

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 6 October 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)
Councillor M Ali (Deputy Chair)
Councillor R Bailey (substitute for Councillor J Lepoidevin)
Councillor J Clifford
Councillor J Innes
Councillor S Keough (substitute for Councillor G Ridley)
Councillor C Miks
Councillor S Nazir (substitute for Councillor L Bigham)
Councillor R Singh

Other Members: Councillor G Duggins - Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership
Councillor G Hayre – Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport

Employees (by Directorate):

Law and Governance S Bennett, G Holmes
Public Health and Well Being L Gaulton (Director), H Watts
Apologies: Councillor L Bigham
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor G Ridley

Public Business

27. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable declarations of interest.

28. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September, 2021 were agreed as a true record subject to the inclusion of the following assurances being sought in relation to Minute 24 relating to “Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 – Impact and Legacy Planning”:-

- a) The City Council receiving and retaining all intellectual property (as well as data) from the Trust and;
- b) Coventry citizen’s participation and engagement in events taking place

The Committee noted that in relation to Minute 24, the information requested to be circulated was being sought.

29. **Coventry as a Marmot City - Update Report**

The Committee considered a Briefing Note of the Director of Public Health and Well Being, together with a comprehensive presentation at the meeting, which provided an update on the work of the Marmot Partnership Group on tackling inequalities.

The Briefing Note indicated that the Covid 19 pandemic has shone a light on health inequalities, showing the stark reality that the circumstances you are born into and in which you live your life, can have very real circumstances for your health. Data from Public Health England (PHE) indicates that health inequalities in the period 2017-19 were improving in Coventry, with the gap in life expectancy between the least and most affluent reducing for both men and women in the City. In addition, Coventry was the only local authority in the West Midlands which significantly improved its position in the indices of multiple deprivation.

However, it is likely that inequalities will have worsened locally and nationally as a result of the pandemic. One area of particular concern is that life expectancy for women in Coventry has decreased locally between 2017-2019, although in England and the West Midlands, the average has increased slightly in the same period. Although the full impact of the pandemic is yet to be seen, it is clear that there has been a disproportionate impact on people in Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. Reasons for this disproportional affect include over-exposure to the virus through poor working conditions, over-crowding and poor living conditions. In addition, the BME communities are over-represented in shutdown and self-employed sectors, leading to a loss of income during the pandemic.

Coventry has been a Marmot City since 2013 and since then, organisations across the City have committed to work together to reduce differences in health outcomes between the most affluent and most deprived areas of the City. Of the seven Cities in the UK to become a Marmot City, Coventry is the only one to remain a Marmot City, reflecting the on-going commitment to acknowledge the inequalities in the City and the importance of the work to tackle this on a long-term, partnership basis. Coventry has received nationwide recognition for its achievements as a Marmot City and the City has maintained effective relationships with the Institute of Health Equity and Sir Michael Marmot, who continues to hold Coventry up as a positive example of its continued work.

The presentation outlined the following work that has been carried out to embed Marmot in the City:-

- Maintained multi-agency steering group / Partnership Group
- Revisited and revised priorities to ensure relevance to needs of City
- Health inequalities embedded in policies throughout the Council
- Influenced range of areas of work, including Thrive at Work, City of Culture
- Influenced partners, including WCC who have joined on Call to Action, and WMCA who are considering becoming a Marmot Region.
- Co-location of PH Office in Place based teams to work with Planning, Licensing and Transport colleagues

- Principles embedded throughout the Voluntary Sector
- Nationwide recognition for work as a Marmot City.
- Approached by other local authorities (and countries) to learn from our experiences

The Committee were informed of work being done in relation to the Call to Work campaign, a system-wide call to the private, voluntary and statutory sector to take one or two actions to help tackle health inequalities, together with the importance and benefits of delivering health and inequalities through business:-

- Initiated by Coventry, expanded to include Warwickshire
- Started with private sector businesses
- Establishing a Health Inequalities Network with voluntary sector

The presentation also detailed the following work being undertaken:-

One Coventry Plan:-

- Embedding reducing health inequalities as a priority within the One Coventry Plan
- Strategic oversight of Marmot work through the One Coventry Partnership Board
- Performance indicators to reflect focus on Marmot principles

Marmot Champions:-

- Members of One Coventry Partnership Board to be asked to 'Marmot Champions'
- Champion the ways to tackle health inequalities in their own organisations
- Ensure Marmot principles are embedded through all policy areas

Health Inequalities – Scrutiny:-

- October 2020 – Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee agreed that health inequalities would be a consideration in all reports/briefing notes considered by Scrutiny
- Format agreed, report templates revised
- Councillors requested to take account of health inequalities in all recommendations

The Committee asked questions, made comments and sought assurances on a number of issues including:-

- The reasons why the City has stayed committed to the Marmot principles
- The impact that Marmot has had on life expectancy in wards in the City
- Work undertaken in relation to applying Marmot principles to planning applications, particularly regarding greenspaces
- The significant positive impact that parks and greenspaces have on people's health and wellbeing, particularly during the pandemic

- Work being undertaken with businesses, particularly smaller businesses, to raise awareness of the benefits of providing a healthy environment for employees
- The benefits of producing a case study showing the effects of Covid on a BME family – it was noted that this will be provided at a future meeting when this matter is next considered
- The benefits of preventative work being undertaken, for example the provision of walking/running track and gyms in parks
- Work being undertaken to engage with social housing landlords, particularly Citizen, and the importance of this engagement
- The importance of school readiness, including speech therapy services, and the work undertaken with the family of schools in the City
- Work being undertaken with religious organisations in the City to deliver Marmot and Public Health messages and services

The Committee commended the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing for her work in this regard and requested that the following information be circulated to the Committee:-

- Life expectancy data for each ward
- The Marmot Principles

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:-

- 1) Supports the work of the Marmot Partnership in tackling inequalities through the Call to Action**
- 2) Acknowledges and welcomes the work that has been achieved to date in embedding the Marmot approach in Coventry**
- 3) Agrees to ensure that there is synergy between the refresh of the indicators in the One Coventry Partnership Plan with those in the Marmot Action Plan by including this in the Committee's Work Programme**
- 4) Agrees to ensure that Councillors consider health inequalities in recommendations made by Scrutiny Boards through the inclusion of a health inequalities assessment in all reports/briefing notes.**
- 5) Agrees that Councillors are encouraged to raise awareness in their local communities of the services available pertaining to the City's Marmot and wider Public Health offer and requests that the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing provides information for Councillors accordingly**
- 6) Requests that the Committee's Recommendation that funding be identified for increasing the number of walking/running tracks and paths in parks and green spaces be considered as part of the Council's Budget setting process.**

- 7) **Requests that Scrutiny be included in any consideration of Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to green spaces and that this be included in the Work Programme for the Communities and Housing Scrutiny Board (4)**
- 8) **Agrees that School Readiness be included in the Work Programme for the Education and Childrens' Services Scrutiny Board (2)**
- 9) **Requests that consideration be given to the inclusion /participation of Citizen, as the City's largest social housing landlord, in the Coventry Health and Wellbeing Board**
- 10) **Requests that a letter is sent from the Committee to the Parks staff to congratulate and thank them for the work undertaken to keep parks open during the last 18 months, particularly during the lockdown periods.**

30. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2021/2022**

The Committee received and noted the Work Programme for the current Municipal Year.

31. **Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.30am)