



Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)

Time and Date

10.00 am on Thursday, 23 March, 2023

Place

Committee Room 3, Council House, Coventry

Public Business

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)
 - a) To agree the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 February, 2023
 - b) Matters arising
4. **School Streets** (Pages 9 - 12)

Briefing Note of the Director of Transportation and Highways
5. **Outstanding Issues and Work Programme for 2022/23** (Pages 13 - 16)

Report of the Chief Legal Officer
6. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

Julie Newman, Chief Legal Officer, Council House, Coventry

Wednesday, 15 March 2023

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Suzanne Bennett, Email: suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillors S Agboola, R Bailey, L Bigham (Chair), J Gardiner, G Hayre, M Heaven, A Hopkins, R Singh, and R Thay

By invitation Councillors P Hetheron, G Lloyd

Public Access

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Suzanne Bennett,**Email: suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk**

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 9 February 2023

Present:

Members: Councillor L Bigham (Chair)
 Councillor S Agboola
 Councillor R Bailey
 Councillor J Gardiner
 Councillor M Heaven
 Councillor A Hopkins
 Councillor R Singh
 Councillor R Thay

Other Members: Councillor P Hetherton, Cabinet Member for City Services

 Councillor D Welsh, Cabinet Member for Housing and
 Communities

Employees (by Service Area):

Environmental Services C Hickin, M McHugh
Law and Governance S Bennett, V Castree
Regulatory Services D Blackburn, A Chowns
Waste Services S Elliott

Apologies: Councillors G Hayre and G Lloyd

Public Business

27. Death of Council Employee

The Chair, Councillor L Bigham, referred to the sad recent death in service of one of the Senior Crew Members in Waste Services.

The Scrutiny Board stood for a Minute's silence as a mark of respect.

28. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

29. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December, 2022 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

30. **Empty Dwellings**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note which provided an update on progress in dealing with empty dwellings following the approval of the Empty Dwellings Strategy in August 2021, with the main aim of reducing the number of long-term empty dwellings in Coventry to a practical minimum.

A long term empty dwelling is considered to be any property that has been empty for six months or more. A number of actions have now been completed within the Strategy and a presentation at the meeting updated the Scrutiny Board on progress made to date, together with information in relation to powers available to the Council to deal with empty properties.

The presentation covered:-

- The three main objectives of the Strategy:-
 - Objective 1 – promote a range of advice, assistance and support and develop new solutions
 - Objective 2 – use enforcement action to bring long term problematic empty dwellings back into use
 - Objective 3 – better understanding why dwellings are being left empty and where possible prevent dwellings from becoming empty for long periods of time

- The City Council's approach:-
 - Three phases leading up to formal action
 - Phase 1 – work with the owner to identify options and find a solution
 - No satisfactory progress – case will progress to phase 2 (Informal warning)
 - Subject to regular environmental crime and ASB – skip phase 2 and move to phase 3 (formal action)/ owner of a property is untraceable or demonstrates an unwillingness to work with the Council

 - The Council will seek to recover all costs where possible
 - Extent of enforcement determined by the resources available to fund both the revenue and capital elements
 - Prior to enforcement, look at all options available legally and within available resources to ensure not being subjected to unnecessary risk

- Action Plans for dealing with empty properties

- Work undertaken so far including:-
 - Identifying 300+ cases to develop an empty dwellings property database

- Identified 32 priority case – targeting 4 for potential insolvency action or enforced sale; 6 potential Compulsory Purchase Order action; 22 requiring proactive enforcement
 - Targeted one long term problematic case with Demolition Order/CPO action
 - During 2022, brought 33 properties back into use
- Enforcement powers available to the Council including:-
 - General enforcement powers
 - Enforced sale
 - Compulsory Purchase Orders
 - Empty Dwelling Management Orders

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

- Noting that the Strategy did not cover empty commercial properties
- Assurances in relation to defining dwellings as empty after a six month period and ensuring that any action taken is applied proportionality, noting that each case is treated individually and on its own merit
- Sources of information used to identify empty properties, including Council tax information
- Assurances in relation to advice and support given to home owners
- The situation in relation to home owners who live abroad
- Difficulties in relation to applying timeframes to dealing with each case due to the potential complexities involved

The officers were thanked for the comprehensive presentation and all the work carried out in this regard.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board:-

- 1) Notes the current position and the situation regarding funding constraints**
- 2) Supports and welcomes the co-ordinated response to managing empty dwellings in the City**
- 3) Requests that an update on progress and outcomes achieved in relation to long term empty dwellings be included on the Work Programme for 2023/24**
- 4) Requests that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities considers reviewing the wording of the Empty Dwellings Strategy to provide reassurance to residents that the Policy is applied proportionality and the case studies as to how the Policy is applied are appended to the Policy**

31. **Update on the Recommendations from the Fly-Tipping Task and Finish Group**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note, together with a presentation at the meeting, which provided an update on the recommendations identified by the Fly-tipping Task and Finish Group which were submitted to the Cabinet Member for City Services in March, 2022.

