

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 8 December 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor C Miks (Chair)
Councillor J Birdi
Councillor G Hayre
Councillor M Heaven
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor B Singh
Councillor A Tucker

Other Member (Invited): Councillor J O'Boyle – Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change

Others Present (Invited): Paul Michael - Chair of Oversight Board - Destination Coventry & Venue Commercial Director – Coventry Building Society Arena
Paul Jones - Managing Director – Destination Coventry

Employees (by Service):

Business, Investment and Culture D Nuttall, P Singh, S Weir

Law and Governance G Holmes, M Salmon

Apologies:

Councillor T Jandu
Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor P Male
Councillor E Ruane

Public Business

17. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

18. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

19. Tourism Strategy

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a report and presentation of the Director of Business, Culture and Investment that provided an update on progress in establishing Destination Coventry as the new Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for the City, and an update on progress in delivering the Coventry Tourism Strategy 2019-2023. It further provided an update

on activity undertaken by the DMO to promote Coventry as a destination for business and leisure tourism. The Chair of Oversight Board - Destination Coventry and Venue Commercial Director – Coventry Building Society Arena, and the Managing Director – Destination Coventry were invited to attend the meeting for this item of business.

The presentation and briefing note highlighted the following:

The Journey

- UK City of Culture 2021
- 2018 - Tourism Strategy 2019-2023
- 2019 - Destination Management Partnership (DMP)
- 2020 - Nationwide research and options appraisal
- 2021- Established principles & consideration factors: membership proposition & market testing; operating model defined and approved by DMP; Cabinet Member approved model and business plan; destination Coventry launched 1st August 2021

Model Principles

- Lead management, development and promotion of Coventry's leisure and business tourism
- Operation of Coventry & Warwickshire Convention Bureau
- Responsibility for the provision of visitor information in the city
- Provision of opportunity for private sector to engage in a regular tourism dialogue
- Delivery of 2019-2023 Tourism Strategy – stakeholders contributed to reviews and future iterations
- Will not rely solely on CCC funding - must allow for private sector contribution for amplification
- Activities to include the development of income streams to ensure sustained financial viability

Considerations

- Visitor economy was in significant growth prior to the pandemic
- Opportunities in 2021 and 2022 gave hope for recovery and growth
- Pandemic dramatically affected Coventry's visitor economy
- Stakeholders experiencing business disruption and uncertainty
- Tourism not a primary sector as in other destinations
- Several business membership organisations already existed
- Competition for business subscriptions in the city was fierce
- DMO membership schemes were difficult to develop and sustain

The Model

- A public / private collaboration between Coventry City Council and Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
- Two-year proof-of-concept, to test the viability of a future public / private Destination Management Organisation entity for Coventry from 2023 onwards

Oversight Board

- Details of Board Members
- Details of Governance Structure

- Fundamental responsibility of the Board - to provide support, challenge strategic direction, maintain oversight and scrutiny, and to improve performance
- Purpose of the Board:
 - Set and maintain vision, mission and values
 - Development and delivery of agreed tourism strategy / destination management plan
 - Ensure accountability to all stakeholders and investors, publishing annual reports, and communicating effectively, for example the annual tourism conference
 - Review the risk register every six months, with any escalations of risk put forward to the Oversight Board for consideration
 - Maintain budgeting oversight, to efficiently manage and offer effective delivery of the organisation's resources and objectives
 - Take steps to maintain effective Governance
 - Promote the work of Destination Coventry, enhancing and protecting the reputation of the organisation and act as ambassadors for the organisation

Brand

- Details of the brand, Website and the launch

Work

- Destination Marketing and PR Campaigns
- Hosted Buyer Familiarisation Trips
- Visiting Media & Influencer Hosting
- Maximising Major Events Opportunities
- Printed Collateral
- Trade Show Attendance
- New Product Development
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2021/22 Campaigns

FOOD & DRINK

Coventry & Warwickshire Foodie Awards; Visit Coventry Homepage banner; Dedicated website landing page; Thematic blogs; Boosted social media campaigns; Showcase video; and Google paid search campaigns

BUSINESS TOURISM RECOVERY - PR CAMPAIGN

Business confidence article - 3 key venues; Social media campaigns; Destination Coventry launch article; *'Killer Stats'* video; TMI Conference (Regional & National); 5 venue spotlight videos; and Business investment article

EXPLORE COVENTRY – SUMMER CAMPAIGN

2 broadcast TV campaigns; Outdoor media; Visit Coventry homepage banner; Dedicated website landing page; Thematic blogs; Boosted social media campaigns; Showcase video; and Google paid search campaigns

CHRISTMAS 'WINTER WISHES' CAMPAIGN

Big budget – cross-sector collaboration; Brand new bespoke creative; 4-week broadcast TV campaign; Commercial radio campaign; Press release and BBC CWR interview; Visit Coventry home banner & landing page; 200+ *What's On* events listings on VC; Reach print and digital campaign; Muddy Stilettos and Day Out with The Kids; Digital radio (DAX) campaign; Digital outdoor media; 4 thematic blogs; Boosted social media; and Google paid search campaigns

The Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed the following issues:

- The Oversight Board provided support, challenged strategic direction, looked to improve performance, connectivity and maximising benefits. Lessons were being learned as the DMO progressed
- The Board's Membership was evolving – future representation should ensure that the cultural diversity of the city was reflected and represented
- Many levels of DMO Members – engagement through Organisation's Website and through working groups who would ensure communication at all levels
- Collaboration with Warwickshire partners involvement – Many businesses drove the economy across the region and Warwickshire leisure and tourism businesses were able to become members of the DMO. Important to collaborate with neighbouring authorities for cohesive working
- The Council was represented on the Board by David Nuttall, Strategic Lead (UK City of Culture and Commonwealth Games) and Acting Head of Service (Sports, Culture and Destination)
- The Council's Political involvement in the DMO was through the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change and the Scrutiny process of Council strategies which underpinned the work of the DMO, such as the Tourism Strategy and the Cultural Strategy
- DMOs were more than a membership – important to offer consumer choice, ensure dialogue and communication
- Two-year proof-of-concept – would test the viability of a future DMO for Coventry from 2023 onwards
- Current successes included the City of Culture, the Commonwealth Games and the MOBO Awards
- Campaigns – were changing the perception of the City. Collaboration was essential to ensure success
- Website – numbers of views had now doubled
- Marketing campaigns – through media, videos, and branding. Videos had been created for Business Tourism Recovery, Summer in Coventry and Christmas in Coventry. The launch of Influencer Programme was imminent
- Video marketing – essential to ensure delivery of offers at ground level to attract consumer and not lose them to neighbouring offers
- Future working would include linking with regional offers, cross boundary working, the provision of total package offers across Coventry and Warwickshire

- Ambassadors of the City were its citizens – need to ensure diversity, promotion, inclusion and varied forms of communication of offers for all groups and communities
- Tourism Strategy – 4-year Strategy for 2019-2023
- Consideration to be given to the content of promotional materials, to ensure inclusivity and cultural diversity and inclusion – food and drink offers already available in the city were a good representation of diverse cultural choice
- Engagement with Elected Members was important as they represented communities and could provide information to citizens
- Travel companies – good relationship with travel companies already developed. Visit Britain – markets Coventry Internationally. Examples of linking include Visit Britain India and Visit Britain Canada. Recognise the need to establish a link with Birmingham Airport

The Board viewed the marketing videos for Coventry for ‘Business Tourism Recovery – Killer Stats’, ‘Explore Coventry – Summer’, and ‘Christmas Winter Wishes’ and requested that links to the videos be circulated to all Elected Members for information. The Board requested that they receive further updates on progress at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Notes the content of the briefing note and presentation and thanks the officers for their useful and informative presentation and their contribution to the meeting.**
- 2) Requests that the following recommendation be made to the Oversight Board – Destination Coventry:**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Board (3) request that consideration be given to future representation on the Board, and promotional materials, to ensure that the cultural diversity of the city is reflected and represented.

20. Jobs and Business - Impact of Covid

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a briefing note and presentation of the Director of Business, Investment and Culture that detailed the support that local businesses had received due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of support initiatives had been delivered by the Economic Development Service, whilst they continued to work alongside local business support partners including Coventry & Warwickshire (CW) Chamber of Commerce, CWLEP Growth Hub, Coventry & Warwickshire Reinvestment Trust (CWRT) and Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). Critical to this effort was to enable the adaptation of the support schemes to the changing economic, social and health conditions, as they continued to offer a range of business support initiatives beyond the immediate COVID-19 support.

The presentation and briefing note highlighted the following issues:

Economic Context

- The Economic Development Services had worked with key partners to adapt the business support offer to changing economic, social and health conditions and ensure they had done as much as possible to support local businesses through the Covid-19 pandemic
- The nature of support services provided to businesses had evolved during the course of the pandemic due to changing economic circumstances: Covid-19 outbreak in March 2020 forced some sectors of the economy to close; social distancing limited the output of sectors remaining open
- The UK economic output fell by over 21% in first two quarters of 2020, and by 9.9% overall in 2020
- West Midlands encountered the highest fall in economic output of any English region during the spring 2020 lockdown and was also projected to have the highest economic contracting of all UK regions during 2020
- The UK economy remained 2.1% smaller than pre-pandemic levels
- 49,200 (30%) posts in Coventry were furloughed in June 2020, when the scheme closed at the end of September 2021, 5,900 (4%) were left on it
- The Coventry unemployment claimant count doubled to 16,695 (6.7%) in October 2020 and as of October 2021 the claimant count stands at 13,945 (5.3%)

