

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 12 October 2016

Present:

Members: Councillor J McNicholas (Chair)
Councillor J Birdi
Councillor R Brown
Councillor M Hammon
Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor T Mayer

Other Members (by invitation): Councillor J O'Boyle (Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration)
Councillor D Welsh (Deputy Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration)

Employees (by Directorate):

Place P Boulton
Resources G Holmes, M Salmon
Apologies: Councillor A Lucas

Public Business

14. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests made.

15. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2016 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Further to resolution 1) in Minute 10/16, the Board noted that a focus group was being established and would include members from Coventry Older Voices, to progress the service users' questionnaire.

16. Select Committee Process

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator on the purpose and process for the Board's proposed Select Committee on Public Transport, scheduled in the New Year.

At an informal meeting of the Board on 8th June 2016 Members agreed they would hold a Select Committee Style meeting to address issues around public transport. The purpose of the Select Committee was to hear evidence on Public Transport with regard to a key line of enquiry. It was important that the key line of enquiry

was identified before the select committee met so that the correct background information could be provided and appropriate witnesses could be invited to give evidence.

The Board identified a group of four Members, Councillors Brown, Lancaster, Mayer and McNicholas (chair), to act as an Advisory Panel whose role it would be to clarify and finalise the key lines of enquiry and scope for the meeting. They would meet at the Agenda Briefing for the Select Committee meeting to agree key questions for witnesses. They would also meet after the Select Committee to analyse the findings and finalise any recommendations that may have arisen, for approval by the Board.

All Members would be provided with briefings and background documentation to provide information on the current position with earlier Scrutiny Board Meetings used as briefing sessions with officers to enable Members to fact check, clarify information and identify any other information and witnesses that may be useful. Members had already received briefings on public transport in general and providing transport for an aging population. Future briefings at Scrutiny Board meetings would include buses and the rail story.

Questions would be tailored to gain evidence from witnesses to answer the key line of enquiry for the Select Committee.

The main points to questioning for a Select Committee were:

- Questioning as a form of research
- The key line of enquiry as the starting point
- Witnesses were sources of evidence for the key line of enquiry
- Witnesses would be prepared in advance
- Proposed Programme of the Day

The key findings from the Select Committee would be discussed at a meeting of the advisory panel and collated into a report which would be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board for approval by the full Board. Depending on the outcome and content of the recommendations, the report may also go to the appropriate Cabinet Member/s for consideration.

To ensure that the Select Committee had a focus, the Board agreed that an item be added to the agenda for the next meeting headed 'Select Committee Recap and Identification of Key Lines of Enquiry'.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the process for the Board's Select Committee on Public Transport.

17. **Task and Finish Groups Progress Report**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received an update on progress of a series of task and finish groups of the Board which had been established at the informal meeting of the Board on 8th June 2016 to look at several issues in more detail and report back to the Board, as follows:

Refresh of the Green Space Strategy

The Task and Finish Group had met twice and comprised Councillors Auluck (Chair), Hammon, and McNicholas, with Lead Officer support from Graham Hood, Head of Streetpride and Green Spaces.

Members had agreed the scope for the task and finish group and met on 6th October 2016 to consider the draft specification for the appointment of a consultant to write the strategy. Members' would be involved in shaping the scope for the new strategy.

Digital for Coventry

The Task and Finish Group had met twice and had visited the Customer Services Centre. The Group had a cross-cutting theme with Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) and comprised Members from both Boards - Councillors Brown, Mayer, McNicholas, Kelly (Chair) and Ridley - with Lead Officer support from Lisa Commene, Assistant Director – ICT Transformation and Customer Services.

Members had received an introduction to the Digital Strategy and visited the new Contact Centre to look at how a more digital approach was being implemented. A further meeting on 4th October 2016 focussed on digital approaches in Adult Social Care and Homelessness.

European Funding

The Task and Finish Group had not yet met. An Officer Group was being established and would include the involvement of Scrutiny Members in its remit. The Task and Finish Group comprised Councillors Auluck, Lancaster, Lucas (Chair) and Ridley, with Lead Officer support from Rebecca Young, Economy and Jobs Manager.

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee had decided that due to the cross-cutting nature of this work, this Task and Finish Group should report to the Committee.

Members noted that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources had arranged for information on European Funding issues to be presented at a meeting being held on 1st November 2016. The Board agreed that it would be appropriate for the Members of the Task and Finish Group to attend this meeting, after which they would consider the direction and work of the Group.

Tourism and Marketing

The Task and Finish Group, which comprised Councillors Auluck, Hammon, and McNicholas, would look at starting in the New Year, once the Refresh of the Green Space Strategy Task and Finish Group had completed, considering the duplication of membership.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Notes the progress of the Board's Task and Finish Groups.**
- 2) The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources be requested to invite Members of the European Funding Task and Finish Group to the meeting arranged for 1st November 2016 to receive information on European Funding issues.**

18. **Coventry Station Masterplan**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a Briefing Note of the Executive Director of Place that provided an update of progress on the Coventry Station Masterplan.

Coventry had the fastest growing railway station for passenger numbers outside London and was a key gateway to the city. It was one of the busiest stations on the West Coast Mainline after London and Birmingham New Street but since being built in 1962 had seen little investment or updating. The Coventry Station Masterplan had been developed to address this, aiming to deliver transformational improvements to the Station and support the wider regeneration and connectivity of the Friargate development.

