

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 2.00 pm on
Wednesday, 20 September 2017

Present:

Members: Councillor R Brown (Chair)

Councillor N Akhtar (Deputy Chair)
Councillor A Andrews
Councillor J Clifford
Councillor D Gannon
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor K Mulhall (Substitute for Councillor M Mutton)
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor S Walsh (Substitute for Councillor R Singh)

Other Members: Councillor L Biggam, Cabinet Member for Community Development
Councillor C Thomas, Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Development
Councillor R Laska
Councillor P Male
Councillor C Miki
Councillor K Taylor

Employees (by Directorate):

Place S Bennett, G Holmes, A Walster, A West

Other Present K Dalglish, R Osbourne, K Still (Whitefriars Housing)
R Mair (West Midlands Fire Service)
S Trim (Coventry University)

Apologies: Councillor M Mutton
Councillor R Singh
Councillor G Duggins, Leader of the Council
M Reeves, Chief Executive

Public Business

18. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

The Committee noted that the City Council's representatives on the West Midlands Fire Authority and Whitefriars Housing had been invited to attend the meeting for consideration of the item referred to in Minute 20 below relating to "Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings"

19. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September, 2017, were signed as a true record.

Further to Minute 12/17, the Committee noted that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) had considered issues relating to the Canal Basin at their recent meeting and had established a Task and Finish Group to give further consideration to this issue.

20. **Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings**

The Committee received a Briefing Note and comprehensive presentation in relation to fire safety in high rise buildings which followed on from the tragic events at Grenfell Tower earlier in the year. Representatives from the West Midlands Fire Authority, Coventry University and Whitefriars Housing attended the meeting for consideration of the item.

The presentation covered the following areas:-

- Ownership of high rise buildings in the City and responsibility for fire safety in those buildings
- Actions which the Government required Local Authorities to undertake in the following areas following the Grenfell Tower tragedy:-
 - Inspections
 - Data gathering
 - Testing
 - Building Regulations
- Action taken by the City Council in this regard, including the adoption of the following Motion at full Council on 11 July, 2017 and its submission to the Secretary of State:-

"This Council calls upon the Government to make available to Local Authorities and Social Housing providers the full amount of funding needed to ensure the safety of residents in all housing.

We also call upon the Government to bring forward, as a matter of urgency, a complete review of fire and building regulations which includes the proviso that Local Authorities will be the only organisation responsible for the signing off of building regulation compliance".

The Committee asked officers and partner representatives present questions and sought assurances on the presentation, particularly in relation to:-

- The Public Inquiry that was currently taking place into the tragedy
- The safety of high rise buildings in Coventry

- The advantages and disadvantages of using of sprinkler systems in high rise buildings and the use of the “stay put” policy in event of fire
- How often tenants in high rise buildings receive fire safety information and training, particularly in relation to short term tenants (such as students)
- The response of the Local Authority to the Grenfell Tower tragedy, lessons learnt from this and the roles and responsibilities of elected Members in the event of a local incident occurring

The Committee thanked all of the representatives from the partner organisations for their attendance at the meeting. The Committee indicated that they were reassured in relation to the responses given to questions and concerns regarding the safety of high rise buildings in Coventry and by the work being undertaken by the organisations present at the meeting.

The Committee noted that Emergency Planning and Resilience would be considered at their next meeting on 18 October, 2017 and requested officers to circulate to all Members any relevant information in relation to that item and to ensure that consideration of appropriate training for Members in relation to this is covered at that meeting.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:-

(1) Notes and welcomes the presentation delivered

(2) Recommends that the Cabinet Member for Community Development, on behalf of the Council, continues to highlight at a national level the Council’s concerns regarding responsibility for Building Control and considers any appropriate action to provide Planning Committee with assurances regarding the fire safety aspect of any planning application before them for consideration.

21. Outstanding Issues

The Committee noted that all outstanding issues had been dealt with in the Committee’s Work Programme.

22. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2017/2018

The Committee received and noted their Work Programme for the current municipal year.

23. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no additional items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.30 pm)