

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on**  
**Wednesday, 10 May 2017**

Present:

Members: Councillor R Lancaster (Chair)  
Councillor N Akhtar  
Councillor J Blundell  
Councillor G Crookes  
Councillor J McNicholas  
Councillor M Mutton  
Councillor R Singh (Deputy Chair)

Other Members: Councillors P Akhtar, L Bigham, J Mutton, P Seaman and  
C Thomas

Employees:

M Andrews, Place Directorate  
V Castree, Place Directorate  
L Knight, Place Directorate  
M Reeves, Chief Executive  
H Shankster, People Directorate  
G Thomas, People Directorate  
A West, Place Directorate

Other Representatives: Emma Bates, Coventry Law Centre  
Sue Bent, Coventry Law Centre

Apologies: Councillors A Khan and E Ruane, Cabinet Members  
Councillors S Bains and G Duggins, Council's representatives  
on the West Midlands Combined Authority

## **Public Business**

### **85. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **86. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2017 were signed as a true record.  
There were no matters arising.

## 87. **Annual Report of the Work of Outside Bodies - West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)**

The Committee considered a report of Councillor George Duggins, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership, concerning on the work of the elected members appointed to three of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Committees over the preceding twelve months and detailed their attendance at meetings. Martin Reeves, Chief Executive attended and provided an update on the latest position with the WMCA. Councillor John Mutton, the Council's representative on the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee was also in attendance and gave a brief summary of the Committee's work.

The report indicated that the WMCA was a statutory body, established on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 which facilitated the collaboration and joint working between local authorities to drive economic prosperity for the area. Coventry was one of the seven constituent members. From May, 2017 the WMCA would be operating as a Mayoral Combined Authority.

For 2016/17 the Council's representatives were:

WMCA Board – Councillor Duggins and A Khan (substitutes Councillors O'Boyle and Maton)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Councillor J Mutton (substitute Councillor R Singh)

Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee – Councillor Bains (substitute Councillor N Akhtar).

The WMCA Board co-ordinated the work of the WMCA to achieve its identified priorities across the region. Each of leaders of the constituent authorities had distinct responsibilities. The Committee were informed that Councillor Duggins was the portfolio lead for skills and productivity. He was also a member of the newly created West Midlands Growth Company.

The report set out the WMCA economic, skills, transport and housing priorities. The Authority had established three commissions to create a blueprint to deliver economic, social and public sector reform. The commissions were addressing mental health, productivity and skills and land. In April 2017 the WMCA published its Review and Annual Plan 2017/18 which highlighted progress to date and set out its objectives. The Plan included significant projects aimed at regeneration and economic growth. For Coventry this included resources of £150m to support the City Centre South and Friargate schemes and £284m for the Connecting Coventry programme.

The report referred to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had met four times over the last year and had been consolidating its terms of reference and formulating its work programme. The work programme concentrated on the outcomes of the three commissions to address mental health, productivity and skills and land along with budget scrutiny.

The Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee had met on three occasions considering a number of reports and policies of the Authority.

Martin Reeves reported on the implications of the appointment of Andy Street as West Midlands Mayor and drew attention to Councillor Duggins' role on the new West Midlands Growth Company. He highlighted the potential for Coventry to be at the centre for the skills agenda, referring to the recent Skills Conference held in the city.

Members questioned the officer and member on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- What plans were in place to ensure that the new mayor wasn't just concerned with Birmingham and would have a presence elsewhere in the region and would promote the whole area
- The options for having WMCA meetings outside of Birmingham, access to report and agendas and whether meetings were open to the public
- The plans for marketing the Combined Authority area
- Further information about the relocation offers and proposals for Channel 4
- Concerns about the slow development of Scrutiny at the CA and the importance of giving local authority scrutiny specialised roles
- The future role of Councillors in light of the CA
- Clarification about Councillor Mutton's role which included asking questions on behalf of Coventry Councillors.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(1) The update on the work of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) be noted.**

**(2) Appointments to the WMCA Board and Committees continue to be made to the organisation in line with legislative requirements.**

**(3) Coventry to be kept at the forefront of the Skills Agenda for the WMCA.**

**(4) Coventry's profile to be embedded in the West Midlands offer when marketing the region to attract new and relocating businesses.**

**(5) Coventry's Scrutiny arrangements to play a significant role in the scrutiny of the WMCA, including the role of the mayor, and, if appropriate, Coventry to take responsibility for one of the WMCA scrutiny priorities.**

**(6) The new mayor, Andy Street, to be offered accommodation at the democratic centre in Coventry.**

**(7) The National Audit Office paper on the governance and operation of Mayoral Combined Authorities be circulated to members following its publication at the end of the pre-election period.**

**88. Feedback on the Local Plan and City Centre Area Action Plan - Proposed Modifications Consultation (March 15 2017- April 28 2017)**

Further to Minute 41, the Committee considered a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which provided a summary of the feedback and consultation responses received to the statutory period of public consultation between 15<sup>th</sup> March and 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2017, relating to the proposed modifications to the Draft City Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) and the Draft Local Plan. An addendum note providing a summary of responses which had been received after 3.00 p.m. on 28<sup>th</sup> April was tabled at the meeting. Councillors Bigham and Thomas, Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Development attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The briefing note indicated that during the public engagement planning officers worked with the Communications Team to ensure a comprehensive communications strategy was delivered. Detailed information was provided on the six public drop-in sessions, five of which were held in areas most affected by the Local Plan proposals with the sixth session being held in the city centre library. The briefing note included a table with dates and venues for these sessions along with approximate attendance levels and key areas of discussion. A full summary of the areas discussed was set out at an appendix to the report.