The proposals linked to completion of the Friargate masterplan and had been developed in consultation with the rail industry and Friargate LLP. It also formed part of the City Centre Area Action Plan and the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, as part of an overarching economic regeneration strategy.

The City Council had been working with Network Rail, the wider rail industry and Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership to identify proposals and a preferred option and secure funding to improve the station and increase capacity. The work remained ongoing and with final decisions subject to approval by the Cabinet.

Preliminary proposals sought to deliver new capacity and accessibility within the station through the provision of a new footbridge between platforms; a new station building which could be accessed from platform level and Warwick Road; replacement and additional car parking and passenger drop off facilities; and a new high quality public transport interchange. To support overall connectivity to Coventry Station and to Friargate, opportunities were also being explored for the integration of a potential future rapid transit system which would connect the city centre to the University of Warwick and eventually serve connections further afield. The works would be delivered in conjunction with NUCKLE 1.2, a 'sister' scheme, which provided a new bay platform; associated track and signalling works; and an enhanced train service between Coventry and Nuneaton, improving train service performance and providing reliability benefits.

To date the focus of the work has been on design optioneering and completion of concept designs. The emphasis was on high quality design which respected the heritage of the existing Grade 2 listed building in order to make Coventry an attractive station able to compete with neighbouring stations across the region.

Construction of the first phase of works had commenced on a pedestrian access under Warwick Road with progress being made on the delivery of NUCKLE 1.2. Extensive traffic modelling work had been undertaken to ensure the new station infrastructure was supported by an effective highway layout.

The Station Masterplan improvements were expected to be supported by funding from Network Rail to provide enhancements to the existing station buildings. This was complemented by the recent improvements to the station forecourt area and Station Square undertaken by the City Council and Friargate LLP. An external funding package was being sought to deliver the remaining aspects of the Station Masterplan which could include Growth Deal, Integrated Transport Block and Devolution Deal.

The Board questioned officers and discussed the following issues:

- Additional station building - Design options currently being assessed, with costs determined by the chosen design and the business deals acquired.
- Funding for the proposals - Various funding sources available, including from the Devolution Deal and the Regional Growth Fund. All funding sources would be investigated. There would be a revenue cost to the Authority, council funding support 'unlocks' other funding opportunities.
- Timescale for proposals – Delivery of the plan was dependent on key decision making, the design selection, and the acquisition of funding. The plan would be phased in as each stage progressed.
- New access points – Would provide a seamless experience from the bus interchange drops, to the under-pass and bridge and into the Station area.
- Taxi facilities – Important facility that would remain at the site.

Acknowledging the progression of the proposals, Members of the Board requested that they be provided with an updated copy of the Masterplan.

Resolved that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the update on progress of the Coventry Station Masterplan and has no recommendations to make to the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration.

19. **Friargate Progress**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a briefing note of the Executive Director of Place setting out key highlights on progress of the Friargate Business District. The Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration attended the meeting for this item.

At its meeting on 25 June 2013 (their minute 30/13 referred), the City Council approved that the organisation support the development of the Friargate Business District to regenerate the City, transform the Council and deliver savings by the construction of a new Council owned office building at Friargate, the construction of a new bridge deck, the rationalisation of its operational property estate and the subsequent disposal of property assets vacated through such rationalisation.

Since that time the Friargate development has achieved the following milestones:

- Construction of CCC building 1 had commenced with an estimated completion date of mid-2017.
- Highway works to junction 6 complete.
- The boulevard linking the station to city centre completed.
- Heatline connection to Friargate underway.
- Demolition/clearance of site completed.
- Planning permission granted on building 2.
- Discussions with Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors around pre-let of building 2 on-going.
- Further discussions with further office occupiers [and hotel operators] underway.
- Discussions on securing of £50m of commitment from Combined Authority to allow development of buildings 2/3 to expedite development.
- Sale of Civic Centre 1-4, Elm Bank and vacation of West Orchards House.
- Should this scheme be fully developed it was likely to produce a business rates income of circa £23 million per annum.

The Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration confirmed the Council's commitment to the Friargate development and that discussions with potential developers and tenants were on-going. The Cabinet Member also indicated that a second building on the site had now received planning permission.

Members agreed that the Assistant Director –City Centre and Major Project Development be invited to attend the next meeting of the Board to provide them with a more detailed brief and to answer questions that they had. They requested that a briefing note be submitted to them for this agenda item that should include more information on proposed business rates income; progress on the second building; action being taken to market the other plots at the site; and a copy of the Masterplans.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

1) Notes the update on the progress of the Friargate Business District:

2) An item be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Board on 2nd November 2016 to enable the Assistant Director - City Centre and Major Project Development to attend the meeting to provide Members with a more detailed briefing on the progress of the Friargate development.

3) Copies of the posters displayed on the Friargate entrance hoardings be made available to the Board at the 2nd November 2016 meeting.

20. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

21. Work Programme 2016/2017

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered the Work Programme for 2016/17 and discussed the scheduling of proposed issues for consideration at the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Notes the Board's Work Programme for 2016/17.**
- 2) Agreed that the following items be added to the agenda for 2nd November 2016 meeting:**
 - i) Select Committee Recap and Identification of Key Lines of Enquiry.**
 - ii) Friargate Progress.**

22. 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 urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.10 pm)