

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 11.00 am on
Wednesday, 18 December 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor G Lloyd (Chair)

Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor Lakha (Sub for Councillor Jobbar for part of the meeting)
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor C Miks
Councillor R Singh
Councillor CE Thomas

Other Members:

Councillor S Agboola (Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing and Equalities)
Councillor N Akhtar (Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities)
Councillor P Akhtar (Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities)
Councillor S Gray
Councillor J McNicholas

Other Present:

Councillor A Burrow, Chair, West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
J Hughes, West Midlands Combined Authority)
L Shoaf (Chief Executive, West Midlands Combined Authority)

Chief Inspector G Hamir, West Midlands Police

Employees (by Directorate):

City Services and Commercial R Back, C Eggington and C Styles

Law and Governance: J Adams, S Bennett, A Chowns and G Holmes

Apologies: Councillors M Ali and L Kelly, G Ridley, A Tucker

Public Business

60. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

61. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 31 October and 14 and 20 November, 2024 were agreed and signed as true records.

There were no matters arising.

62. West Midlands Combined Authority Update

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report, together with a detailed presentation and video at the meeting, which provided a high-level summary of the structure and corporate performance of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) for the financial year 2023/24 and 2024/25. Laura Shoaf (Chief Executive of the WMCA), James Hughes and Councillor Andrew Burrow, Chair of the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee attended for consideration of this item.

The presentation covered:-

- What is the WMCA
- Details of the Mayor and Mayoral Office and the Executive Leadership Team
- The key priorities of the WMCA:-
 - Jobs for everyone
 - Homes for everyone
 - Growth for everyone
 - Journeys for everyone
- How the WMCA achieves more when working in a more integrated way which had led to the launch of #BetterConnected Strategy:-
- The People and Culture Strategy which aims to:-
 - Create an agile, curious and learning organisation
 - Provide the environment to help everyone bring their best energy and thrive
 - Think and act as “One team WMCA” aligned to the overall purpose, values and strategy
- A review of the Financial Year 2023/24 and 2024/25:-
 - Annual Business Plans 2023/24 and 2024/25
 - Financial Budget 2023/24 and 2024/25
- Key achievements 2023/24
- Lookahead 2024/25
- How the WMCA work with Coventry City Council

The Committee also considered the WMCA Scrutiny and Audit Annual Report 2023/24.

Members asked questions, sought assurances and information and commented on a number of issues, including:-

- The possible future franchising of bus services, how this could lead to improvements in service and the role of the WMCA in this

- Liaison between the WMCA and Coventry City Council on disability and equality issues, particularly in relation to developing Disability and Equality Charters in the West Midlands
- How free bus passes operate in the West Midlands
- The possible impact on the WMCA of the recently published White Paper on Local Government (Its was noted that the Chief Executive of the WMCA would shortly be circulating a summary of the White Paper to all Councillors)
- Attendance at meetings of the WMCA
- The Governance and decision making arrangements of the WMCA
- The funding arrangements for the WMCA and how the distribution of money to the constituent Councils is done via grants
- The continuing lobbying by the WMCA for fair and appropriate funding

Laura Shoaf, James Hughes and Councillor Burrow were thanked for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

RESOLVED that the West Midlands Combined Authority corporate update and the Scrutiny and Audit Annual Report 2024/24 be received and noted.

63. Regulation 19 Local Plan

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Director of City Services and Commercial, together with a detailed presentation at the meeting, regarding the review of the Local Plan. The report had been considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 14 December, 2024 (Minute 47 refers) and would be considered by Council on 14 January, 2025 where approval would be sought to undertake a Regulation 19 stage for a 6 week publication period as part of the review. The report outlined the responses received from the Regulation 18 consultation which had been used to inform the development of the Regulation Plan.

