

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 11.00 am on
Wednesday, 25 September 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor G Lloyd (Chair)
Councillor M Ali
Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor K Maton (Substitute for Councillor L Kelly)
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor C Miks
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor R Lakha (Substitute for Councillor R Singh)
Councillor R Thay (Substitute for Councillor CE Thomas)

Other Members Councillor P Akhtar (Deputy Cabinet Member Policing & Equalities)
Councillor G Duggins (Leader)
Councillor S Gray

Employees (by Service Area):

Chief Executive: J Nugent

Finance & Resources: B Hastie

Law and Governance: Joy Adams, D Blackburn, A Chowns, E Jones, L Nagle, C Taylor

Public Health and Wellbeing: V de Souza

Regeneration and Economy: A Williams

Others in Attendance: DI Marston and PI Stobbart, West Midlands Police

Apologies Councillors AS Khan, L Kelly, R Singh and CE Thomas

Public Business

30. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

31. One Coventry Plan Bi-Annual Performance Report (April 2023-March 2024)

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing regarding the One Coventry Bi-Annual Performance Report 2023 – March 2024. The Committee noted that the report would also be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 1 October 2024.

The report indicated that the One Coventry approach helped to shape the way the Council worked with its partners to improve the city and improve people's lives. It included the Council's vision and priorities, new ways of working, and core areas of activity to deliver the One Coventry Plan objectives, key strategies, and approaches. A One Coventry approach put the needs of the communities at the heart of the continued vision to improve the health and wellbeing of Coventry's residents.

The last performance report was presented to all Members in February 2024, and it was agreed that performance reporting should be twice yearly going forward. This increased frequency was to provide members, partners and residents with timelier assurance that progress was being made towards the priorities in the One Coventry Plan, and an opportunity to understand more quickly if envisioned impact was not being realised and to review plans accordingly. The data within the report was from April 2023- March 2024 and the next annual report would include data for the year Oct 2023-Sept 2024 and presented in Jan 2025, repeating this bi-annual pattern going forward.

For each objective within the One Coventry Plan, the report set out the trends, actions taken, and performance metrics to provide an assessment of the progress made against previous years and to benchmark against other places. The report also included case studies to capture impacts that were less easy to measure numerically.

The Leader, Councillor G Duggins, welcomed the One Coventry Plan Bi-Annual Performance Report (April 2023 – March 2024) advising this was a good guide to Council's performance and recommended Members focus on the indicators that were not progressing.

The Committee considered the report and asked questions, sought assurances and made comments on a number of issues which were to be reported to the Cabinet meeting to be held on 1 October 2024, as follows:

- The recent collapse of construction firm ISG and what the future plans were for delivery of the Cultural Gateway.
- National data relating to the proportion of neighbourhoods amongst the 10% most deprived in England had not been recently updated. In Coventry, this metric was marked by health and inequalities.
- The decrease in male life expectancy was a national trend however, Council's Marmot approach had been refocused and would be monitored to measure impact.
- Council worked closely with the Marmot team to reduce health inequalities in the city.
- Digital exclusion measures were being developed along with measures for traffic control and the impact on congestion and air quality.
- Council tax end of year collection rate figures had decreased and were being monitored.
- The launch of the Job Shop had seen a positive uptake in employment. An increase in the unemployment rate should improve as the city benefitted from further investment.
- Consultation on the One Coventry Plan was widespread across the city.

- Information on the Household Support Fund was distributed through Customer Services and the community and voluntary sector across the city. Software was in place which targeted eligible residents and this was currently being used to target pensioners eligible for pension credit.
- The average speed enforcement programme was successful. Revenue was collected by the Government.
- The leadership team were actively involved in looking into staff sickness rates and spend on agency staff with a view to it being more tightly managed.

Members requested the following:

- A statement circulated to all Members regarding the recent collapse of ISG.
- Officers to investigate how the City's Marmot status could help increase life expectancy.
- Officers to develop a meaningful indicator for traffic control and impact on congestion and air quality.
- Metrics to be addressed when the Climate Change Strategy comes to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, including carbon emissions and council staff inequalities.
- Information to be circulated to Members regarding the UK resettlement scheme and migrant/asylum seekers access to social housing.
- Future reports to be more accessible including standard size 12 font.
- Further comparative information to be built into future reports.
- The effectiveness of Coventry being a Marmot city to be brought back to Members.
- Ward Councillors to be consulted regarding tree planting and residents to be notified.
- Officers to investigate and build into the report how to track direct emissions and carbon footprint for the city.
- Trends to be reported in future reports including Council staff sickness levels and cycling infrastructure.

Councillor Ridley requested a written response regarding Council acceptance of donations of trees.

Following discussion, the Committee highlighted a number of issues to be added to the Scrutiny Board's Work Programmes for 2024/25.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1. Notes the Council's performance as set out in the performance report.**
- 2. Notes that there were no comments/issues to raise with Cabinet.**

32. Proposed Creation of a City-Wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)

The Committee considered a report of the Community Safety Officer regarding the proposed creation of a city-wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). The previous Order had expired. The new PSPO had conditions within it to address the unauthorised use of offroad motor bikes and other specifically mechanically

propelled vehicles (MPV) in the city and it would also seek to control the drinking of alcohol in public places.

