

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)**  
**held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 11 July 2018**

Present:

Members:                           Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)  
                                          Councillor R Ali  
                                          Councillor R Bailey  
                                          Councillor Clifford (substitute for Councillor Walsh)  
                                          Councillor T Khan  
                                          Councillor K Sandhu  
                                          Councillor T Sawdon  
                                          Councillor H Sweet  
                                          Councillor R Thay

Other Members:                   Councillor R Lakha, Deputy Cabinet Member for City Services

Officers by Directorate:

Place:                               S Bennett, C Hickin, G Holmes, G Hood, A Walster

Apologies                         Councillors S Walsh and J Innes

## **Public Business**

### **1.       Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2.       Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 April, 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

### **3.       Update on Changes to Waste Collection Services**

The Scrutiny Board considered a presentation of the Deputy Chief Executive, Place, which provided performance data following the introduction of an alternate weekly collection for waste in the City that was introduced in September, 2017.

The presentation covered:-

- The alternate weekly collections:-

#### **Week 1**

- Fortnightly residual waste collections – Reduction from 17 to 12 collections rounds

## **Week 2**

- Fortnightly comingled recycling – Increase from 9 to 10 collection rounds
- Fortnightly food and garden waste across the year.
- Performance data for:-
  - Residual Waste (which had seen a 17% reduction in tonnage collected over the 9 months)
  - Recycling (which had seen a 14% increase in tonnage collected over the 9 months)
  - Food and garden waste (which had seen a 28% increase in tonnage collected over the 9 months)
- Complaints profile during the service changes (which were currently lower than before the introduction of the new service)

The Scrutiny Board were informed of investigations currently taking place to improve the service with the increased use of ICT which would enable live information to be provided in relation to missed bin collections etc.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on aspects of the new service including:-

- Action taken in relation to inconsiderate parking which prevents refuse vehicles from accessing properties
- Weight restriction on refuse vehicles
- How missed collections are logged and rescheduled
- The current technology being used in refuse vehicles and steps being taken to improve it's use
- Impact on the service of an ageing population

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board note the update on changes to the waste collection service following the introduction of alternate weekly collections and request that a further update be provided in 9-12 months time.**

#### **4. Unauthorised Encampments**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive, Place, which provided an overview of unauthorised encampments in the City. In recent years, various areas of the City have experienced regular unauthorised encampments, some of which have caused concern, uncertainty, disruption and, on occasions, conflict locally.

Unauthorised encampments tend to be seasonal in nature and occur between the months of April – September. Peak periods tend to occur locally around the Kenilworth Horse Fair which is held in April and September. Where possible, the Council seeks to protect its land with fortifications, which is a major undertaking, given the variety and number of parcels of land owned by the City Council. An Appendix to the Briefing Note contained details of the number of unauthorised encampments and a further Appendix detailed money invested in site protection, clean-up costs and eviction costs.

Addressing the issues arising from such encampments often requires significant resources from the Police and Local Authority. These agencies seek to ensure a positive, coordinated and informed approach to all aspects of management of unauthorised encampments, whether that relates to initial identification of such encampments, making assessments of the needs of persons on site (which is a legal requirement for public bodies), assessing and deciding upon the correct and proportionate course of action and, where necessary, taking enforcement action.

The Briefing Note detailed the 3 following possible courses of action in relation to unauthorised encampments on highways, council owned land or common land:-

- Decision not to evict immediately
- Decision to Evict (Local Authority Powers)
- Decision to Evict (Police Powers)

In determining the course of action, a balancing exercise is undertaken between the rights of those encamped, the rights of the landowner, the rights of those lawfully entitled to use the land and the rights of the local community.

In relation to practice elsewhere in the region, in 2017, Sandwell MBC created a purpose built transit site for the travelling community. This action was accompanied by court injunctions prohibiting unauthorised encampments at 17 specific sites in their borough, which has been subsequently increased to a whole borough court injunction. In the event of an unauthorised encampment, the Police have agreed to use their powers under s.62 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, to immediately evict the unauthorised campers and direct them to the transit site. To date, it has not been necessary for the Police to use these powers in Sandwell.

This had had an impact on neighbouring local authorities. Wolverhampton MBC has seen a 24% increase in unauthorised encampments in their area. Wolverhampton have subsequently identified an area for their own transit site and are proceeding with this course of action. It is likely that other local authorities in this area will follow suit.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on aspects of the Briefing Note including:-

- Issues relating to the Travellers site at Siskin Drive
- Defences used at different sites in the City and their effectiveness
- Action taken once an encampment takes place and information

- provided to Ward Councillors in relation to this
- Clean up operations, particularly in relation to children's play areas
  - The possibility of a transit site in Coventry

**RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) notes the contents of the Briefing Note and:-**

- 1) Endorses the actions taken by officers to protect land owned by the City Council and deal with unauthorised encampments**
- 2) Requests that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities be informed of the Scrutiny Board's support for exploring the possibility of establishing a transit site in Coventry and that any proposals relating to this be considered by Scrutiny.**

**5. Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2018/19**

The Scrutiny Board considered their Work Programme for 2018/19 and identified the following items for future consideration:-

Parking enforcement, speed cameras and city centre parking- October meeting

Public toilets – December meeting

Review of residents parking scheme – future meeting

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board's Work Programme be updated to incorporate the issues identified above.**

**6. Any other items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.30 pm)