

## SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

8<sup>th</sup> August 2012

### Scrutiny Co-ordination

Committee Members Present: Councillor Mrs Abbott  
Councillor Mrs Bigham (Chair)  
Councillor Blundell  
Councillor Crookes (substitute for Councillor Foster)  
Councillor Lakha  
Councillor M. Mutton  
Councillor Skipper (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor Thomas (substitute for Councillor Mrs Fletcher)  
Councillor Welsh

Other Members Present: Councillor Sawdon (Lord Mayor of the City of Coventry)  
(for matters in minutes 16 and 17 below)

Employees Present: M. Greenwood (Chief Executive's Directorate)  
G. Holmes (Chief Executive's Directorate)  
K. Malone (Customer & Workforce Services Directorate)  
F. Nicholls (Chief Executive's Directorate)  
J. Parry (Assistant Chief Executive)  
H. Peacocke (Customer & Workforce Services Directorate)  
M. Salmon (Customer & Workforce Services Directorate)  
A. West (Chief Executive's Directorate)

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Fletcher  
Councillor Foster  
Councillor Howells

### **Public Business**

#### **13. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

#### **14. Minutes**

(a) The Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2012 were signed as a true record.

Further to Minute 2/12, the Committee noted that a meeting of the Streets and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) had been arranged for 10<sup>th</sup> August 2012 at the War Memorial Park Visitors Centre, to which the Transport & Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board (6), for consideration of the Shared Spaces Concept Monitoring Reports.

Further to Minute 7/12, the Committee noted that a meeting of the Task and Finish Group – Outside Bodies had been held and a further meeting was planned to finalise their work.

(b) There were no matters arising.

## 15. Overview and Scrutiny Management

The Committee received details of the determination of validity of a Call-in that had been received relating to the Proposed Closure of Six Children's Centres – Public Consultation, approved by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

The following Call-in relating to this decision was received from Councillors Foster, Noonan and Taylor:-

1. *To understand why consolidating Earlsdon, Finham and Cheylesmore Children's Centres was not considered.*
2. *To better understand how after 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2012, those families that need a service previously provided will be able to access a suitable service.*

The Committee Chair, Councillor Mrs Bigham, had considered the Call-in in accordance with the Council's Constitution, and, having received advice from the Assistant Director (Democratic Services), in conjunction with the Council Solicitor/Assistant Director (Legal Services), determined the Call-in inappropriate. The reason for her decision was that it fell within paragraph 4.5.26 of the Scrutiny Rules (part 4 of the Constitution): *It related to a matter where the associated report had already been considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee or a Scrutiny Board who had endorsed the recommendations or made recommendations that had been accepted by the Cabinet/Cabinet Member.*

The Members who submitted the Call-in were informed of the Chair's decision and the reasons for it.

Members of the Committee requested clarity of the decision and were informed that as the report had been considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board (2) (their minute 3/12 referred) who had endorsed the recommendations that had subsequently been approved by Cabinet (their minute 14/12 referred), Call-in did not apply.

Councillors Blundell and Crookes challenged the decision invalidating the Call-in and were informed that paragraph 4.5.25.4 of the Constitution, did not provide for an appeal against the decision taken by the Chair. They registered their objection to the decision to invalidate the Call-in and the length of time it had taken to determine this and asked that this be recorded.

The Committee requested that a briefing session be arranged for all Members of the Council to provide clarity of the Call-in process, particularly for new Members of the Authority.

**RESOLVED that a briefing session be arranged for all Members of the Council on the Call-in process.**

## 16. Civic Visit to Kiel – 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012

The Committee considered a report of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Sawdon, who attended the meeting to present the report, that provided details of the Civic Visit to Kiel and the associated Kieler Woche (Kiel Week) celebrations that he had attended on 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012, and the outcomes of the visit.

An annual invitation to Coventry's twin town, the purpose of the visit was to take part in a programme of events hosted by Kiel City Council to mark the formal opening of Kieler

Woche, the biggest summer festival in northern Europe and the largest sailing sports event in the world. With a ten-day programme, there were over 1,000 events for more than 3.5 million visitors from all over the world. The city centre played host to numerous events including Kiel Week Opening Ceremony and the International market. Now in its 130<sup>th</sup> year, the sailing regatta continued to grow with over 6,000 competitors, from over 50 countries, participating in the sailing classes.

The Coventry delegation also attended the International City Forum entitled “Civic Participation–The Key to Greater Democracy in the Community?”, enabling an exchange of information and best practice in local government, with practitioners from 14 of Kiel’s twin and friendship cities. The Lord Mayor’s attendance raised the profile of the City Council and Coventry at a European and International level.