The Task and Finish Group made 25 recommendations, details of which were contained in an Appendix to the Briefing Note, including progress to date on implementing the recommendations.

The presentation covered fly-tipping trends over a three year period, including total fly tipping incidents; ward figures (including no of fly-tipping incidents per ward); and fly-tipping by types.

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

- Numbers of fly-tipping incidents and how they are recorded and counted
- The disposal of fridges and steps undertaken to ensure these are collected and disposed of properly, together with lobbying undertaken to try and bring a change to legislation so that old fridges are collected when a new fridge is delivered
- An initiative currently being trialled by Birmingham Council – “Bring Tip to You”, which is similar to the “pop up sites” which operate in Coventry
- Work being undertaken in relation to education people regarding disposing of waste properly, including enlisting more volunteers and using the small waste education team in the most efficient and effective way
- “Hot Streets” – which are identified as the streets with the most incidents of fly-tipping and which resources are then focused on
- Collection of side waste, which was now being undertaken (subject to health and safety rules)
- Data collection in relation to fly-tipping and how this is used to target resources
- The use of CCTV cameras in the City and how, in the right location, these can be very effective deterrents. The constraints of using mobile CCTV cameras were noted
- Support and advice given to private land owners when fly-tipping occurs on private land
- Fly- tipping on land owned by Citizen
- Work undertaken by the waste education team
- Fly-tipping fixed penalties
- The assisted bin lift scheme and how this is operated
- Abandoned supermarket trollies and the “Trollywise” app where residents can report abandoned trollies to be collected and returned

The Scrutiny Board thanked officers for the comprehensive presentation and for all of the work undertaken in relation to fly-tipping.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board notes and welcomes the update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Fly-tipping Task and Finish Group.

32. Waste Services Update

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note, together with a presentation at the meeting, which provided an update on Waste Services, including the impact of the industrial action and information on the Christmas waste collection 2022.

The presentation detailed:-

- Industrial Action during 2022:-
 - Extent of action taken
 - Pop up sites provided during the strike
 - The impact of the industrial action on tonnage and recycling rates
 - The financial implication of the industrial action

- Christmas Collection 2022:-
 - Historic information outlining previous difficulties experienced with collections over the Christmas period
 - The new waste services agreement as part of the strike negotiations which means that collections are now provide over the Christmas period, without the need for clear sacks
 - The reduction in complaints received as a result of the new Christmas arrangement
 - The financial implications of the new arrangements

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

- The numbers of drivers who left the authority and the early retirements/voluntary redundancies costs associated with those drivers (it was noted that this information would be circulated to the Scrutiny Board)
- The complaints process for members of the public in relation to waste collections (it was noted that this information would be provided to the Scrutiny Board)

REOLVED that the Scrutiny Board notes the update on Waste Services.

33. Outstanding Issues and Work Programme 2022/23

The Scrutiny Board noted their Work Programme for 2022/23.

34. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.30 pm)

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Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)

Date: 23 March 2023

Subject: School Streets

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To consider the use of School Streets to create a safer environment outside schools during entry and exit times at the start and end of the school day and encourage modal shift.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) is recommended to:
 - 1) Note the report and the steps being undertaken to trial the use of School Streets and the proposed School Street programme being undertaken as an 18-month trial in collaboration with Transport for West Midlands.
 - 2) Identify any further recommendations for the Cabinet Member

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 School Streets use Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to restrict motorised traffic using a road within school drop off/pick up times, creating a pedestrian and cycle zone for that time period.
- 3.2 The proposed School Streets programme is a collaborative initiative between Coventry City Council and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM); and is funded through the Walking and Cycling Programme. School Streets aim to minimise the negative effects of motorised traffic at school opening and closing times by reducing the vehicles that can access specific roads around the school at these times. The School Streets scheme has numerous road safety benefits and secondary benefits include a reduction in air pollution and an increase in walking and cycling, helping to create a healthier and safer place for children and young people.
- 3.3 Residents are still permitted to access/egress their property during the times of the restriction using a permit system. Access is permitted at all times for emergency services.
- 3.4 The proposed School Streets will be introduced using Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders, these differ slightly from traditional TROs as they provide an opportunity to see how the scheme works for a period of up to 18 months, allowing monitoring and assessment to be undertaken before a final decision is made whether they should be made permanent. The first 6 months of operation are also an objection

period, allowing parents, residents, drivers etc to see how the scheme works before making comments or objections.

