

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on**  
**Wednesday, 28 September 2022**

Present:

Members:

Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)  
Councillor C Miks (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor M Ali  
Councillor L Bigham  
Councillor J Clifford (Substitute for Cllr J Innes)  
Councillor P Male  
Councillor R Lakha (Substitute for R Singh)  
Councillor G Ridley

Other Members:

Councillor J O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change

Employees (by Service):

Law and Governance V Castree, G Holmes,

Employment and Skills K Mawby, G Smailes

Economic Growth S Weir

Apologies:

Councillors R Auluck, J Innes, R Singh, K Sandhu, B Gittins

## **Public Business**

### **13. Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

In relation to Minute 16/22 below relating to "Jobs and Skills – Coventry Skills Strategy" the Committee noted that Cllr Bigham was an ambassador for the Workers Education Association.

### **14. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2022 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

### **15. Jobs and Skills - Coventry Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027**

The Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change introduced the item and the purpose of an Economic Development Strategy, which built on the achievements of the previous Strategy. The Strategy acknowledged the changing economy and positioned Coventry and the sub-region as the place to locate their businesses and invest in the City.

The Committee received a report of the Director of Business, Investment and Culture, which would be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 11 October, 2022, together with a presentation on the Coventry Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027 which highlighted the following points:

- Coventry's new Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027 would build on the achievements of the Coventry Economic Growth and Prosperity Strategy 2018-2022.
- It was one of the key strategies for delivering the objectives of the new One Coventry Plan 2022-2030, and it was also particularly strongly integrated with the new Coventry Skills Strategy.
- As well as replacing the current Economic Growth and Prosperity Strategy, which expired at the end of 2022, a new Economic Development Strategy ("EDS") was needed that provides a holistic framework for facilitating the sustainable growth of Coventry's economy.
- This was vital as Coventry and the wider West Midlands region continued to recover from the recession generated by the Covid-19 pandemic, growing challenges around adjusting to new UK-EU trading regulations after Brexit and wider global supply chain disruption, inflation, and the cost of living and cost of doing business.
- The new Economic Development Strategy would be integral to delivering the objectives of the 2022- 2030 One Coventry Plan. It would be central to the objective of Increasing Economic Prosperity, by creating the conditions for local businesses to thrive, new investment to come into the city and the creation of new good quality job and training opportunities. Through providing the framework for sustainable economic development and enabling all residents to benefit from new employment and training opportunities created, the Strategy will also be key to tackling the causes of climate change and tackling inequalities. These actions would also cement the Council's role as a partner, enabler and leader in shaping the local economy, and would help to improve the financial sustainability of the Council.
- The vision of the Strategy was to "deliver a strong and resilient economy, where inclusive growth is promoted and delivered, businesses are enabled to innovate and grow, and new local jobs are created." To achieve this vision, the following would take place, through eight interlinked pillars which were outlined to the Committee:
  - facilitating a sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and challenging economic climate driven by inflation and rising cost of living and cost of doing business, creating the platform for longer-term growth and prosperity
  - delivering a first-class support infrastructure that responds to our businesses' needs and opportunities
  - securing maximum public and private investment to deliver infrastructure projects that create the conditions for economic growth and job creation

- securing job creation, growth and prosperity through attracting and supporting business investment from both the UK and overseas
- ensuring that social value and sustainability are incorporated into all economic development work
- supporting the development of a skills ecosystem which provides the skills required by Coventry's businesses, both current and future, and contributes to economic growth and the prosperity of the city
- ensuring Coventry is a leader in the green industrial revolution by supporting our businesses, residents and partner stakeholders to tackle the challenges and opportunities presented by climate change
- Building on existing strong partnerships in delivering all elements of this strategy

Due to the links between the two items, questions from the Committee were captured in Minute 16 below.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:-**

- 1) Recommend that Cabinet approve the Coventry Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027**
- 2) Request that annual performance data on the Strategy is presented to the appropriate Scrutiny Board**

**16. Jobs and Skills - Coventry Skills Strategy 2022-2030**

The Committee received a report of the Chief Partnerships Officer/ Director of Education and Skills, which would be considered by Cabinet on 11 October, 2022, together with a presentation on the Coventry Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027 which highlighted the following points:

The report indicated that this was Coventry's first ever citywide Skills Strategy. The Coventry Skills Strategy took a holistic approach to the skills system from early years through to lifelong learning to achieve the best outcomes for our residents and businesses. It would play a pivotal role in delivering on the ambitions of the 'One Coventry 2022-2030 Plan' in helping to increase the economic prosperity of the city, addressing climate change and tackling inequalities within our communities.

