

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 27 November 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor R Singh (Chair)
Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor T Jandu
Councillor A Kaur
Councillor R Lakha (substitute for Councillor T Khan)
Councillor B Singh
Councillor D Toulson

Other Members Councillor J O'Boyle (Cabinet Member for Jobs Economy and Climate Change)
Councillor K Sandhu (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills)

Employees (by Service Area):

Regeneration and Economy K Mawby, P Singh, G Smailes, S Weir

Law and Governance G Holmes, E Jones

Apologies: Councillor F Abbott
Councillor T Khan

Public Business

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

8. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

9. Economic Development and Skills Strategies Progress Report

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered a report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy, which provided an update on progress achieved since the Strategies were adopted.

a) Skills Strategy

The Board received a presentation introduced by the Cabinet for Education and Skills, that supported the progress detailed in the report, highlighting the three Strategic Ambitions, the shared goals with the Economic

Development Strategy and the eight priority areas. The presentation also highlighted key activity and achievements to date, as well as key current activity for 2024-25

In considering the report and a presentation by officers, the Board asked questions and received responses on matters in the following areas:

- Detail on Universal Credit claimants in work in Coventry compared to the West Midlands Combined Authority members, and other local authorities in the wider region.
- Details on the Gatsby benchmarking measures for schools careers advice.
- The Danish model of job rotation being piloted, and how it could create progression opportunities within an organisation.
- What work had been done and strategies being planned to retain graduates in the city, including better data collection, work with the universities and marketing the city better.
- How the wider offer from the city, including housing, perception of safety and entertainment offer was also important in retaining graduates in the city, as well as career opportunities.
- How Coventry compared better with other cities in the West Midlands for NEET data as well as nationally.
- Partnership work with employers through the job shop to showcase opportunities
- The opportunities and risks offered by AI and work being done to maximise skills in this area.
- Access to benchmarking data to track progress over time.

b) Economic Development Strategy

The Board received a presentation introduced by the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy and Climate Change, that supported the progress detailed in the report, highlighting the eight priorities, as well as work being delivered on business support and net zero, foreign direct investment, the Investment Zone identified on the outskirts of Coventry, and work to maximise the social value from key development projects in the city.

In considering the report and a presentation by officers, the Board asked questions and received responses on matters in the following areas:

- That the energy efficiency audits for businesses, includes retail, but not student accommodation.
- Whether the social value work is included as part of the Council resolution to include care experienced as a protected.
- The work with partners to deliver and sign-post businesses for energy efficiency audits
- The potential to retain business rates from Green Power Park regionally as part of the Investment Zone
- The potential for the Health Determinants Research Collaborative to identify what works in reducing health inequalities.
- The Coventry is good at spending grant allocations, benefitting from others underspend
- Whether higher level apprenticeships are being taken up by Coventry students.

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

- 1) Agrees the recommendations in the report.**
- 2) Agrees that a further progress report be added to the Work Programme for 2025/26, which will detail progress against benchmarks, as well as work delivered to retain graduates in the city.**

10. Work Programme 2024/25

The Business, Economy, and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that detailed issues on the Board's Work Programme for meetings of the Board for 2024/25.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) notes the issues on the Board's Work Programme for 2024/25 and that 18th December meeting had been re-scheduled to 5th February 2025 to enable the Board to have an input into the WMCA Bus Franchising Consultation.

11. 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: 4.00pm)