- 3.5 Coventry City Council is trialling School Streets at five locations.
- 3.6 The first School Street scheme has recently been installed in the Knights Templar Way Area (Templars Primary School). This became operational on 27th February 2023. This was funded separately and not through the Walking and Cycling Programme and was in response to safety concerns raised by local residents and Councillors
- 3.7 Four further School Street schemes are proposed to be funded through the Walking and Cycling Programme. The schools selected for the trial are Stanton Bridge Primary School, Southfields Primary School, Ravensdale Primary School and Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School.
- 3.8 Initiatives such as School Streets or Low Traffic Neighbourhoods aim to reduce the reliance on motorised vehicles. They are residential areas where a variety of tools are used to significantly reduce traffic levels and to create a more comfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.9 Reducing the reliance on car travel, we will also significantly improve conditions to encourage more people to walk and cycle, as well as introducing new forms of micromobility. We will seek to do this in an inclusive way, ensuring that areas are designed to be accessible to everyone.
- 3.10 School Streets typically see changes in walking levels of 3-11% after intervention and Park and Stride increases to between 3-13%. Evidence undertaken by Sustrans demonstrates that School Streets mainly show drops in traffic volumes with only some displacement. There is very low risk of large levels of traffic displacement.
- 3.11 To achieve a successful School Street project, we have identified areas where there is a strong appetite for these measures following issues raised by the school and local residents, it is proposed to design the schemes collaboratively with the school and residents.

4 School Streets in Collaboration with TfWM

- 4.1 The proposed School Streets programme consisting of Stanton Bridge Primary School, Southfields Primary School, Ravensdale Primary School and Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School is a collaborative initiative between Coventry City Council and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM); and is funded through the Walking and Cycling Programme.
- 4.2 School Streets have been implemented across the UK, including the West Midlands; including 23 School Streets already installed across Birmingham, Walsall, and Solihull. The TfWM collaboration is the first regional cross-border school streets programme. The existing initiatives have been installed with relatively good outcomes, including increasing walking and cycling.
- 4.3 Local Authorities submitted a bid for potential School Streets. These have been prioritised to 16 locations, to be delivered by September 2023, based on a number of criteria including, level of school/local political support, links to LCWIP/cycling and walking infrastructure and existing framework to promote School Streets. Local authorities needed to demonstrate they had a high-level project plan deliverables to demonstrate success, including to measure any benefits.

Budget and Monitoring

- 4.4 The budget for the School Streets programme is £410,000 and will be paid through a grant to the local authorities via a grant agreement/grant claim process. The ATF3 grant is capital only and will not fund any revenue activities such as behaviour change/promotion, the maintenance of any School Streets infrastructure or school management costs associated (i.e. resources), nor will it fund any changes to ETROs that are not costed as part of the deliverables or the cost of any reinstatements.
- 4.5 Local Ward Councillors, for the areas where the 4 schools chosen to be part of the School Street initiative are located, have already been consulted and support the initiative.
- 4.6 The Head Teachers at each of the schools selected to be involved in this initiative (Stanton Bridge Primary School, Southfields Primary School, Ravensdale Primary School and Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School) have all been consulted and are supportive of being part of a School Street scheme.

5 Timescales and Milestones

- 5.1 The School Streets initiative is subject to consultation and will take approximately nine months to deliver.

Key high-level deliverables per school are:

Milestone 1: Official confirmation of school's interest to local authority and TfWM in delivering a school street.

Indicative timescale: Early 2023 -January-February 2023

Milestone 2: informal and formal consultation for each school street is complete as part of any TRO/ETRO.

Spring 2023 (March-April 2023).

Milestone 3: Set up of monitoring and evaluation and baseline monitoring and evaluation is completed. Spring 2023 (March-April)

Milestone 4: Delivery of infrastructure, marketing materials and implementation of the TRO/ETRO. Summer 2023 (May-September 2023)

6 Health Inequalities Impact

- 6.1 The reduction in traffic outside a school during the start and end of the school day, as a result of a School Street, will contribute to improving safety and air quality, providing health benefits to those attending the school and in the vicinity of the school, helping to address health inequalities and create a healthier and safer place for children and young people. The reduction of traffic at this time should encourage modal shift, reducing the reliance on the car and encouraging walking and cycling.