Health Inequalities Impact

- There was a gap in life expectancy of 10.7 years (men) and 8.3 years (women) between the most deprived and affluent areas
- Business Support services encouraged economic growth
- Supporting and sustaining the economy in Coventry through Covid and protecting jobs

Covid-19 Support

- EDS staff mobilised to deliver support to businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic - communication to businesses via website, e-newsletter, LinkedIn, Twitter and partner networks
- £48m distributed in Government COVID-19 grants during 1st lockdown - over 4,000 Coventry Retail, Leisure & Hospitality and small businesses supported and a further £2.7m in Discretionary Grants to 470 adversely affected businesses
- Information communicated to businesses on CJRS and COVID-19 loans: 49,200 employees of Coventry firms furloughed at highest point; 7,400 Coventry businesses accessed loans, totalling over £300m; over 10,000 individuals accessed the Self Employment Income Support Scheme
- £19.5m COVID-19 grants to 1,612 businesses closed since 4/11/20 plus £12.3m in Restart Grants to 1,880 Coventry businesses in non-essential retail and leisure
- Design of £12.5m Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) fund - to-date, 3,874 grants provided, and strategy developed to allocate the final £1.8m ARG top-up fund earmarked for new applicants that missed out on previous rounds

On-Going Business Support

- Nearly 10,000 businesses in Coventry, many of which were Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
- Coventry's SMEs continued to need advice, access to finance and infrastructure
- Partnership working was key to help grow and develop SME business base
- Support services are designed to help SMEs fulfil their growth potential, and is delivered: Directly through EDS Business Advisors; Webinars to replace Workshops; 1:1 support delivered via video conferencing
- Support tailored to the needs of individual Business
- SLA with Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Hub ensured local businesses were referred to the most appropriate support available
- Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce supported new businesses to successfully start - demand for start-up support increased through 2020 and £249k of COVID-19 Discretionary Grant funds allocated to expand start-up support
- The four EU-funded support programmes managed by EDS continued to be integral to the Council's business support offer: CW Business Support; CW Green Business; CW Innovation Programme; CW Skills for Growth - since March 2020 all four programmes had applied flexibilities in delivery methods to ensure services were able to continue and had secured extensions through to June 2023 (worth £9.2m of EU funding)
- Take-up of suite of support services had remained high during 2021: programmes had supported 175 SMEs (Q1 to Q3) to adapt, modernise and innovate / diversify; 40 of these were new businesses; Green Business Network webinars regularly had 50+ attendees; the CW Innovation programme saw increased demand for 1:1 support and usability studies; new Skills 4 Growth project: 155 employees across 61 SMEs supported to address skills gaps in Quarter 1 – Quarter 3 2021 alone
- £2.4m of grants were awarded in 2021 to date, supporting: the creation of 26 new jobs; a reduction of 578 tonnes of CO2 emissions
- £500k tourism grant pot allocated (claimed by 209 SMEs within two days of launch)
- Inward Investment service was receiving significant interest - 14,554 jobs created from 216 Coventry & Warwickshire FDI projects (2016-2020)

The Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed the following issues:

- There were currently 3,000 job vacancies in the city with a large number of these vacancies in the hospitality industry and, although the skills for these positions were available, there was a reluctance to take-up vacancies in this area
- European funding had been extended to June 2023 – the US Share Prosperity Fund would replace EU funding streams in the longer term. Prospectus awaited in the New Year
- Coventry Creative Growth and Cultural Tourism Recovery Programme - Community Renewal Fund successful application - would enable the delivery of a pilot project, which would support the continued growth and competitiveness of cultural sectors in the whole of Coventry, not least through

realising the unique opportunities presented by UK City of Culture 2021, the 2022 Commonwealth Games, and associated Legacies

- The Community Renewal Fun success would enable freelancers and creative and cultural businesses to be supported. It was currently difficult to determine how successful their recovery was progressing
- There was a 2% Covid 'economic scaring' however, the longer-term effects were difficult to quantify. The economy was very different at present
- The manufacturing sector, mainly in the field of electric vehicles for which Coventry had a world class reputation, were showing interest in International Investment in the city
- Universities were important employers in the city as well as learning providers – the drop in numbers of international students during the pandemic had resulted in a loss of income
- New businesses could access start-up support from the Chamber of commerce
- The Furlough Scheme ended on 31st October 2021 – many employees had been re-employed by their companies, others had left the labour market (retired) and some had been made redundant. There hadn't been a noticeable spike in unemployment figures resulting from the ending of furlough

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the content of the briefing note and the presentation and thanks the officers in the Economic Development Service for all the work they have undertaken supporting businesses through the pandemic.

21. **Work Programme 2021/2022**

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that detailed issues on the Board's Work Programme for meetings of the Board for 2021/2022.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the issues on the Board's Work Programme for 2021/2022.

22. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.35 pm)