

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 11.30 am on
Wednesday, 8 July 2020

Present:

Members: Councillor R Brown (Chair)

Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor A Andrews
Councillor J Clifford
Councillor L Kelly
Councillor C Miks
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor R Singh

Other Members Present:- Councillor K Caan, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport
Councillor G Duggins, Leader of Coventry City Council
Councillor Hetheron, Cabinet Member for City Services
Councillor J O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration
Councillor D Welsh, Deputy Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration/ Housing and Communities

Employees: V Castree, Law and Governance
G Holmes, Law and Governance
C Knight, Director of Transportation and Highways
R Moon, Director of Property and Development
A Williams, Director of Business Investment and Culture
A West, Law and Governance
B Willers, Climate Change and Sustainability

Apologies: Councillor G Lloyd

Public Business

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

8. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June, 2020 were agreed as a true record.

9. Sustainability and Climate Change

Cllr Brown introduced the item, outlining that sustainability and climate change had been a priority for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee before the pandemic. However as the country planned recovery from the pandemic, there were opportunities to accelerate activities which would impact on this broad agenda.

The Committee received a presentation which outlined the following;

- To impact on climate change, a partnership approach was needed and the City Council would show leadership to make this happen and bring together experts, businesses and industry. This would be done through the newly established Climate Change Commission.
- The City was undertaking significant work on this agenda – there were more electric car charging points in the City than anywhere else in the UK outside of London, there was investment in Very Light Rail, trials for e-scooters and we are the home of the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre.
- The 17 United Nations Sustainability goals were being used to help develop partnerships locally and nationally.
- To reduce out emissions across the City, the following had been implemented; Very light rail; Recycled roads; 10 electric buses; Energy efficient buses; Heatline; Electric car charging points and Electric taxis.
- An application had been made to the electric city fund.
- Transport was responsible for about a third of carbon emissions and therefore it was necessary to focus on providing attractive alternatives to the car.
- Sustainability and Climate change policies were creating jobs locally, being at the forefront. Very light rail offers a fantastic opportunity to put the city at the heart of this. Low cost alternative a tram (fifth of cost – Birmingham £100m per km vs £10m km VLR), deals with particulates issue. 5G, e-scooter, electric car clubs all provided the opportunity to have a holistic approach.
- The City had higher than average fuel poverty which a recently announced Government grant of £2 billion would help to address although details of the scheme had not been announced.
- There had been significant behaviour change as a result of Covid which had environmental impacts. These changes included a marked decrease in car journeys; increase in walking and cycling; reduction in the use of taxis and public transport; initial increase in fly-tipping and incidence of bonfires; fewer people visiting city centre and local centres and recognition of the importance of climate change and loss of biodiversity.
- As a result of Covid, we have found people value the sense of place created by less traffic; we now need to consider how we make public transport safe and retain user confidence and capitalise on active travel.
- The forthcoming City of Culture provided an opportunity to showcase creative design, activities and events to encourage more visitors in to City and local centres and to mobilise stakeholders around the sustainability and climate change agenda.
- Next steps being taken to promote the agenda were; promoting & enhancing a sense of place in the City and local centres; RESO ????? Project & SMART City – informing strategic investments & partnerships; A Commission for change across the City; Mobilising communities – supporting behavioural change; A major opportunity for job creation and economic growth in a global zero carbon market and the development of environmental and sustainability policies.

- The approach being taken was a holistic approach which had Environmental & Social Sustainability criteria at its heart.
- There were a number of national funding schemes which had been announced and bids made where appropriate.
- Targets were being developed and the community would be engaged to intensify the indicators. The Council were working with Climate View to identify and set the targets.

Following the presentation, Members raised a number of questions and issues, and received the following responses;

- It was possible to have locally determined planning policies, through supplementary planning guidance set out in the Local Plan.
- There were 571 privately registered electric vehicles which had grown by 50% from previous year. It was thought this would grow as there began to be increased confidence in the infrastructure and a stronger second hand market.
- There was a tension between the promotion of home working and the impact on the City Centre, however there was an opportunity to relook at the role of the city centre and to make it a more attractive place to be as well as a lower carbon city.
- Further information would be circulated on e-scooters.
- Enforcement of Cycle Lanes would be undertaken
- Further details were requested about targets and time frames, including those for fuel poverty, reduction in carbon emissions, meeting UN goals and active travel.
- Work was being undertaken with Public Health around food consumption and initiatives which would link to reducing our carbon footprint through our diet.
- Would need to target messaging to encourage behavioural change.
- A car sharing scheme was being considered to give residents access to book a car slot.

RESOLVED that additional written information to be provided on:

- a. The e-scooter pilot**
- b. The installation of footways and lighting in Parks to encourage usage**

10. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2020/2021 and Outstanding Issues

The Committee considered and noted their Work Programme for 2020/21.

11. Scrutiny Spotlight Groups

The Committee agreed that in light of all Scrutiny Boards being re-established from September, the work of the proposed Spotlight Groups would be absorbed into the relevant Scrutiny Board.

12. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 1.45pm)