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Agenda Item 5

Communities and Neighbourhoods Work Programme 2022-23

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Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

Last updated 10th February 2023

7th July 2022
Consultations on SPD's – Biodiversity and Residential Building Design Highways Asset Management Programme - Scheme Assessment Process
6th October 2022 (moved from 22nd September)
Article 4 consultation HMO DPD Local Listings SPD - Tall Buildings and View Management
3rd November 2022
Homes for Ukraine Scheme
8th December 2022
Housing and Homelessness Services Green Spaces SPD - Householder Design Guide
9th February 2023
Empty Properties Fly-tipping and Street Cleansing Waste Services
23rd March 2023
School Streets
2023/2024
Review of the Implementation of the Homefinder Allocations Scheme (June 2023) Housing Development Infrastructure Homes for Ukraine Scheme Update on Empty Properties Review of the Local Plan – including Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Dog Fouling

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
7th July 2022	Consultations on SPD's – Biodiversity and Residential Building Design	To input into the consultation on the Supplementary Planning Document for Biodiversity and Residential Building Design	Cllr Welsh David Butler
	Highways Asset Management Programme - Scheme Assessment Process	About the selection and assessment process for schemes coming forward.	Cllr Hetherton Neil Cowper
6th October 2022 (moved from 22nd September)	Article 4 consultation HMO DPD	For the board to contribute to the consultation process	Cllr Welsh David Butler
	Local Listings	To look at the process and criteria for Local Listings	Cllr Welsh David Butler
	SPD -Tall Buildings and View Management	To consider the final SPD before Cabinet agreement	Cllr Welsh David Butler
3rd November 2022	Homes for Ukraine Scheme	How the Council is supporting the Homes for Ukraine scheme	Cllr Welsh Peter Barnett
8th December 2022	Housing and Homelessness Services	An update following an item in December 2021.	Cllr Welsh Jim Crawshaw
	Green Spaces	To consider levels of usage post pandemic and steps taken to encourage usage of green spaces and parks such as paths, lighting, and mile markers	Graham Hood Cllr AS Khan, Cllr Caan, Cllr Hetherton
	SPD - Householder Design Guide	To input into the consultation on the Householder Design Guide SPD.	Cllr Welsh David Butler

Communities and Neighbourhoods Work Programme 2022-23

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
9th February 2023	Empty Properties	To consider the work being undertaken to get empty properties back into use.	Cllr Welsh Davina Blackburn/ Adrian Chowns
	Fly-tipping and Street Cleansing	Including an update from the task and finish group and progress on the implementation of the recommendations.	Cllr Hetherton/ Cllr AS Khan Andrew Walster/ Martin McHugh
	Waste Services	To pick up impact of industrial action, including recycling rates and review of Christmas waste collections	Cllr Hetherton/ Cllr AS Khan Andrew Walster/ Martin McHugh
23rd March 2023	School Streets	To look at measures to improve issues with parking and traffic around schools.	Cllr Hetherton Joel Logue
2023/2024	Review of the Implementation of the Homefinder Allocations Scheme (June 2023)	Requested at the meeting on 8 th December.	Cllr Welsh Jim Crawshaw
	Housing Development Infrastructure	To look at proposals for planned housing developments and infrastructure. Specifically, to look at the timetabling of these developments and associated roads and infrastructure which will be required to support population growth and movement. To seek assurances that infrastructure will be in place before homes are occupied.	Cllr Welsh Andrew Walster/ Clare Egginton
	Homes for Ukraine Scheme	To consider the situation with Ukrainian guests once the 12 month hosting arrangements are ending	Cllr Welsh Peter Barnett
	Update on Empty Properties	To provide an update on Empty Property Strategy as requested at the meeting on 9.02.23.	Cllr Welsh Davina Blackburn Adrian Chowns

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	Review of the Local Plan – including Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	To look in detail at the proposals in the review of the Local Plan. This will cover several meetings to enable Members to comment on detailed sections of the plan.	Cllr Welsh, Chris Styles, Rob Back, Clare Eggington
	Dog Fouling	To look in more detail about approached to prevention and enforcement of dog fouling	Cllr AS Khan Craig Hickin