

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 17 April 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor R Singh (Chair)
Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor T Jandu
Councillor A Kaur
Councillor J Lepoidevin (Substitute for Councillor R Simpson)
Councillor A Masih
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor B Singh

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

Others by invitation: Paul Michael – CBS Arena - Chair of Destination Coventry
Corin Crane – Chair of Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber
of Commerce
Brian Tilley - Head of Energy Policy and External Affairs, E-ON
Joel Stafford - Green Funded Solutions Business

Employees
(by Service Area):

Law and Governance E Jones, M Salmon

Regeneration and
Economy M Dillow, D Nuttall, R Palmer

Apologies: Councillor F Abbott
Councillor R Simpson

Public Business

22. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

23. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 5th March 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

24. 2024 Tourism Strategy and Destination Management Organisation (DMO) Model

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a presentation and briefing note of the Director of Regeneration and Economy that provided an update on progress in establishing Destination Coventry as a sustainable Destination

Management Organisation (DMO) for the city. It also provided a review and update on activity undertaken by the DMO to promote Coventry as a destination for business and leisure tourism, in support of delivery of the Coventry Tourism Strategy 2019-2023 outcomes. It further provided a review of the recent changes in national and regional tourism infrastructure and requested consideration of the priorities in securing a sustainable DMO and new Tourism Strategy for the City.

The Chair of Destination Coventry and the Chair of Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce attended the meeting for this item.

The presentation and briefing note detailed:

Destination Coventry

- Background
- Headline Aims, Outputs and Impact
- Coventry Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor Data

Coventry Tourism Strategy

- Coventry Tourism Strategy 2019-2023
- Visitor Economy Sector Developments and Coventry Tourism Strategy 2024+

The establishment of Destination Coventry as a proof-of-concept model for a new DMO was anticipated to increase resources for tourism promotion and destination management, thereby creating opportunities to improve service delivery, invest in the City's visitor offer and strengthen the business and leisure tourism economy within the city and its surroundings.

Destination Coventry had successfully secured over £209k of additional private sector investment over the pilot period, to support tourism promotion and destination management. Whilst it should be noted that the model was still in its relative infancy and the development of a longer-term sustainable model was required, the projected success of the DMO and Partnership Local Visitor Economy Partnership model would contribute to sustaining and increasing employment in the tourism and hospitality sectors, creating positive opportunities for local people. This would further promote Coventry as a visitor destination and focus for investment, promoting opportunities for sustainable and inclusive growth in the city, thereby contributing to positive health outcomes for local residents.

In considering the presentation and briefing note, the Board questioned officers, received responses and discussed matters summarised below:

- Increase in visitor numbers – mostly domestic visitor increase. Room rates were higher than they had ever been with hotel occupancy rates between 1-2%
- Collaborative working essential to capture and share data to obtain an economic footprint
- Destination Coventry – DMO commitment to working to ensure that Coventry works as a brand and a destination
- Whole of Warwickshire was included – would provide better outcomes for the whole region
- £107,000 secured from local private sector membership
- Exhibitions/trade industry stands – stand presence generated cash transactions, with some in-kind transactions

- DMO assisted businesses in securing business or signposting them to secure business for their venues
- Data comparison of business support carried out by the Destination Management Organisation against external providers
- 97 active members of Destination Coventry
- DMO support to businesses through the post COVID 'Step back into hospitality' scheme
- Marketing – domestic only marketing for proof of concept. Proof of concept was about getting established as a brand.
- Visit England – Coventry now on the map
- Next 12 months - decide where the best markets were and how to bring in new business. Need to target international events and connect with private sector businesses and also engage with the city's universities
- International market - vision to move into this area
- Current Board was a good mix of private and public sector representatives and meetings were well attended
- Consideration be given to representatives of the city's Universities as members of the Board when the configuration of the Board was reviewed. Warwick University was a patron
- Domestic/Coventry Market - Membership and patronage looked at and included but vision needed to be sustained
- 'In' needs to be determined - what level they come in at and what level of support they need. Diverse range requiring bespoke support for individual needs
- Coventry's cultural and festival offer - starting to gather data
- Look at marketing campaigns of individual organisations to determine how they could be expanded, possibly as a whole offer for visiting the City. Targeted work undertaken with further work planned
- Visitor Guide – available but published/printed at a minimum
- Events diary - a diary of all events in the city too big and difficult to manage however, a major/key events diary could be investigated
- Need to be sensitive about publicising events - experience had shown that, following events publicity, businesses saw an opportunity to market their goods and services at an increased price
- Data collection was an accredited model. There was a range of survey data and a different range of organisations asked to provide data. Data was not managed or analysed by local people
- Taxis and Air B&Bs – interface with them to promote the city. Some training had been provided to Taxi drivers. Further work to be undertaken

Members requested that information be circulated to them regarding: the percentage of business support carried out by the Destination Management Organisation compared to external provider support; details of the 97 active members of Destination Coventry; details of the businesses, on a Ward-by-Ward basis, that received support through the post COVID 'Step Back into Hospitality' Scheme; and a copy of the presentation slides. They further requested that consideration be given to representatives of the city's Universities as members of the Board when the configuration of the Board was reviewed.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the content of the briefing note and presentation.