The approach reflects collaborative principles of the One Council Plan with shared work across Council teams and services, residents, education/skills providers, employers, other public sector bodies and community organisations. It served as a 'framework for action' with partners learning and developing creative solutions to skills challenges together to meet our three Strategic Ambitions and the eight Priority areas within them:

- Strategic Ambition 1: A comprehensive, citywide skills offer that raises aspirations and allows each and every resident throughout their lives to reach their full potential.
  - 1. Skills Levels: To improve the overall skills levels of Coventry residents.

- 2. Aspiration: Further develop a skills system that inspires residents to achieve from primary school through to lifelong learning.
  - 3. Progression Pathways: Providing a clear line of sight for people to progress through Coventry's skills system.
- Strategic Ambition 2: A skills ecosystem which ensures that all, including those most in need, are able to participate in, progress and achieve success.
  - 4. Community: A skills system which meets the needs of all residents and is widely accessed by all Coventry communities, including newly arrived communities.
  - 5. Inclusion: A skills system which is fully inclusive and representative of our diverse City.
  - 6. Highest Needs: A skills system which supports those most in need, with a 'proportionate universalism' approach, helping people out of poverty and creating a more equal City.
- Strategic Ambition 3: A flexible and responsive system that works together with our growing, investing and local businesses to deliver the right skills mix for our dynamic labour market.
  - 7. Skills for business: A skills system which provides the skills required by Coventry's businesses, both current and future and contributes to economic growth and the prosperity of the City and Region.
  - 8. Social Value and Sustainability: A skills system which is well positioned to maximise increased commitment to social justice, respect, community, and responsibility including Coventry's commitment to tackling climate change.

The presentation indicated that there were three key shared goals between the Economic Development Strategy and the Skills Strategy

- Skills and opportunities in the City are right for investment
- Co-designing skills solutions for businesses
- In work upskilling

Following the presentation, together with the presentation referred to in Minute 15 above, the Committee asked a number of questions and the following points were discussed:

- How the performance and the success of the strategies would be measured, including the indicators the One Coventry Plan
- The frequency of performance reporting of the strategies to Scrutiny
- The challenge of the current economic climate for businesses
- Retrofit grants for Registered Social Landlords and a retrofitting project in Foleshill were outlined
- The development of the Gigafactory site
- Reassurances were given about the viability of Coventry College. It was acknowledged there were challenges in getting lectures in certain trade subjects and options to address this gap were being explored.
- A summary progress of City Centre South was given with a public report to Cabinet due in the Autumn
- Investment Zones would be subject to a bidding process and no details of this were known at the time of the meeting
- How the strategies would be communicated to, and benefit Coventry communities was discussed

- The role and purpose of Equality Impact Assessments was outlined in relation to the development of new strategies
- Social Value data will form part of the evaluation process
- Options to use employment land for open spaces
- Opportunities to upskill over 50s given the current retirement age and that people may need to wstay in work longer given the rising cost of living
- Opportunities to upskills parents and link with Early Help Partnership to enhance skills. Opportunities to make training flexible and modular around family commitments were being looked at to make it as inclusive as possible.
- Narrowing the attainment gap at GCSE level would be discussed by Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board 2
- Limitations of the consultation on the skills strategy were discussed. Although the response rate was disappointing, new information was gained from undertaking it and the survey would run annually, and try and increase it's reach based on lessons learnt.
- The Coventry Charter was not the Thrive Programme
- Apprenticeships were a key focus for the skills strategy both within the City Council and in other organisations. Certain groups were targeted for support including those with barriers to employment. The parts of the Apprenticeship Levy was transferred to other organisations to help ensure it was spent within the City.
- A work experience offer was being redeveloped following a lull due to the pandemic.
- Support for women from BAME backgrounds to access training and therefore employment

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee: \_**

**1) Recommend that Cabinet approve the Coventry Skills Strategy 2022-2030**

**2) Request that annual performance data on the Strategy is presented to the appropriate Scrutiny Board**

#### **17. Co-option of Other Faiths Representatives to the Scrutiny Board**

Further to amendments to the Constitution in relation to the co-opted Members for Education matters appointments for the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2), the Committee considered a Briefing Note of the Director of Law and Governance seeking approval to the appointment of Mr Ghulam Vohra to the Committee as the representative from other faith groups in the City for Education matters.

The Briefing Note outlined the process for nomination, together with the outstanding vacancies for co-opted Members.

**RESOLVED that under Part 2D, Section 6.1 (e) of the Constitution, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee approves the co-option of Mr Ghulam Vohra as a non-voting co-optee to the Committee for Education matters.**

**18. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2022/23**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received and noted the Work Programme and outstanding issues for the current Municipal year.

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

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.00 pm)