

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 20 September 2017

Present:

Members: Councillor J McNicholas (Chair)

Councillor M Hammon
Councillor L Harvard
Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor B Singh
Councillor D Skinner (substitute for Councillor G Crookes)
Councillor H Sweet
Councillor K Taylor

Employees (by Directorate):

G Holmes, Resources Directorate
K Martin, Place Directorate
K Mawby, Place Directorate
L McGovern, Place Directorate
M Rose, Resources Directorate
S Weir, Place Directorate

Apologies: Councillor R Auluck

Invited: A Dyer – Canal Basin Trust
E Tierney – The Tin
R Nash – Coventry Canal Society

Public Business

13. Declarations of Interest

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

14. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th July, 2017 were agreed and signed as a true record.

15. Delivering the Jobs and Growth Strategy - End of Year Progress (16-17) and End of Current 3 Year Strategy (2014-17)

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) regarding delivering the Jobs and Growth Strategy, which was also due to be considered at Cabinet on 4th October 2017. The report detailed progress at the end of year 2017-17 and also the end of the Strategy 2014-17. The report detailed how the council planned to use its resources to make Coventry a city that

supported businesses to grow and ensure that residents shared in the benefits of a sustainable growing economy.

The report noted that the Economy and Jobs Service, part of City Centre and Major Projects Development division, had over the last 12 months directly contributed to creating 1,340 new job opportunities against a target of 1,219. £63 million pounds of business investment had also been secured for the benefit of the city. Council Services had supported 413 businesses to grow and develop.

In the past year 7,751 people had accessed employment support. 1,641 people who had engaged with the services provided had progressed into work. This was a significant achievement. The majority of these individuals were engaging through the Council's city centre Job Shop located in Bull Yard.

The Council was committed to supporting young people into employment, particularly those who fall into the NEETS category (young people not in education, employment or training). In May 2016 the Council began implementing the £8.5 million European Social Fund (ESF) funded youth programme for Coventry, called Ambition. Since the implementation of the ESF funded Youth Employment Initiative programme, 1,655 young people had been supported to raise their aspirations, develop employment skills or return to education. In addition the Employment Team had secured a further 3 grant programmes for Coventry, worth £8 million in total which would help transform lives for young people at risk of becoming NEET and adults who needed help to engage with the labour market.

Over the life of the Jobs & Growth Strategy (April 2014-March 2017) £472.9m of investment had been secured and more than 1,300 local businesses received assistance, 798 were supported to change their recruitment practices and employ local residents. More than 5,500 inactive and unemployed people were now in good quality and sustainable work as a result of this Strategy and over 1,000 NEETS had been supported back into education, training or work.

There had been significant achievements over the last 3 years and a new strategy was being developed for 2017-20 which would reflect the opportunities and challenges for Coventry over the next 3 years.

The Board discussed the following:

- Funding for the new strategy over the next 3 years
- Working with Universities in the City
- The number of people of working age in Coventry
- The number of people helped to improve skills
- Encouraging graduates to stay in Coventry

The Board were reassured that funding had been allocated until 2020 and that there were potentially opportunities with other funding being investigated including China and West Midlands Combined Authority.

The Board requested the next report include information about funding and student retention strategy.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board:

1. **Note progress and achievements**
2. **Request the following comments be sent to Cabinet on 4th Oct, 2017**
 - a) **the next Jobs and Growth Strategy include consideration of student retention in the city**
 - b) **consider how to support funding for the next strategy particularly in light of Brexit and access to European Union funding sources.**
3. **Report back requested in March 2018**

16. Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Deal 3

Further to Minute 39/17 of the Cabinet and 41/17 of Full Council, the Scrutiny Board considered a presentation of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which provided more detail regarding the additional Growth Deal funding of £42.44m the Council had accepted into its Accountable Body remit secured from Central Government to add to the existing approval of £89.4m.

Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) successfully negotiated and secured this additional funding and the Growth Deal now totalled £131.8m which would support economic growth. By 2021 up to 7,500 jobs would be created and 3,500 homes built with a total investment of up to £240m.

The enlarged Deal remained focused on the four key areas of:

- New infrastructure that would improve connections, tackle congestion and support housing and employment sites.
- Driving innovation in advanced manufacturing and engineering.
- Supporting businesses to flourish
- Growing local skills and talent

The Council had previously agreed to be the Accountable Body for the Coventry & Warwickshire First and Second Wave of Growth Deal funding and the programme had been operational since 2015.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers present on the following areas:

- Differences between core city status and key city status
- Comparisons with other LEP areas
- Growth Deal 4
- Funding

RESOLVED that the Board note the report and request further information about funding of projects.

17. Coventry Canal Basin

Further to minute 12/17 of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, the Scrutiny Board considered further the Coventry Canal Basin, at the request of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.

The Board welcomed Robert Nash, a representative from Coventry Canal Society, Alan Dyer, a representative from the Canal Basin Trust and Elaine Tierney a

representative from 'The Tin' an Art and Music Company who currently were located at the Canal Basin.

The Board discussed the Canal Basin with the interested parties present and noted the activities and concerns of the Canal Society and in particular the problems of litter and the need for dredging. The Board noted the history of the Trust and how the Charity used warehouses as a place for University design students and how they were supported to host events and fairs in the past. The Board were also keen to support the ambitions represented by 'The Tin' to develop transferable skills in students by investing in music and arts and encouraging students to stay in the city by improving the offer of opportunities.

The Board discussed the following areas with interested parties present:

- Responsibilities
- Partners using the canal basin
- Promoting the asset to the city
- Visiting the location
- Connections to the city centre and encouraging use of the site
- Facilitating funding
- Signage
- Safety concerns regarding the breach of the canal walls
- Section 106 funding
- Legal advice

Members felt that a visit and further discussion would be beneficial in order to facilitate improvements at the Canal Basin, in particular to clarify responsibilities and to consider funding opportunities.

Officers would also consider further the safety concerns raised in the meeting regarding the breach of the canal walls.

RESOLVED that the Board request a Task and Finish Group be arranged to facilitate improvements to and better use of the Canal and Canal Basin to include Councillor McNicholas, Councillor Hammon and Councillor Singh.

18. Outstanding Issues

There were no Outstanding Issues.

19. Work Programme 2017/2018

The Board discussed the work programme 2017/18.

RESOLVED that the following changes be made to the work programme:

- 1) The addition of a Task and Finish Group Coventry Canal Basin**
- 2) Jobs and Growth Strategy to be considered in March, 2018**
- 3) The Select Committee on Autonomous Vehicles to be a single meeting and Electric Vehicles to be a Task and Finish Group**

20. 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 business.

(Meeting closed at 11.40 am)