The presentation covered:-

- The Local Plan Review – Progress and Next Steps
- Process and practicalities
- Land Banking and stalled sites
- Key principles:-
 - Housing land supply
 - Employment land supply
 - Affordable housing delivery
 - New housing allocations
 - Purpose built student accommodation
 - Space standards/Design codes
 - Open space
 - Greenbelt
 - Tackling climate change
 - Development density
 - Parking standards for new development

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

- Clarification of the new housing allocation figures
- Projected population figures for Coventry and assurances regarding their accuracy
- The new energy efficiency in homes standards were welcomed.
- Land banking, locally and nationally
- Ensuring that new houses are capable of being adapted in the future and are therefore “homes for life” (It was noted that introducing standards in relation to this were proposed in the new Plan)
- Clarification of the requirements in relation to affordable housing and the inclusion of requirements for larger affordable family homes
- The links between the proposed new Plan and a number of existing Council Policies and Strategies (including the Climate Change Strategy and Greenspaces Strategy) were noted
- The inclusion of a requirement for electric charging points for new homes was noted

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee note the information in the report and:-

- 1) Request that a joint meeting of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) and the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) be arranged to consider the Space Standards/Design Codes.**
- 2) Request that the outcome of the Regulation 19 be consultation be considered by the Committee in due course.**

64. Community Safety Plan 2024-27

Further to Minute 13/24, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a Briefing Note of the Director of Law and Governance which provided an update on the consultation process to develop the Community Safety Partnership Plan and seeking the Committee’s contributions to shape the final Plan.

Chief Inspector Godhania Hamir, West Midlands Police, attended the meeting and was welcomed by the Committee.

The Briefing Note indicated that Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) are required to develop an overarching Community Safety Partnership Plan under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Plan provides an overview of the work and priority areas that fall under the responsibility of the CSP. The Plan is intended to focus upon those issues of most concern to residents, that cause the most harm to communities and require a coordinated approach to deliver lasting change.

A 12 week public consultation period on the development of the Plan had commenced on 10 July, 2024. A list of stakeholders invited to participate in the

consultation was appended to the report. Workshops were also held by sub-groups of the Police and Crime Board to obtain the views of partners and other stakeholders. A summary of the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC) priorities was also appended to the report.

The Briefing Note detailed the outcome of the 696 responses received from the Council's consultation (Crime Survey) and indicated that one of the main emerging themes is that residents generally feel safer during the daytime than at night in Coventry. Other emerging key issues were concerns with Environmental Anti Social Behaviour (ASB), ASB, vehicle crime and drug offences.

Workshops were undertaken with stakeholders and various partners who reviewed the findings of the Strategic Assessment and gave their professional perspective on what considerations should be in the Community Safety Partnership Plan. These workshops were organised in the theme of Place, Victim and Offender. Some of the key themes emerging from these workshops included lack of resources being a challenge and the need to support vulnerable people and protect them from exploitation. The partners felt improvements could be made by improving multi-agency networks, engaging with communities and making it easier to report crime. They also felt that there was a need to provide more information on success stories.

Good practice guidance recommends that Community Safety Partnerships consider various aspects of crime. The primary elements of a crime include the victim, offender, and location. Analysing crime from this perspective assists partners in pooling resources to set priorities and allocate resources effectively to reduce crime and disorder in their area. The Plan therefore addresses the following three key themes:

- The reduction of Offending, Re-Offending and Serious Organised Crime:
- Public Place Safety and Reassurance; and
- Tackling Exploitation and Protecting Victims of Crime.

It is proposed that under these themes, a range of priorities will be developed based on the feedback from the consultation.

Feedback was sought from the Committee to further develop the Plan. A survey has also been developed for Members to complete so that the results can be integrated into the Plan, a copy of which was appended to the report. The Committee noted that the full set of results and recommendations for the Plan will be submitted to Cabinet on the 18th March 2025.

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

- The inclusion of faith groups in the list of stakeholders. It was noted that consultation with the Faith Group Alliance and Street Pastors had taken place
- Work undertaken with a range of communities was welcomed
- Police resources in Coventry, including deployment of officers in the city centre
- Priorities in the City, particularly in relation to Domestic Abuse and violence against women and girls

- Parking on kerbs
- Work undertaken in relation to ensuring the consultation was far reaching, and ways this may be improved in the future, including consulting with the BID and local businesses outside of the city centre

Chief Inspector Hamir was thanked for his attendance and contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:-

- 1) Note the consultation questions and responses provided at Appendix 3.**
- 2) Note that all Members will be provided with an opportunity to respond and contribute to the consultation process.**
- 3) Note that Cabinet will consider the Plan at their meeting on the 18th March 2025.**
- 4) Request that that future consultation includes the BID and businesses outside of the city centre.**

65. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2024/25

The Committee considered and noted their Work Programme and outstanding issues for 2024/25.

66. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 2.05 pm)