

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Thursday, 11 April 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)
Councillor J Gardiner (Substitute for Councillor G Ridley)
Councillor A Hopkins (Substitute for Councillor A Ali)
Councillor C Miks
Councillor E Ruane
Councillor R Singh
Councillor R Thay

Other Members: Councillor K Caan Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing
Councillor G Hayre Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing
Councillor P Hetherton, Cabinet Member for City Services

Others present: Inspector J Moran, West Midlands Police (for item contained in Minute 56 below)

Employees (by Service Area):

City Services: P Bowman, D Keaney

Law and Governance: S Bennett, G Holmes

Public Health and Wellbeing: A Duggal (Director), A Allen, R Chapman, P Hargrave, M Pouton

Apologies: Councillors M Ali, G Duggins, P Male, G Ridley, CE Thomas

Public Business

53. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

54. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March, 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

55. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that the Committee agrees to exclude the press and public under Sections 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the private item

in Minute 61 below headed 'Rebuilding Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Services' on the grounds that that item involves the likely disclosure of information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as it contains information relating to the financial affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

56. **Parking Enforcement and Road Safety**

The Committee considered a Briefing Note of the Director of City Services which outlined the Council's Civil Parking Enforcement function and informed the Committee of current activities and arrangements relating to parking enforcement by providing an overview of key priorities and performance.

The Briefing Note covered the following areas:-

- The background to Parking Enforcement, which has been the responsibility of the Council since 2005 when the function was decriminalised and transferred from West Midlands Police
- The main aims of parking enforcement:-
 - To Improve road safety
 - To Improve access for public transport, public service vehicles and emergency services vehicle
 - To act as a deterrent to inconsiderate and dangerous parking
 - To improve traffic flows
 - To reduce traffic congestion which in turn will improve air quality
- The following functions and activities undertaken by the Council's Parking Service:-
 - Civil parking enforcement
 - Bus lane and enforcement
 - Moving traffic enforcement
 - Parking appeals service
 - Resident parking scheme management
 - Car park management
- Civil parking enforcement and the work undertaken by Civil Enforcement Officers including:-
 - Operational arrangements
 - Deployment
 - Staff resources
 - Performance levels
 - Penalty charge notice levels
 - Enforcement challenges and plans to deal with them
 - City Centre Restricted Parking Zones (RPZ)

- Issues regarding Burges and Trinity Street
- Pavement parking
- Parking hotspots
- Moving Traffic Enforcement

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

- Implementation of disabled parking bays and the fact that disabled bays are an advisory service and not enforceable
- Bus lane enforcement and the impact that they may have on footfall in the city centre
- Traffic management in the Burges and Trinity Street, and steps taken to address the issue of delivery drivers, such as allocated parking bays in White Street car park
- School parking issues and measures in place to try and improve, including the use of volunteers.
- The impact of physical and verbal abuse on the wellbeing of parking staff and the issues around recruitment
- Issues at specific car parks in the city
- Problem parking on pavements on main arterial routes into the city such as the Foleshill Road, Longford Road, Stoney Stanton Road and Clay Lane.
- Street furniture, signage and whether the changes proposed in the city centre would be clear to drivers.
- The issues of enforcement of white zig zag lines, which only the police are able to do.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:-

- 1) Notes and welcomes the actions and initiatives in place to tackle the key parking enforcement priorities.**
- 2) Recommends that the Cabinet Member for City Services:-**
 - a) Considers the introduction of red routes on the parking hotspots of Foleshill Road, Stoney Stanton Road, Clay Lane and Longford Road.**
 - b) Reviews the parking restrictions in the City Centre, including the Restricted Parking Zone, to ensure they are clear and consistent.**
- 3) Recommends that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities request that West Midlands Police take enforcement action in relation to parking on white zig zag lines.**
- 4) Requests that officers:-**
 - a) Continue to work with schools regarding parking and enforcement issues.**

b) Continue to review road signage and reduce this wherever possible.

c) Ensure that the parking bays in White Street car park are marked for delivery drivers.

57. Complaints Policy and Procedure Task and Finish Group

The Committee considered a Briefing Note which detailed recommendations from the Complaints Policy and Procedure Task and Finish Group, which was established to review the existing Policy and Procedure to ensure that the process is easy to access and understandable for everyone involved, particularly members of the public.

The Briefing Note detailed the membership of the Task and Finish Group, which was chaired by Councillor N Akhtar. The scoping document for the Group was appended to the Briefing Note.

The Briefing Note indicated that the Task and Finish Group had discussed the following issues:-

- There are unlikely to be savings but better service provision.
- The need to have the right processes before a system can be built.
- Links with Members Casework Management tool to be explored.
- Training for staff to deal with complaints and soft skills to manage engagement with residents.
- Where complaints come in from Members – the need to be kept involved in the process and updated to be built into the process design.
- The possibility of including surveys of complainants to be shared with Members at some point in the future.

