

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 21 July 2021

Note: This meeting was not held as a public meeting in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972

Present:

Members:

- Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)
- Councillor M Ali (Deputy Chair)
- Councillor L Bigham
- Councillor J Clifford
- Councillor J Lepoidevin
- Councillor C Miks
- Councillor G Ridley
- Councillor R Singh

Other Member:

- Councillor G Duggins, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership

Employees:

Adult Services	A Errington
Business, Investment and Culture	D Hope
	S Weir
Children's Services	P Smith
Education and Skills	R Sugars
Finance	P Jennings
Housing and Transformation	J Crawshaw
Human Resources	A Hylands
	R Perks
	A White
Law and Governance	O Aremu
	V Castree
	G Holmes
Property Service and Development	A Hunt
Streetscene and Regulatory Services	C Hickin
Public Health	V De Souza
	S Lam
Transportation and Highways	J Shore

Apology:

- Councillor J Innes

Public Business

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

8. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st April 2021 were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

9. **One Coventry Plan Annual Performance Report 2020-21**

Councillor G Duggins, Leader of the Council, introduced the item. The One Coventry Plan was an annual report to look at the progress of the Council against key indicators. The headline figures were that 70% had either got better or stayed the same over the year. This was a remarkable achievement considering the context of Covid-19 and the Leader was very proud of the work done by the Council to support the city, including Covid Marshalls, distribution of support grants to business and the Job Shop especially for supporting 1000 people to acquire employment over that period of time.

The Committee received a presentation which summarised the key points contained in the report. This year, the report not only covered the current plan (2016-24), but also refreshing the plan to create greater alignment between the key themes and priorities that were emerging in the city and regionally, and the work that was undertaken across Council services and with partners.

This included Brexit; UK City of Culture; climate and sustainability; infrastructure projects.

As well as the overall performance the presentation focused on the three priorities in the One Coventry Plan. Under Globally connected there had been a decrease in a broad range of economic measures including GDP, business rates, employment and unemployment and city centre footfall. For Locally committed there had been challenges around crime to fly-tipping; demand for children's services; missing education and adult social care indicators and Delivering our priorities. For Delivering our priorities there had been Improvements in a range of measures from self-service transformation to sickness absence and carbon emissions.

The Board was also presented with a timescale of next steps and activity including an All Members performance seminar on 9th September and the Refreshed One Coventry Council Plan.

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

- There were 5 successful prosecutions, 11,444 notices and 124 fixed penalty fines for fly-tipping over the period. There were another 20 cases waiting to go to court. Figures for fly-tipping were on a decline with April showing a 30% on last year. Indicators were moving in the right direction.
- A task and finish group had been set up by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board to look at this issue in more detail, including the impact of residents having to book an appointment at the tip.

- The indicators for condition of the road networks had been national indicators which were no longer required nationally but were continued to be used to measure road standards
- The One Coventry Plan is not a statutory requirement, but something that the Council chooses to do. The value is that the plan is a live document and enables Members to have an understanding of performance. There would be engagement with residents on their priorities as part of the refresh of the plan.
- Life expectancy had gone in the wrong direction. Data on the gap in life expectancy between the highest and lowest areas of the city would be included in the final report. This issue was referred to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board for consideration.
- The increase in childhood obesity was a shock and the Council were taking a Marmot city approach to tackling it, with a focus on family activity and healthy food.
- The increase in demand for children's services was in excess of the national figures, mainly down to domestic abuse, austerity, and self-isolation. The Council had injected additional finance to increase the number of social workers available to work with children and families, as well as an increase to the placements budget. There were plans in place to reduce the number of looked after children and to continue to support children at home more intensively as well as close management on placement costs. The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board would be looking at this issue in more detail.
- There was a concern that GDP per head had decreased. This could be due to the increase in population and effects on the statistics as students are counted as economically inactive.
- The data on use of parks is not the same as last year, also usage of parks last year was high during lockdown due to the Council's decision to keep parks open during this time.
- There had been a decrease in apprenticeships but work was being done to improve this. Internal Council apprenticeships had increased and they were getting a more diverse set of population applying for and securing apprenticeships. The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board and the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board had had a detailed item on this at their meeting in March 2021.
- HIV testing had gone down due to a number of factors, including lockdown and Public Health resource focused on Covid. It was important to engage with specific community groups again.
- Concern was raised about the increase in under 18 conceptions. Officers were keen to dig into the reasons behind this as it is in contrast to regional and national figures. It would be good to get some more prevention campaigns on this issue.
- The reduction in requests for Adult Social Care were related to lockdown, by the end of the year there had been a recovery and requests for support had increased.
- Ofsted had not been undertaking graded inspections of schools during lockdown, but there was confidence that once these re-started there would be an increase in the percentage of children attending a Good or Outstanding school.

- The indicators within the plan were kept as consistent as possible, but with the refresh there would be the possibility to change or amend those indicators.

RESOLVED that, having considered the Council's performance as set out in the performance report, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee: -

- 1) Request the inclusion of: -
 - Updated Covid deaths figure with the final 2020 figures released 22 June
 - A picture and description of life expectancy by MSOA AND healthy life expectancy by MSOA (2015-2019)
 - Clarification of which customer service areas are included in online services and provide a list of services included
- 2) Refer the growing life expectancy gap to Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5).
- 3) Note the intention to refresh the current One Coventry Plan (2016-24) to reflect emerging priorities and make any comments as part of the engagement and consultation process on the draft Plan as this is developed.

10. **Scrutiny Management Issues**

The Committee noted that Councillor N Akhtar, Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, attended the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities on 11 June 2021. Councillor Akhtar agreed that the decision was urgent for the reason indicated and that call in should not apply: -

Acceptance of Grant Funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund towards the project to transform St. Marys Guildhall

The reason for urgency was that the next meeting of Cabinet was scheduled to meet the day after the grant agreement needed to be signed off under its expiry date.

Councillor Akhtar had also been invited to attend the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change on 15th July to consider that the decision was urgent for the reason indicated and that call in should not apply:-

Surrender of Existing Lease and Simultaneous Re-grant of a New 150 Year lease in Relation to 49-51 Corporation Street

The reason for urgency was that there was an urgent need to complete the surrender and regrant of a new 150 year lease for the property as this enables the third phase of Belgrade Theatre development plan to be completed and occupied. It was also important that as the majority of the £5m development cost for the whole scheme was coming by way of grant funding and that as the accountable body, the Council secures the grant funding outcomes agreed, of which phase 3 is part.

Also, there was a desire to complete the works as soon as possible during the City of Culture year, enabling the maximum use of the new space. To this end Complex Development Projects (CDP) who own the long lease of the building, have commenced the refurbishment works for the Belgrade at risk. They are looking for payment from the Belgrade for the internal construction works as soon as possible. The Belgrade couldn't get access to the grant for this to pay CDP until the new lease is in place.

11. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2021/2022**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered their Work Programme for the current Municipal year.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee note that an additional meeting had been arranged for 26th August 2021 to consider a report on Council subsidiaries. The meeting would be held in person.

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

There were no additional items of public business

(Meeting closed at 11.30 am)