

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 9 November 2023

Present:

Members: Councillor M Ali (Chair)
Councillor J Gardiner
Councillor G Hayre
Councillor M Heaven
Councillor A Hopkins
Councillor R Lakha (Substitute for Councillor A Kaur)
Councillor R Thay

Other Members
(by invitation): Councillor S Agboola (Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing
and Communities)
Councillor P Hetherton (Cabinet Member for City Services)
Councillor G Lloyd (Deputy Cabinet Member for City Services)
Councillor D Welsh (Cabinet Member for Housing and
Communities)

By Invitation: L Ishutina (Ukrainian Guest)
P Luczka (Association of Ukrainians of Great Britain, Coventry
Branch representative)
A Rivett (Host)
M Stoliarova (Ukrainian Guest)
A Zakharchenko (Ukrainian Guest)

Employees
(by service area):

Law and Governance: G Holmes, U Patel, T Robinson

Libraries and Migration: P Barnett, R Johnson

Traffic Management: R Goodyer, J Logue

Apologies: Councillors R Bailey and A Kaur

Public Business

12. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

13. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record subject to a number of amendments suggested by Councillor Gardiner.

14. **Homes for Ukraine Update**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note and received a presentation from the Head of Libraries and Migration which provided an update on the local implementation of the UK Government 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched on 14 March 2022 by the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Coventry City Council and the voluntary and community sector were continuing to work in partnership to ensure the necessary local authority functions were in place to provide sanctuary to Ukrainian people and families arriving in the city and the on-going support required.

The City Council continues to deliver its 9 key functions under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. These include safeguarding DBS checks on all hosts, accommodation checks for suitability and safety of properties, administering of interim payments to guests, provision of education, service referrals, employment and benefits support, homelessness assistance, community integration and administration of 'thank you' payments to hosts.

Ukrainian guests continue to arrive in Coventry, but in smaller numbers. So far, 390 guests had been welcomed, of which 71 were children under 18. A central registration portal managed by DLUHC had been set up which provided information about hosts and guests, including potential guests.

The briefing note provided further information on the support for guests, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and employment support, education, employment, leisure activities, support for hosts and communication.

The Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC) has been commissioned to facilitate the matching process between potential hosts and guests and to provide any associated support as necessary.

The Coventry Ukrainian Community and the Ukrainian Catholic Church have supported the newly arrived guests by offering pastoral support, weekly coffee mornings with events and outings and have been extremely supportive of the city council.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme was in its second year and has been running efficiently, however there were a few challenges and some unknowns which were creating uncertainty for the guests and the support services.

These included:

- Growing speculation that the scheme would be wound down in March 2024
- If the war was to end, implications for continued support for those who did not want to return to Ukraine straight away or for those who arrived towards the end of the scheme

- Uncertainty for those who had enrolled in English classes and/or were looking for employment
- Whether there would be an extension to the current Ukraine visas which are issued for 3 years?
- Resource implications for local authorities to provide continued support

The Board welcomed and listened to the invited guests who shared their views and their personal moving experiences. The guests expressed their deep appreciation for all of the support they had received.

Members asked questions, made comments, and sought assurances on a number of matters including:

- greater clarity on future funding for the scheme beyond March 2024
- greater clarity around the extension of visas, including for students completing further education
- an update on employment and transferrable skills
- English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) courses

The Board thanked the invited guests for sharing their emotive experiences and wished them well.

The Board also thanked and commended the Migration Team for their continued work in welcoming and supporting the guests and hosts and their ongoing work with partner organisations.

The Board requested that a letter be sent to the Government, on behalf of the Board and in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, requesting greater clarity on future funding for the Homes for Ukraine scheme and whether the current 3 year visas would be extended.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board:

- 1. Notes the Briefing Note and presentation on Homes for Ukraine scheme.**
- 2. Thanked the invited guests for attending and sharing their personal experiences with the Board.**
- 3. Requests that a letter be sent to the Government, on behalf of the Board, and in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, requesting greater clarity on future funding for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme beyond 2024 and whether the 3 year Ukraine visas issued would be extended.**

15. Average Speed Enforcement (ASE) Update

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Head of Traffic and Network Management which provided an update on the impact of the Average Speed Enforcement (ASE) projects in Coventry. The information covered the initial

schemes on London Road and Ansty Road that have been operational for over 3 years and the proposed ASE schemes.

The City Council received many concerns from residents and elected members across the city about inappropriate vehicular speed; this included a significant number of petitions requesting road safety measures. As the highway authority, the city council is responsible for setting speed limits on our local roads. West Midlands Police (WMP) are responsible for enforcing speed limits, and we collaborate to optimise speed limit compliance.

In line with our regional partners, the city council is committed to reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSIs) on our road network. Over the last 3-year period (22/07/2020 to 21/07/2023), a total of 1231 personal injury collisions occurred on Coventry's roads and this resulted in 1577 casualties. In-depth analysis revealed that a significant proportion of KSIs were attributed to drivers travelling at excessive speeds, careless and aggressive driving.

In addition to average speed enforcement, the council also work with West Midlands Police with traditional speed enforcement techniques such as Mobile Camera Enforcement and Community Speedwatch.

The ASE cameras detect vehicles through Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and calculate their average speed by measuring the time taken to travel between defined points, a known distance apart. ASE encourages drivers to travel at a constant speed and this consequently reduces the negative environmental effects associated with vehicles accelerating and braking excessively.

The data showed that in the three-year period prior to the first ASE schemes being introduced in 2019, there was a total of 249 people injured on the roads that currently have ASE schemes in operation. Since the introduction of ASE on those roads, there had been a reduction of over 50% in personal injuries to a total of 116.

A review of the first two projects London Road (Toll Bar to Allard Way) and Ansty Road (Dane Road to Hinckley Road) has highlighted a significant reduction in personal injury collisions, including KSIs.

Since the London Road ASE project became operational in January 2019, to date there has been 9 personal injury collisions recorded since the go-live date. Further analysis revealed that the collisions resulted in two serious and seven slights and the two serious were no speed related.

The Ansty Road project became operational in January 2019 and to date there has been eight personal injury collisions recorded since the ASE camera go live date. Data showed that these were not speed related.

The Board noted that there are a number of ASE schemes where the ASE infrastructure has been installed and the scheme is due to "go-live" shortly. These included Allard Way – Kenilworth Road, Allesley Old Road and Holyhead Road. The ASE infrastructure is yet to be installed at Hearsall Common.

Members asked questions, made comments and sought assurances on a number of issues including:

- Explanation of what 'camera activation' means in practice
- Tickets and fines and whether the fines come to the council
- Reasons for delay with the new schemes waiting to go live
- Effectiveness of each scheme
- Impact of Covid on data
- Explanation of data for Longford Road
- Prioritising new schemes

The Board noted that traffic management officers could only access personal collision data, they did not have access to incidents relating to anti-social behaviour, drink driving incidents etc, hence the reason why they had not been referred to in the briefing note.

RESOLVED that the Board:

- 1. Notes the information contained in the briefing note on the impact of schemes and were pleased that the current Average Speed Enforcement schemes are working.**
- 2. Supports the implementation of forthcoming Average Speed Enforcement schemes as detailed in the briefing note.**
- 3. Requests that the 3 year accident data on the schemes waiting to be implemented be circulated to the Board for information.**

16. Work Programme 2023/2024

The Scrutiny Board considered their Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

RESOLVED that the Board notes that 'Additional Licensing Scheme' will be brought to the next meeting before being considered by Cabinet on 12th December 2023.

17. 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 urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.25 pm)