The Task and Finish Group had agreed that a renewed Policy and Procedure should include the following:

- Differentiation between contacting the Council, service requests and complaints.
- Some case studies or flow charts as to how a complaint will be handled.

An Appendix to the report detailed annotated comments and amendments made by the Task and Finish Group to the current Policy and Procedure. The Task and Finish Group had also considered a presentation on progress and had discussed the following:-

- The benefits and challenges of the informal resolution stage for complaints and how it has reduced the number of formal complaints by 68%.
- The structure and capacity of the complaints service and the introduction of the new service manager who will start on the 1st of May.

- The areas that still need to be worked on, such as checking the Ombudsman code, creating training and response standards, reporting, and learning from complaints, and reviewing the templates and systems.
- The issues around a single point of contact and potentially violent persons processes and how they can be improved and aligned with data protection and customer service principles.
- The opportunities and implications of exploring Customer Relationship Management systems and how they can support the complaints process and the resident experience.
- The feedback and suggestions from the Task and Finish Group on the draft Policy and Process and how they will be incorporated into the final document.

RESOLVED:-

- 1) **That the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee approves the submission of the following recommendations of the Complaints Policy and Procedure Task and Finish Group to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources:-**
 - a) **That the Complaints Policy and Procedure be amended as proposed by the Task and Finish Group and as detailed in the Appendix to the report.**
 - b) **That timescales for implementation of the electronic complaints system to deal with complaints be identified.**
 - c) **That consideration be given to future strategic planning opportunities, including the budgetary implications for savings from an alternative Customer Relations Manager system.**
- 2) **That a report on progress on the recommendations made to the Cabinet Member as detailed above be added to the Committee's Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2024-25.**

58. Rebuilding Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Services

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, which would be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 16 April, and which indicated that the Council is responsible for commissioning drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services. The current contract for this service is due to expire in March 2025.

National policy in relation to drug and alcohol treatment has changed significantly with the launch of the new Drug Strategy "From Harm to Hope" which reinforces the Government's ambition to rebuild treatment services following a decade of disinvestment. The report included a summary of the health needs in Coventry related to drug and alcohol misuse, a summary of the engagement and consultation work carried out and the planned process for re-procurement of drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services. The report indicated that people

misusing drugs and alcohol are among the most vulnerable and socially excluded populations and the contract will directly lead efforts to reduce health inequalities and prioritise engagement with communities affected by addiction.

The report proposed re-procurement of services via an open tendering process and summarised some of the funding stream relevant to the procurement.

The Committee also received a presentation in private relating to the commercially sensitive aspects of the current contract (Minute 61 below refers)

The Committee asked questions, raised concerns and received assurances in relation to a number of issues including:-

- Details of the procurement process and length of contract
- Value of the new contract compared to the current contract
- Whether the resources in the new contract were sufficient to meet current demand
- Whether the new contract would bring an improvement in performance, what would be done differently to what has been done before
- The consultation process and steps taken to engage service users, as well as the on-going dialogue with service users, which forms part of the contract requirements
- Performance data, how Coventry was performing compared to national data, including drug related deaths
- How performance was managed as part of the contract including regular formal and informal meetings, the monitoring of data, KPI's and powers to manage poor performance.
- The wider causes of addiction and prevention and a request for scrutiny to be updated on progress on the Drug and Alcohol Strategy
- The links with mental health services and how different services were working in partnership, including joint training and joint service meetings

RESOLVED that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:-

1) Supports the recommendations to Cabinet as detailed in the report with the following additional recommendation:-

2) That Cabinet's attention is drawn to the following recommendations made to officers:-

- i. That officers consider ways of assuring the consultation process and continue to consult throughout the term of the contract.**
- ii. That officers provide information detailing how the new contract will improve performance, specifically in terms of opiate users >6 years opiate treatment.**
- iii. That the new contract ensures that there is capacity to undertake new and innovative approaches.**

- iv. That officers investigate how best to get feedback from GP's on the effectiveness of treatment.
- v. That officers ensure that data is collected on repeat attendances on treatment programmes.

59. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2023/20246

The Committee considered their Work Programme and outstanding issues for 2023/24.

RESOLVED:-

- 1) That consideration be given to ensuring maximum Member involvement and engagement in Scrutiny during 2024/25
- 2) That the following items be added to the appropriate Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2024/25

**Local Development Plan
Review of external partners**

60. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

Private Business

61. Rebuilding Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Services

Further to Minute 58 above, the Committee considered and noted commercially sensitive information regarding the current contract for Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Services.

62. Any other item of private business

There were no other items of urgent private business.

(Meeting closed at 1.40pm)