

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 11.00 am on
Wednesday, 16 September 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 J O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration

Employees: V Castree, Law and Governance
G Holmes, Law and Governance
D Hope, Economic Growth
J Kilgallon, Economic Growth
A Williams, Director of Business Investment and Culture

Apologies: Councillor G Duggins, Leader of Coventry City Council

Public Business

19. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

20. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 July, 2020 were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

21. Jobs, Regeneration and Recovery

Jobs, Regeneration and Recovery

Cllr Brown introduced the item, outlining the effect that the pandemic had had on businesses and employment in the city. There had been various Government support available and the Committee wanted to ensure that the Council were using all of the tools available to them.

The Committee received a presentation which outlined the following;

- The contraction of the UK economy
- The growing jobs problem
- Coventry City Council actively supporting the economy
- Impacts of the support offered
- The continued regeneration of Coventry
- Changes to ways of working
- Future economic opportunities
- The need for inclusive growth
- Delivering the recovery

Councillor O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration, highlighted the fact that work on economic development had continued throughout the lockdown and that the City was in a good position despite the impact of Covid-19. There were two areas in particular that were emphasised- the green economy and Very Light Rail. There had been a One Coventry approach bringing together the Council, national, regional and sub-regional government, and private business to make things happen.

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

- Information about support to businesses had been shared on the Council website and social media, as well as via newsletters. Also, information had been shared through the Federation of Small Businesses and direct phone calls to businesses. All businesses who asked for support had been given it.
- Coventry had been a beneficiary of European funding over many years and the Council had been pursuing the Shared Prosperity fund which would replace it, but they needed to know how this would be delivered regionally and sub-regionally
- Officers had been looking at international partnerships and emerging markets and would look in detail at the trade deal with Japan.
- Future trade deal with the European Union would be important post-Brexit and officers had been supporting businesses to be post-Brexit ready.
- There were no figures locally on the impact of the furlough scheme but nationally the Office for Budget Responsibility predicted that 15% of jobs which had been furloughed would be lost.
- The Job Shop was working with employers with vacancies to match with those who needed work
- Officers were following all possible schemes to support those who become unemployed including the Kickstart scheme for young people.
- Partners across the region were working hard to make the argument for a battery Gigafactory to be located locally. The benefits would be the direct creation of 3000 jobs from highly skilled to semi-skilled, as well as the associated supply chain jobs.
- That an effective test track and trace system was important to building confidence for businesses and consumers alike. Officers were supporting employers and businesses to be covid-compliant; the main focus was on minimising the risk.
- Data on the location and sector of business who had been supported with grants was not available but could be forwarded to Members for their information.

- There had been unprecedented demand for support over the lockdown period which had meant that officers had not targeted support at any underrepresented groups in particular but recognised that there was more work to do to support women in employment, including childcare provision.
- Officers were supporting businesses on the digitalisation agenda.

RESOLVED:-

- 1) That the contents of the presentation be noted
- 2) That the following items be added to the Work Programme:-
 - i. Understanding the impact on BAME and women of Covid 19 on employment. To include reviewing whether suitable childcare is in place to support employment.
 - ii. Update on broadband access across the City, including the rollout of Fibre to be provided
- 3) That information be disseminated to Members regarding support available to businesses within their Wards

22. Draft Scrutiny Annual Report to Council 2019-20

The Committee considered the draft Scrutiny Annual Report to Council 2019-20.

RESOLVED that the draft report be approved.

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

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

24. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.40 pm)