The visit reinforced Coventry and Kiel twinning links and provided an opportunity to maintain relations with Kiel and to continue to promote peace and reconciliation in a modern world.

The Lord Mayor asked the Committee to consider:

1. Examining the responses from the 12 local authorities who had replied to the Election questionnaire to see if there were lessons that the Local Authority might learn in improving ‘civic’ participation in local decision making.
2. The feasibility of a ‘Coventry Week’, that might link the Godiva Festival with the Coventry Inspiration Book Awards, the Positive Images Festival, Armed Forces Day and an international food festival.
3. Putting ‘impetus’ behind the efforts of Karen Thomsen, the official interpreter for the delegation who was a regular visitor to Coventry and was responsible for arranging student exchanges, to promote more cultural exchanges with Kiel.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:**

- (1) Endorsed the report of the Lord Mayor’s Civic Visit to Kiel and the positive outcomes of the event.**
- (2) Requested that the 12 local authority Election questionnaire responses be included in the Electoral Arrangements Audit 2012, on the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme for the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012 meeting.**
- (3) Supported the principle of a ‘Coventry Week’ linking the Godiva Festival with the Coventry Inspiration Book Awards, the Positive Images Festival, Armed Forces Day and an international food festival.**
- (4) The ‘slippage’ in the current student exchange process be investigated and the findings be forwarded to Cabinet Member (Education).**

**17. Civic Visit to Cork – 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

The Committee considered a report of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Sawdon, that provided details of the Civic Visit to Cork, Ireland that he had attended on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012. The visit maintained and reinforced the links with one of Coventry’s twin cities, that go back to 1960; enabled discussions on the Irish economic situation and the impact of the cuts on the respective local authorities; the support a Coventry athlete, Kyza Derby, who took part in the Cork Marathon; and meeting with the former Council Leader and Lord Mayor of Coventry, Nick Nolan. In conclusion, whilst only a short visit, with a large Irish

community in Coventry, it was valuable to keep a good link with one of Coventry's more accessible twin cities. The report provided details of the itinerary, costs, and outcomes of the visit.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee endorsed the report of the Lord Mayor's Civic Visit to Cork and the positive outcomes of the event.**

#### **18. Civic Visit to India – 22nd February – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

The Committee considered a report of the former Lord Mayor, Councillor Mulhall, that provided details of the Civic Visit to India that he had attended on 22<sup>nd</sup> February to 4<sup>th</sup> March 2012 to witness the Free Eye Camps taking place in Jalandhar, Punjab for which Coventry organisations, Sikh Union Coventry and Godiva Lions Club, undertake significant fundraising for in the City and the extended area to raise funds for the free camps in India for the needy and poor people who cannot afford essential medical or optical treatment for their eyes. The report provided details of the itinerary, costs, and outcomes of the visit.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee endorsed the report of the former Lord Mayor's Civic Visit to India and the positive outcomes of the event.**

#### **19. i-Cov Post Implementation Review**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services that provided an update on the progress made and issues identified during the first full year of operation of the newly in-sourced ICT service.

As part of its abc Transformation Programme, the City Council had identified ICT service provision as a priority for service transformation. The i-Cov project demonstrated a strong fit with the Council's ambition to better align its interaction with its citizens, to improve service delivery and maximise value for money. The drivers for change in the service included service performance, cost and service delivery.

The Council's major ICT services were outsourced to external suppliers which cost the Council around £15m on an annual basis, but there was also a significant amount of internal ICT delivery which added considerably to the overall cost of ICT across the authority. Concerns were raised over the contract management, governance, performance and value for money of ICT provision in general, but specifically around the contract with Serco Solutions.

The i-Cov FSR formally began in November 2009 and the review phase completed in March 2010. It then moved from review stage to implementation with the new in-house service becoming operational on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. The i-Cov review's purpose was established as: Improve the reliability and predictability of ICT services provided to the Council; Develop strategic management of the ICT architecture and change portfolio; Rationalise the ICT organisation – reduce costs, increase productivity and efficiency and improve service quality; Develop greater depth and breadth of business, technical, process and people skills; and Improve customer satisfaction.

The Evaluation report, attached as an appendix to the Briefing Note, provided details of achievement against the original criteria, realisation of benefits and outstanding issues. The report concluded that the City Council had made the right decision in bringing its previously outsourced ICT service back in-house so that it could achieve significant savings and take back strategic control of the function. It had used external help to assist with the

review because at that time the Council did not have the requisite skills in-house to carry out the work itself. Whilst the review had already proven to be a financial success, it was never going to be an overnight task to bring the infrastructure and service up to the levels that the Council had a right to expect. Resolving many of the legacy issues that the new service had inherited and permanently embedding a new culture and customer focussed ethos within the ICT team would take at least another 2-3 years. However, during that time the Council would benefit from many ICT related improvements which would also support the wider organisational transformation programme.