25. Domestic Retrofit - Update

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a presentation and briefing note of the Director of Regeneration and Economy that provided progress of the Council's domestic retrofit programmes.

The presentation and briefing note detailed:

- Domestic Retrofit overview
- Retrofit Current Activity
- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) 2
- Home Upgrade Grant 2
- Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 4
- Local Authority Delivery 3
- Retrofit Challenges
- Customer take-up (engagement)
- Grant Funding and Finance
- Accuracy of Data to Target Properties
- Complex and Inflexible Eligibility Criteria
- Supply Chain and Skills Shortages
- Housing Stock and Planning
- Retrofit Opportunities
- Customer Engagement
- Retrofit Funding
- Innovation
- Policy
- Skills
- Next Steps

Fuel Poverty disproportionately affected householders who were vulnerable and on low incomes, and particularly those with ill-health or disabilities. Increasing the capacity of funding available to support these residents was of vital importance.

Most of these programmes specifically supported those residents suffering from fuel poverty or those on low incomes. The improvement of energy efficiency to their homes could help to reduce energy bills, help residents to keep their homes warmer, reduce potential for mould and damp growth, and ultimately help residents to stay healthier.

In considering the presentation and briefing note, the Board asked questions and received responses on the matters summarised below:

- Eligibility criteria – financial products, 'Green Finance' was being pursued with banks to support those not eligible for the scheme with offers that were affordable/manageable
- Specific loft and cavity wall insulation schemes were available and open to all, but these were not very well promoted/offered by suppliers

- Affordability – examples of schemes in the Northwest of the country that offered energy efficiency measures with no up-front costs. Service based contract payable over a number of years/fixed-term
- Information on retrofit programmes/energy efficiency measures were available through direct mail, libraries, community centres and churches
- Important to get message out - consideration to be given to the use of local radio channels to promote the programmes/measures available to residents.
- Members to be supplied with information on the measures available, including the list of accredited traders for the works, that they could provide to residents to sign post them to the retrofit programmes
- 141 properties across the city had been supported with energy efficiency measures – variety of works undertaken
- Progress of those who had undertaken the 2-week retrofitting course
- Net zero carbon footprint – achievable with relevant Government funding support
- Once the Net Zero Neighbourhood Project was completed, investigate the preparation of a city-wide retrofit business case
- Energy suppliers had a major role in supporting homeowners to achieve energy efficiency measures – provision of a service over a long term that would enable residents to acquire a retrofit at an affordable monthly amount on their energy bills
- Development of a green financial product between authorities being investigated - Wolverhampton, Coventry and Birmingham
- Need a long-term programme with achievable outcomes - supply chain in place, and skills set available
- Consideration currently being given to establish an Energy Masterplan for the City for the next 15 years
- Very important scheme, impacts were huge – climate change issues, health issues, more manageable energy bills for residents
- EON energy support - last winter a reduced fuel costs scheme was offered to those with a health condition and/or on a low income
- Clarity of pathway for developing skills – consider getting message out to schools
- Developing skills and providing training for the retrofit trade was important but consideration needed to be given to the appropriate time to promote the trade. Once there was demand for the work city-wide/regionally/nationally, there would be greater employment opportunities.

Members requested that: they be supplied with information on retrofit programmes/energy efficiency measures available, including the list of accredited traders for the works, that they could provide to residents; details, on a Ward-by-Ward basis, including what specific works had been carried out, for the 141 properties across the city that have been supported with energy efficiency measures, be circulated to them; and a copy of the presentation slides be circulated to them. They further requested that: officers investigate the progress of those who had undertaken the 2-week retrofitting course; officers consider the use of local radio channels to promote retrofit programmes/energy efficiency measures available to residents; and that once the Net Zero Neighbourhood Project was completed, officers investigate the preparation of a city-wide retrofit business case.

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

- 1) Notes the content of the briefing note.**
- 2) Agrees to receive further updates regarding the overall progress of the domestic retrofit programmes across the city.**

26. Work Programme 2023/24

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator, that detailed items that had been considered by the Board during the Municipal Year 2023/24 and the proposed issues to be included on the Board's Work Programme for 2024/25.

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

- 1) Notes the issues considered at meeting of the Board for the Municipal Year 2023/2024 and the proposed issues to be included on the Board's Work Programme for 2024/25.**
- 2) Requests that updates on the following be added to the Board's Work Programme for 2024/25:**
 - a) Green Park**
 - b) City Centre South**
 - c) Very Light Rail**

27. 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 5.20 pm)