The Committee were informed that a briefing note had been circulated at the Westwood Ward Forum and a further briefing note was provided to support ongoing consideration of the Plans within the Wainbody Ward.

The strongest objections to the Local Plan were again raised in the areas around Cromwell Lane, Eastern Green, Whitley and Keresley, with objections to the principle of developing on Green Belt land and specific issues relating to proposed development sites. Other key areas for debate included infrastructure; the relationship of existing homes to the proposed developments; ecology and biodiversity; and a desire for a greater focus of development on brownfield land.

With regard to the City Centre Area Action Plan, discussions were limited and the plan appeared to have gained genuine support. The most notable areas for discussion were city centre car parking, student accommodation and new leisure and retail opportunities.

The briefing note detailed the additional engagement activity that had taken place which had generated e-mails, phone calls and letters with most concerns relating to the development of green belt land at Keresley, Eastern Green and Cromwell Lane.

The Committee were informed about the community response to both plans. 174 responses had been received, 151 of which were from local residents or community group with 2 responses from Ward Councillors. The major concern was loss of green belt land to development, particularly at Cromwell Lane, Eastern Green, Whitley and Keresley. In general the responses mirrored the feedback from the drop-in sessions as well as the responses received at last year's consultation stage.

The briefing note also referred to the 17 other responses, 16 from companies and organisations and 1 from a neighbouring Council.

Following the consultation process, a small number of minor changes were proposed for both plans which aided clarification and certainty of the Plans. Further details were included in a second appendix to the briefing note. Due to their nature it was not envisaged that further consultation would be required in relation to the amendments.

The addendum informed of the additional 55 representations received after 3.00 pm on 28<sup>th</sup> April, meaning a total of 229 responses were received. The Committee noted that these additional responses would be included in an updated report. The Committee also noted that one of the responses was from Solihull Council. In general the additional comments mirrored the issues previously identified and resulted in one minor amendment to the Plan.

Members questioned the officer on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- The issue of which comes first, development or infrastructure
- An assurance about the proposed population growth figures and housing needs statistics for the city
- Further information about affordable housing requirements for housing developments with Coventry having a 25% target and Warwickshire 40% and whether Warwickshire's 40% could help to deliver Coventry's 25% target
- Clarification about the difference between social housing and affordable housing
- The importance of having efficient broadband speeds for new developments and who has responsibility for the associated costs
- The availability of brownfield sites for development as oppose to using greenfield sites
- As the same issues were continually highlighted, were the same people attending the individual drop-in sessions
- Further details about the consultation and responses from other neighbouring local authorities and the importance of highlighting that responses haven't been submitted because of all the co-operation between the authorities
- The importance of monitoring variation orders in respect of new developments and the affordable housing element
- The position relating to the Whitley water table and planning developments in the area
- The importance of providing larger affordable housing for families within new developments.

Members placed on record their appreciation of all the work undertaken by officers involved in the consultation process.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(1) Having considered the content of the briefing note, its appendices and the addendum, the submission of all representations and summary notes of public drop in sessions and the schedule of proposed minor changes to the Secretary of State's nominated Inspector for her consideration as part of the**

**on-going Public Examination of the city's draft Local Plan and City Centre Area Action Plan be endorsed.**

**(2) Paragraph 7.8 of the report be expanded to include that the co-operation of other local authorities working in close partnership has meant there has been no requirement for them to provide responses.**

**(3) Planning Committee be requested to monitor planning applications where variation orders are requested.**

**(4) The issue of ensuring that development of the necessary infrastructures to support planning developments and the required timescales be considered by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4).**

**(5) The official explanation for the terms 'affordable housing' and 'social housing' be circulated to members.**

#### **89. Ignite Programme - Progress and Early Lessons**

The Committee considered a joint briefing note which set out the initial progress and learning from Ignite, which was a five year programme funded by the Early Action Neighbourhood Fund and the City Council which aimed to transform public services. Emma Bates and Sue Bent, Coventry Law Centre attended the meeting for the consideration of this item along with Councillors Bigham and Thomas, Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Development and Councillor Pat Seaman, Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

The briefing note indicated that funding of £1.5m had been secured by the Law Centre and Grapevine for a five year programme to support public services to move services away from crises level interventions through tackling root causes early on. Additional one-off funding of £320,000 was provided by Public Health to ensure all crucial elements of the programme were covered.

