Morton

Resources: S. Bennett, G. Holmes

Others present: R. Stewart, Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise
Partnership

Apologies: Councillor Maton, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise
and Employment

Public Business

47. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

48. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February, 2015 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

49. Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) Skills Strategy Update

The Scrutiny Board received a Briefing Note, together with a comprehensive presentation, on developments taking place relating to the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Skills (CWLEP) Strategy.

The Skills Strategy for CWLEP was launched in November 2013 following extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. It is monitored by the CWLEP Jobs and Skills Business Group which meets six times a year. The Strategy has recently been reviewed and refreshed following its first year of implementation and has the following 3 core objectives:-

- Using Skills to drive and create growth
- Developing skills to tackle unemployment
- Getting a better fit between education and employment

Implementation has been through a work plan made up of the following 6 strands and the Briefing Note detailed progress to date on some of the strand activity :-

- Apprenticeships
- Information, Advice and Guidance
- NEETS (Not in Employment, Education or Training) 16-18 and 18-24
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths)
- Skills, Capital and European Structural Investment Funds
- Workforce Development

The Briefing Note detailed the membership of the Jobs and Skills Business Group and the Scrutiny Board noted that each strand of the above work plan was led by a member of the Group.

A separate report on the 3rd quarter of the Skills 4 Growth programme was attached as an appendix, which outlined the strong and solid progress that this Project has achieved against the targets set.

The Scrutiny Board questioned Rachael Stewart, Skills Executive, CWLEP, together with officers, on aspects of the Briefing Note, in particular in relation to:-

- The make-up of the Jobs and Skills Business Group and why there is no elected Member representation or Trade Union representation on that Group.
- How training outputs are measured and if any self-evaluations are carried out
- Proposals by City College Coventry to provide a stand alone skills hub that compliments the provision of the Coventry Job Shop
- The graduate employment scheme

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the success and achievements of the CWLEP Skills Strategy be welcomed and noted.**
- (2) That Councillors Lucas and Maton, as the City Council's representatives on the Local Enterprise Partnership, be requested to explore the membership of the Jobs and Skills**

Business Group and the fact that there are no elected Members or Trade Unions represented on that Group.

50. Progress Report to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change Regarding Energy Conservation Measures in the Housing Sector

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which indicated that Local Authorities have duties under Sections 2 and 5 of the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) to prepare reports on energy conservation measures for submission to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. The Government issued revised guidance in July 2012 on new reporting arrangements that will apply within the policy context of the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO). The guidance was further revised in March 2013.

The City Council submitted a report to the Secretary of State in 2013 and, in accordance with the revised guidance, progress reports are required to be submitted at two yearly intervals. Local authorities have to review the progress made in implementing the energy conservation measures in these subsequent reports. There is also a continuing requirement that each subsequent report is made available on the Council's website. The progress report for submission to the Secretary of State and for publication on the Council's website were attached to the report.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on aspects of the report, particularly in relation to:-

- Changes to the definition of fuel poverty that the Government uses to estimate fuel poverty levels and the effect that this has had on the number of households who are now deemed to be fuel poor, compared to the number in this category under the previous definition.
- Work carried out by the Council's Fuel Poverty Team, including advice given to residents and private landlords
- Partnership working, particularly with the energy companies
- Information relating to the housing stock in Coventry and the different types of work that can be carried out to make homes more energy efficient

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment be informed of the Scrutiny Board's concerns regarding the change to the way that fuel poverty is calculated and the fact that some vulnerable people may no longer be considered to be in fuel poverty, but that their situation may not have changed.**

- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment be requested to express the above concern to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change when submitting the report on behalf of the City Council
- (3) That the Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and the Chairs of the Scrutiny Boards consider the most appropriate way of including Fuel Poverty in Scrutiny's Work Programme for 2015/16

51. **Outstanding Issues**

The Scrutiny Board noted that Outstanding Issues were included in the Board's Work Programme.

52. **Work Programme 2014/2015**

The Scrutiny Board noted the Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year, 2014/15 and that the meeting scheduled for 4 April, 2015 had been cancelled.

53. **Other Items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.00 p.m.)