

SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

Introduction by Cllr Naeem Akhtar, Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

2021/22 was a successful year for scrutiny with the delivery of some excellent task and finish groups alongside the regular programme of meetings.

Scrutiny returned to face to face scrutiny meetings in the Council House as the UK began to adapt to living with Covid. However, Scrutiny Chairs and Scrutiny Members embraced learning from the pandemic and used technology and virtually meetings to undertake task and finish group work with partners and experts by experience. Scrutiny will continue to use technology to increase participation with scrutiny.

I would like to thank Councillors Miks, Clifford and Rupinder Singh for chairing the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board, the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board and the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board during 2021/22 and know that the recommendations made by the Boards under their direction will make a real difference to the people of Coventry. Councillor Rupinder Singh will take on a new portfolio this year and will Chair the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board. Welcome to Councillors Ali and Auluck who will be chairing the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board and Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board respectively this year.

Looking forward to 2022/23, the Scrutiny Boards will focus on prioritising items where scrutiny can influence change and improve outcomes for Coventry people including the cost of living crisis and health inequalities.

Scrutiny is a part of the Council's democratic structure led by non-executive Councillors. It works to the common aim of improving services for the local community and is involved in the following:

- Policy review and development: Helping to shape the way public services are delivered.
- Scrutinising decisions: Is the right action being taken? Are services working effectively?
- External scrutiny: Examining services that impact upon the local community.

Scrutiny does not make decisions; it uses evidence to make recommendations to the Cabinet to request change.

Get involved:

Suggests topics for scrutiny here:

Email the Scrutiny Chairs and Team via scrutiny@coventry.gov.uk

Follow us on twitter @covscrutiny

Find meeting dates and agendas here:

[Coventry City Council Meeting Papers](#)

Scrutiny during 2021/22

The Municipal year 2021-22 saw the return to meetings held face to face in the Council House from August 2021, with full a full programme of meetings throughout the year. Covid restrictions were maintained to keep Members, officers, and the public safe, whilst continuing the scrutiny function.



**Scrutiny
Co-ordination
Committee**



Chair: Cllr N Akhtar

Deputy: Cllr Ali

Scrutiny Coordination and cross cutting items
Policy and Leadership
Policing and Equalities
Designated Crime and Disorder Board
City of Culture 2021



Chair: Cllr R Singh

Chair: Cllr Innes

Chair: Cllr Miks

Chair: Cllr Bigham

Chair: Cllr Clifford

Strategic Finance
Council Resources
Procurement & Social Value
Workforce

Children & Young People's Social Care
Schools
Adult, Higher & Further Ed.
Libraries
Skills & Employability

Business, Enterprise & Employment
Inward Investment
Transportation
Sustainability & Climate Change
Digital Strategy

City Services
Social Enterprise Strategy
Community and Third Sector
Housing and Homelessness

Health
Adult Social Care
Health Inequalities
Sustainability and Transformation Plans
Sport & Physical Activity



Key Scrutiny Activity 2021/2022



COVID-19: Living with COVID

Scrutiny Co-ordination and the five Boards continued to consider the impact of COVID-19 on the city's people, the organisation and partners throughout the year. This included looking at what was being done to restore them, what positive lessons had been learned, what was working due to the pandemic and how services were going to recover and improve in the future with COVID.

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board considered an item on support to businesses throughout the pandemic and how the grants available were being distributed to ensure anyone eligible was able to access the support they were entitled to. Members were confident the Council were maximizing the benefits to but raised concerns about the longer-term impacts on businesses as well as other organisations in the city such as the universities.

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board looked at the impact of the pandemic on school readiness and what actions were being taken to address the gap in children being ready for school compared to before the pandemic. It was recognised that the true impact would not be felt until those children born during the pandemic reach school-age. The Board recommended that more peer-to-peer work was supported where there was good practice identified and requested further updates on progress.

The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board also looked at the impact of Covid on Homelessness noting that reports of anti-social behaviour had increased during lockdown, delays in minor repairs and although rent arrears with social landlords were low there had been some increase.

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board consider the impact of COVID on health services throughout the year. This included a specific item on NHS Restoration in July 2021. Members asked robust questions of health partners about issues facing Coventry citizens including access to GP appointments, mental health support and wait times for operations.

The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board considered the impact of COVID on the Council's finances. The Board also scrutinised the learning and opportunities from the new ways of working brought about by the pandemic and the impact this had on customers and staff.

City of Culture 2021

City of Culture has been an exciting opportunity for Coventry. The pandemic delayed the start until May 2021. Scrutiny have heard from the City of Culture Trust throughout the year about the plans for the year and the impact and benefits of Coventry being the City of Culture. Members wanted to ensure that City of Culture provided opportunities for all our communities to participate in the events. The enduring legacy from the City's title year was the subject of much scrutiny. The Performance Measurement and Evaluation Interim Report was discussed in depth.

Autism Task and Finish Group

Members of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board and the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board established a task and finish group to look at autism, which was promoted by the unacceptably long waits for assessment and diagnosis experienced by children and young people in the City. Although the task and finish group was set up with a narrow remit, it became clear as the group spoke to stakeholders, that to improve the lives of, and outcomes, for, autistic people a number of cross cutting recommendations would need to be made to Cabinet and Partners. It was also recognised that it would be beneficial to do a follow up piece of work with an education focus in 2022/23 to look at how children, young people, their families and education provider can best manage the period between referral and diagnosis.

Fly-tipping Task and Finish Group

At the start of the year there were a lot of concerns raised from Members about the levels of fly-tipping across the city and there was an appetite to look at identifying solutions to the issue. The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board established a task and finish group to look at the issues around fly-tipping, including some of the main causes, and potential ways to improve the situation. The group met 6 times and received presentations and information from a range of service areas including enforcement, waste management, Streetpride and ICT. Members were also able to bring their own experiences through casework.

The group identified 28 recommendations in all covering Enforcement, Domestic Waste, Communication, Education and Technology, Commercial Waste as well as further work for scrutiny to continue.

The recommendations were agreed by the Board at their meeting on the 3rd March and will be presented

Scrutiny Topics covered



DRY