Ignite aimed to build capacity and resilience in those who were most vulnerable and to tap into their strengths and the strengths within their communities and networks, helping individuals to move forward, build aspiration and be ready to take opportunities. The project was working in Willenhall with two public services 'pathfinders' for change – Children's Services and Whitefriars Housing. The work was focusing on people facing multiple and complex disadvantage but the learning from the work of the programme would be applicable to all people-based services.

The early findings from the programme were outlined and appendices to the briefing note set out two individual case studies. Attention was drawn to the issue of moving away from public services being the only resource and solution during difficult times. Operating in the locality meant that problems could be spotted and understood as they emerged and identifying who could help right at the start including non-service solutions. Ignite was beginning to demonstrate how communities could be part of the solution.

The Committee were informed that Causes not Consequences had been set up as an online home of Ignite and as a focus for events that helped to promote the practice of acting early on root causes throughout the local workforce. A

secondary aim was to build and foster a community of people who wanted to change how services were delivered and needs met.

The Board questioned the officer and representatives on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- Clarification about the current unmet need in the city and how many people had been supported to date by the project
- What happens at the end of the 5 year duration of the project
- How much additional finance and support would be needed to expand the project across the city
- Further information on the initial observations of the project and whether any areas of duplication had come to light
- Further details about the support which had already helped individual residents
- How the project linked and communicated with existing workers in the Willenhall area, for example the Early Intervention Team
- When would information be available to enable a report to be presented which highlighted that the project had been successful
- Further details about the joint working with Whitefriars and the opportunities to improve the support that the company provides for tenants
- An acknowledgement of the importance of persuading organisations to adopt best practice along with concerns about the difficulties of getting organisations to embrace change
- Support for the work being undertaken.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(1) The update report set out at Appendix 1, the progress to date and the early lessons be noted.**

**(2) Children’s Services and Whitefriars Housing be requested to report back to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee about their learning from the Ignite Programme and what new practices have been embedded in their procedures.**

**(3) Ignite be invited to report their findings concerning the partnership working with Children’s Services and Whitefriars Housing.**

**90. Prevent in the Community**

Further to Minute 56/16, the Committee considered a briefing note of the Executive Director of People concerning the Prevent programme in the community. Councillor P Akhtar, Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The briefing note highlighted that Prevent Duty was based on the principle that recognising that children, young people and adults could be vulnerable to exploitation and radicalised to support and engage in violent extremism was one part of the safeguarding duties of the local authority and was therefore part of the overall duty of care. The key duties for the Council were highlighted.

The Committee were informed that a large part of the response to the Duty had been to provide basic training and awareness not just within the Council but also with representatives of the local voluntary and community sector. Over the previous year the Council had worked with Voluntary Action Coventry to support two community focussed workshops with a further event being held to allow voluntary and community groups to discuss the implications of delivering Prevent in the city. The briefing note listed the specific community organisations who had been provided with training.

A current priority was to do more to engage with local sports and recreation groups around Prevent and a workshop had been organised in May to initiate this work.

Further information was provided on three community based projects: Upstanding Neighbours, Kikit and Women Building Resilience which were being funded and evaluated centrally by the Home Office. One other significant local community development during 2016/17 had been the Our Families Our Future (OFOF) initiative. This programme was centred on Coventry schools and while it featured the risks of radicalisation it did so in the context of wider safeguarding issues. Initial events had centred on Sidney Stringer Academy and there was now a strong interest in taking up OFOF at other schools across the city.

The Prevent Duty had also been presented to a variety of local community networks including the Coventry Inter-Faith Forum, the Muslim Community Forum and the Community Safety Forum.

Councillor Pervez Akhtar, Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, outlined his support for the excellent work provided by the Prevent programme.

Members questioned what was being done in relation to social media, including Facebook, to remove extremist views and potentially harmful information for various sites which children and young people could access. Members also asked about the criticism to the Prevent programme from organisations.

**RESOLVED that the issues raised in the report be noted.**

91. **Outstanding Issues**

The Committee noted a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator which outlined the approach to be taken on progress, outcomes and responses to recommendations and actions made by the Committee.

92. **Review of 2016- 2017 Scrutiny Activity**

The Committee noted their final work programme which reviewed the work carried out by the Committee during 2016/17. It was agreed that the outstanding issues not covered during the year and some areas of Cabinet Member portfolios not addressed would be taken into account during the planning process for the 2017/18 municipal year.



The Chair, Councillor Lancaster, placed on record her thanks to officers for all the support given to the Committee and the Scrutiny Boards during the course of the municipal year. Members thanked Councillor Lancaster for her work as Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Chair.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted and the outstanding issues set out be put forward for consideration as part of the work programming and planning for the 2017/18 municipal year.**

93. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no additional items of business.

(Meeting closed at 12.30 pm)