

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 11.00 am on
Wednesday, 21 April 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor C Miks
Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor R Singh
Councillor D Skinner

Other Members: Councillor Hetherton, Cabinet Member for City Services
Councillor O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs and
Regeneration
Councillor Welsh, Cabinet Member for Housing and
Communities

Employees: V Castree, Law and Governance
R Back, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
D Butler, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
G Holmes, Law and Governance
A Williams, Director, Business, Investment and Culture
B Willers, Business, Investment and Culture

Apologies: Councillor Andrews
Councillor Clifford
Councillor Kelly
Councillor Lloyd, Deputy Cabinet Member
Councillor Ridley, Substitute Councillor Skinner

Public Business

58. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bigham declared she held a position on the West Midlands Combined Authority – Transport Delivery Committee. There was no requirement for her to leave the meeting.

There were no other declarations of interest.

59. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2021 were agreed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

60. Sustainability and Climate Change - Progress to Date

Councillor O'Boyle introduced the item and emphasised that the Council was committed to tackling climate change. A new climate change strategy was being developed which would help shape the future work programme on this agenda. There were a number of projects either completed or underway in the City to support this agenda, including; Heatline, work with the Energy sector located in Coventry, more electric vehicle charging points per head in the City than anywhere else in the UK outside of London, becoming the first city with an all-electric bus fleet and the development of Very Light Rail.

Cllr Hetherington outlined that there was a range of work taking place within her City Services Portfolio on sustainability and climate change. This included looking at 15 minute cities and 20 minute neighbourhoods, ensuring recycling provision in the city centre, looking at cycling routes and electric fleet for Council vehicles.

Cllr Welsh outlined that there was a review of the Local Plan due and sustainability would form part of it.

The Committee received a presentation on Sustainability and Climate Change – Progress to date from the Head of Sustainability and Climate Change,

The presentation outlined the following points with regards to sustainability and climate change:

- Energy and Climate Change
 - The City Council had a CDP A- Rating.
 - The City was part of an innovative programme called Regional Energy Systems Operator (RESO).
 - Meetings were taking place with Western Power Distribution & Cadent to see how we could predict energy usage more accurately
 - £6m had been received from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund for school and Coventry City Council buildings.
 - There was a review of Supplementary Planning Guidance Documentation in relation to energy
- Regional Energy Systems Operator (RESO)
 - This was funded by Innovate UK
 - The money was used for identifying systems design for Zero Carbon energy generation, distribution and efficient use of supply.
 - Work was underway to identify potential investors for developing infrastructure
- Transforming transport & mobility
 - An Electric Vehicle Infrastructure was being built in the City
 - The City would be the first all Electric Bus City
 - Very Light Rail was being developed
 - Active Travel would require a new infrastructure which was being implemented
- Biodiversity
 - There were a number of projects on biodiversity underway in the City including
 - Living Landscapes River Sherbourne Corridor
 - Wildlife Corridors
 - London Road Cemetery

- The Green Space Strategy was informing West Midlands Combine Authorities 5 year plan
- Addressing Environmental Inequalities
 - Plans to support this area of work included
 - Air Quality Action Plan
 - Social Value Policy
 - £2.3 million had been awarded to retrofit energy saving measures in homes to help address one element of fuel poverty.
 - Support had been provided to the City Food Network
 - Work was underway to look at employment and training opportunities through social enterprises
- Circular Zero Carbon Economy
 - Support was being given to businesses to look at ways to support them to reduce carbon usage and change the way they do business
 - Support was being provided to develop the infrastructure for green technological innovation including
 - Battery Innovation Centre
 - Gigafactory
 - Work was underway with social enterprises to encourage them to repair & re-use, use local sourcing with training & work experience.
- The 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
 - These would form the main plank of a strategy for the City.
- Sustainable Coventry Commission
- The 5 ICLEI Pathways for a Sustainable City
- Potential Opportunities
 - A number of potential opportunities were outlined which included
 - New supply chains with export potential – electric vehicles and Very Light Rail
 - Diversification of a localised energy supply
 - Growth of active modes of travel including pop up cycle routes, electric bicycles
 - Retrofit & residential opportunities – rebuild RSLs' capacity, Government funds
 - Incentives for electric vehicle take-up
 - Incentives for public transport use – build consumer confidence
 - Enhancement of electric vehicle charging infrastructure & energy storage
 - Opportunities for Municipal bonds, crowd funding & new funding systems
- Some of the key areas for action
 - A transition in Coventry City Council's corporate culture to set an example for others to follow
 - City of Culture provided opportunity to raise awareness and inspiring change at the community level
 - Playing a collaborative role in energy network planning and investment
 - Decarbonising buildings through priming the retrofit market and working with Developers and landlords. A key target group were registered social landlords.

Following the presentation, Members asked a number of questions and received the following responses:

- Coventry City Council would lead from the front with the reduction of emissions by the organisation. Options for more energy efficient large vehicles were being explored. The technology was evolving all the time. New buildings had been designed to be more efficient.
- There were a number of buildings which Coventry City Council had transferred to Trusts to manage. The Council would work with them to improve these buildings energy efficiency.
- The Council had bought a number of electric taxis which taxi firms could borrow for a free trial to encourage them to purchase them.
- Dates and targets for active travel would be circulated to Members once the appropriate discussions had taken place.
- It was possible for local authorities to put a local levy on big polluters to be used to fund public transport. Nottingham had done that with a levy on parking spaces on private companies with car parks of more than 10 spaces. The money was used to subsidise the tram system. Lambeth had run a scheme around vehicle permits which encouraged people to purchase less-polluting vehicles, however there were issues around equalities for a scheme such as this.
- There had been work with Registered Social Landlords to retrofit properties. Private Landlords were more challenging to engage. There were energy elements of the Additional Licensing Scheme which could help with encouraging landlords to improve their properties. The Landlords Forum would be used to have a discussion with Landlords about this topic.
- The Council and Coventry University, who had a social enterprise unit, were working with social enterprises to encourage them to support, and benefit from, the green agenda.
- Work was underway to look at how the new Environment Bill and the impact of the work on this agenda.
- Work was planned to look at densification within poor air quality areas.
- The Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities was asked to include climate change issues in the review of the Local Plan.
- Work was ongoing with developers to improve tree retention and green spaces. Information would be circulated to Members on the number of trees planned for planting during the coming year.
- There was work being done with developers to secure existing mature trees as planting two for one in its place was not providing an equivalent.
- A Climate Change Strategy was under development.
- Ensuring comprehensive community engagement was discussed. The importance of engaging a wide range of demographic groups was stressed as was the need to undertake Equality Impact Assessments.
- Work was underway with leading experts in their field to develop ways to measure the impact of policy on CO2 reduction.
- Behaviour change work was underway with the Universities and Private Sector to encourage active travel.
- Members of the team were undertaking publicity work.
- There would be a paper to Cabinet in June about the work planning being done on the run up to a review of the Local Plan being triggered.

RESOLVED that, having considered the content of the presentation and the comments raised:-

- 1) **The Committee consider the Climate Change Strategy once it has been developed.**
- 2) **When the Local Plan is reviewed, the impact of Climate Change be taken into consideration.**
- 3) **That information on the following be circulate to Members:**
 - a. **The figures of reduction from emissions from Council buildings**
 - b. **The development of targets for active travel**
 - c. **The number of trees likely to be planted over the next year.**

61. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2020/2021**

The Committee considered their Work Programme for the current municipal year.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme 2020/21 be noted.

62. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 1.00 pm)