The Committee outlined their support for the new In-house service and the employment of IT apprentices and highlighted specific instances of the service they had experienced that had provided them with helpful and efficient responses.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:-**

- (1) Noted the progress made during the first full year of operation of the newly in-sourced ICT service.**
- (2) Endorsed the actions that are planned to address outstanding issues and further strengthen and improve the ICT service.**

**20. Household Survey Findings**

The Committee considered a Briefing Note and received a presentation (attached as an appendix) by the Corporate Research Manager, Chief Executive's Directorate, on the key findings from the most recent Coventry Partnership Household Survey 2012.

In 2012 Coventry Partnership commissioned its eighth household survey to monitor Coventry residents' views and perceptions of quality of life in the City. The survey, undertaken in collaboration with the Coventry Partnership, the University of Warwick and MEL Research, covered: equalities and communities; housing and environment; community safety; health and well-being; work and training; and transport and accessibility. It aimed to complement the well-being agenda with the addition of a set of questions that were to track levels of mental wellbeing using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale. This was the third year that the survey had incorporated mental well-being questions and a full Coventry Well Being Report would be produced in September 2012 by the University of Warwick.

The findings from the research were used to inform policy development, strategic initiatives and changes and improvements to local services to better meet the needs of the people of Coventry.

The Committee questioned officers on aspects of the presentation and discussed the findings of the Survey. They requested that they be provided with the information from the Survey: on a Ward by Ward basis; the 'The Quality of your Home' information be broken down into categories of: Owner/Occupier; Private Rented; and Social Landlord (main City landlord kept separate); and details of any links between the responses to the questions on 'Qualifications' and 'Money Matters/Income'. The Committee noted that full details of the Survey were available on the Coventry Partnership Website.

**RESOLVED that:-**

- (1) The Household Survey findings contained in the presentation be noted.**

- (2) The Members of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee be provided with further information on the Survey findings: on a Ward by Ward basis; the 'Quality of your Home' information be broken down into categories of Owner/Occupier, Private Rented, and Social Landlord (main City landlord separate); and details of links between the responses to the questions on 'Qualifications' and 'Money Matters/Income'.**
- (3) The link to the Coventry Partnership Website, containing detailed information of the Survey, be sent to all Members of the Council.**
- (4) The survey findings, along with more detailed analysis where required, be considered by Scrutiny Boards as appropriate.**

## **21. Population Change and Service Demand**

The Committee received a Briefing Note and presentation by the Corporate Research Manager, Chief Executive's Directorate, on the recent changes to Coventry's population and population projections.

The Census, which took place every ten years, provided the most accurate information about an area's population. The 2011 Census put Coventry's population at 318,600 and the number of households at 128,600 indicating that the population grew by 5.2% in the ten years from 2001 to 2011 with much of the growth towards the latter half of the decade. The overall population growth in the City had been at a slower rate than the population growth in England and Wales (7.1%).

More detailed findings from the 2011 Census would be released by the Office for National Statistics through a staged approach between November 2012 and October 2013, as set out in the timetable appended to the Briefing Note. The information would include demographics and population characteristics such as ethnicity, employment status and healthiness as well as data at a neighbourhood level. In addition to Census information the City Council received annual population estimates and bi-annual population projections from the Office for National Statistics. Current 'unofficial' population projections indicated that the City's population may grow by an extra 66,000 people by 2033, taking the population to 430,900. Updated projections were due in September 2012 and the City Council was expecting a lower projection based on the latest Census information. Whilst there were some questions about the extent of projected population growth in Coventry, the population of the City was expected to increase and this was likely to have a significant impact on service demand in the future especially at a time of decreasing resources.

The Committee questioned officers on aspects of the presentation and discussed the findings of the census and requested that a Seminar be arranged for all Members of the Council on the findings of the 2011 Census, once detailed information had been received from the Office for National Statistics.

### **RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:-**

- (1) Noted the changes to the City's population and potential impact on service demand and the different levels of information available from the 2011 Census and population projections.**
- (2) A Seminar on the Census be arranged for all Members of the Council, once detailed information has been received from Office for National Statistics.**

**22. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2012/2013**

The Committee noted the Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2012/13.

**23. Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

**24. Meeting Evaluation**

The Board evaluated the meeting. Comments given by members would be used to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of future meetings, this included that it had been a good meeting although the agenda had been a little 'heavy' for Members to discuss each item fully.

**25. Any Other Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

**Private Business**

Nil

(Meeting closed at: 12.45 p.m.)