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Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities held at 3.00 pm on Thursday, 10 October 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor AS Khan (Cabinet Member)
Councillor P Akhtar (Deputy Cabinet Member)
Councillor A Andrews (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

People S Newing, H Shankster

Place G Carter, J Hogan, L Knight

Apologies: Councillor G Ridley

Public Business

13. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

14. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th July 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

15. Keep the Godiva Festival Free for All

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), which responded to a petition requesting that the Godiva Festival is kept free for all.

A petition bearing 134 signatures was submitted by Councillor G Ridley, who had been invited to the meeting but had been unable to attend. The petition read:

“As we approach our year as City of Culture the Godiva Festival should play a big part in attracting visitors to the city, however that’s now at risk. The Council’s plan to charge people just because they’re not from Coventry is divisive and unfair.

We’ve always welcomed visitors to the city of peace and reconciliation and they’ve made a huge contribution to our economy. However, this plan punishes them at a time when we should be opening our doors to the world.

So, we the undersigned believe the festival should remain free for everyone wherever they are from. All are welcome in our city and we call on the Council to scrap this divisive visitor’s tax.”

The report indicated that the Godiva Festival is a major undertaking and in the climate of reducing resources and the need to introduce ticketing, a small charge of an administration fee was introduced during 2019 to enable the festival to go ahead. Charges were made at a very low level, to ensure they did not create a barrier to attendance and they were applied to festival-goers regardless of whether they were Coventry residents or visitors from out of town.

For the 2019 festival, the Council wanted to see how introducing charging could contribute to ensuring the festival has a sustainable future and piloted:

- Introduction of an “Administration fee” of £2 per person for all Festival visitors
- Introduction of a charge for on-site car parking
- Introduction of merchandise retail line.

The Cabinet Member noted that the festival attracts a mainly local and regional audience and the 2019 Festival attracted a similar audience profile as in previous years. Thus the introduction of charging did not reduce the appeal of the Festival for visitors from outside Coventry;

Coventry continues to warmly welcome visitors to the city and visitor feedback strongly supported the view that the Godiva Festival offered value for money. The Godiva Festival continues to be one of the Country’s largest and best value festivals of its type.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:

- 1. Notes the content of the petition and note the concerns of the petitioners.**
- 2. Authorises Officers continue to seek out the best value options for financing the Godiva Festival, reflecting the need to balance attracting visitors from outside of the city with the opportunity for residents to attend and the imperative to produce a balanced Godiva budget.**

16. The Coventry Award of Merit

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), which set out details of a nomination for the Coventry Award of Merit.

The Coventry Award of Merit was established by the City Council in the 1960’s as a means of acknowledging and honouring personal behaviour reflecting the highest ideals of citizenship or outstanding performance in any field of human endeavour which enhances the good name of Coventry and affords inspiration to its citizens.

The report indicated that a nomination had been received for the City of Volgograd to receive the Award of Merit. The CM for P and Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities Award of Merit Advisory Panel had considered the nomination and had supported it unanimously. The nomination was supported unanimously. The Advisory Panel noted that, whilst a City has never been granted the Award before,

the long, historic and significant relationship between the two Cities totally captures the spirit of the award. This relationship enhances Coventry's renowned reputation as the City of peace and reconciliation.

The City of Volgograd has been twinned with Coventry for 75 years and, as one of the original United Nations 'International Peace Messenger Cities', continues to work hard to promote peace and understanding between nations.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, having considered the advice from the Coventry Award of Merit Advisory Panel, recommends that the City Council grants the Coventry Award of Merit to the City of Volgograd.

17. Equality Objectives Performance Report 2018/19

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People), which provided information on the progress made with the equality objectives from April 2018 to March 2019.

On 14 July 2016, the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities approved the equality objectives for the Council as set out in appendix 1. The equality objectives are linked to the Council Plan and are set for four years or until the next refresh of the Council Plan. The Cabinet Member also agreed to receive an annual report on the progress made on the equality objectives.

There are 15 equality objectives, which were attached at appendix 1. Progress towards the equality objectives are measured through a variety of means including performance indicators, comparators with other areas, contextual information and actions taken. Where possible, indicators were broken down by protected groups to ensure that all protected characteristics under the Equality Act had been considered, monitored and reported on. For example, improving educational outcomes is broken down into gender, SEN, and race and by pupil premium. Progress against each equality objective was set out within the report and linked to the appropriate Council Plan theme.

In summary, the report indicated that there are many examples of positive work to improve outcomes for protected groups; in relation to employment, the Council is leading on various projects to help vulnerable people into work – including young people, BME people, disabled people and migrants. This work has also been supported by the Marmot Task and Finish Group on employment and poverty. Other notable performance headlines from the last year include positive progress in education across all priority groups at key stage 4, as well as reductions in teenage pregnancies, first time entrants to the youth justice system and the number of young people self-harming. There has, however, been an increase in the number of domestic violence incidents recorded and also an increase in the number of households accepted as statutorily homeless (including Black households and female lone parents).

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:

- 1. Notes the progress made on the equality objectives at year end.**

2. **Notes the progress made on the development of revised equality objectives for 2020.**
3. **Considers ways of improving the diversity of the Council workforce.**

18. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.25 pm)