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, local authorities must carry out a statutory consultation before implementing a PSPO. A period of public consultation had taken place between 22 July and 19 August 2024.

The Committee noted that the report would also be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 1 October 2024.

Members noted that the Council could only make a PSPO when it was satisfied on reasonable grounds that the activities carried out or likely to be carried out in a public place had a detrimental effect on the quality of life in the area and were persistent, continuing and unreasonable. The Council would also need to be satisfied that the restrictions imposed were justified.

Within Coventry, the previous citywide PSPO addressed the drinking of alcohol in public places, consumption/possession of Nitrous Oxide canisters and nuisance use of MPV.

Under the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, local authorities were required to review the conditions of the Order before renewing the Order.

The previous Order had a provision regarding Nitrous Oxide however, there had recently been a change in national legislation and the use and possession of Nitrous Oxide for anti-social purposes was now a criminal offence and as such, there was no need to make a provision in this Order.

The creation of the city-wide PSPO provided for the continued use of powers to address the following issues in Coventry: Public consumption of alcohol and the use of off-road motorbikes. It was recognised that both behaviours in public spaces were closely linked with anti-social behaviour. The Order would allow authorised officers to order persons consuming alcohol in public places to stop drinking and also permit them to confiscate or dispose of cans or bottles. The Order would also allow individuals to be challenged when consuming alcohol without the need for officers to wait for an incident to intervene. Specific MPV usage, which includes off road motorbikes were a common problem across the city and this Order would allow people to be challenged for just being in possession of their bikes in public areas.

The Council had undertaken a statutory consultation with the Local Chief of Police, the Police Crime Commissioner, owners and occupiers of land within the affected area where reasonably practicable and appropriate community representatives. The response from West Midlands Police had been previously circulated. The Police and Crime Commissioner was consulted but at the time of publishing this report, a response had not been received. The response had now been received and was tabled at the meeting.

A city-wide 4 week consultation had commenced on 22 July 2024. 294 responses had been received with a large percentage of respondents believing public drinking and off road bikes were issues in the city and over 90% supported the creation of the Order to give officers powers to address them.

The Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing & Equalities, Councillor P Akhtar welcomed the proposed creation of a City-Wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), including the work of the West Midlands Police and Community Safety Officers in the scheme. He emphasised the scheme was about early intervention, improving safety and the quality of life for the residents of Coventry and stressed the importance of reporting offences to the police or to community safety officers.

A comprehensive presentation at the meeting was provided by officers. An Addendum to Appendix 3, Responses from Key Partners was tabled at the meeting.

The Committee considered the PSPO report, asked questions, sought assurances and made comments on a number of issues which were also to be reported to the Cabinet meeting to be held on 1 October 2024 as follows:

- Early intervention and intelligence led targeted responses used less resources and reduced pressure on other services.
- The expiry of the PSPO had seen a decline in good behaviour in the city centre, however, with the new Order in place, an improvement would be seen along with access to help and support.
- Breaches of the Order would be enforced by fixed penalty notices and recording of incidents was undertaken.
- Operation Prosperity was a West Midlands Police and local partner targeted operation in Coventry which identified and held users of illegal e-bikes accountable.
- Partnership working with Trading Standards and others was helping with early intervention in combatting Nitrous Oxide usage.
- The PSPO would be immediately enforceable once approved and recent changes in legislation mentioned in the King's speech would make it easier for local authorities to bring in PSPO's.
- Residents supported the PSPO; shown in the consultation results.
- Frequent monitoring and reporting around the PSPO was in place.
- The Community Safety Plan, currently out for consultation, covered behaviour not included in the PSPO, including rehabilitation of offenders, knife crime and parking.

Following discussion, the Committee highlighted a number of issues to be added to the Scrutiny Board's Work Programmes for 2024/25.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked officers from West Midlands Police and council officers for all their work in this regard and for their attendance at the meeting.

Members requested the following:

- Officers to liaise with public health and education colleagues regarding the supply and use of Nitrous Oxide.
- The PSPO be brought back to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee prior to expiry.
- Data regarding e-bike confiscation in Operation Prosperity to be provided.

RESOLVED:-

- 1. That the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee noted the report and the Addendum to Appendix 3, circulated at the meeting, and had no comments or recommendations for Cabinet at their meeting on 1st October 2024.**

33. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2024/2025

Further to Minutes 31 and 32 above, it was noted that the following items would be added to the following Scrutiny Board's Work Programmes:-

- SB4 – National Highways Satisfaction Survey and rehabilitation of reoffenders (PSPO)
- SB1 – Increased use of agency staff (T&F group) and digital exclusion (26 March 2025)
- SB5 – Increasing life expectancy in Coventry
- Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee – Coventry City Council Transformation Programme
- Fly tipping (maximising fines) to be prioritised.

RESOLVED:-

- 1) That the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee notes and approves the Work Programme and Outstanding Issues for 2024/25.**
- 2) That the issues above be included in the Work Programme for the relevant Scrutiny Boards and Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.**

34. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 1.20 pm)