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### **Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)**

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**Time and Date**

10.00 am on Thursday, 8th February, 2024

**Place**

Diamond Rooms 1 and 2 - Council House

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1. **Apologies and Substitutions**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)
  - a) To agree the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 December 2023
  - b) Matters arising
4. **School Streets Update** (Pages 9 - 14)  
Briefing Note of the Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability
5. **Work Programme 2023/2024** (Pages 15 - 18)  
Briefing Note 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**

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Julie Newman, Chief Legal Officer, Council House, Coventry

Wednesday, 31 January 2024

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Usha Patel Email: [usha.patel@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:usha.patel@coventry.gov.uk)

Membership: Councillors M Ali (Chair), R Bailey, J Gardiner, G Hayre, M Heaven, A Hopkins, A Kaur, L Kelly, G Lloyd and R Thay

By invitation: Councillors P Hetherton (Cabinet Member for City Services) and G Lloyd (Deputy Cabinet Member for City Services)

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**Usha Patel****Email: [usha.patel@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:usha.patel@coventry.gov.uk)**

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)**  
**held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 7 December 2023**

Present:

Members: Councillor M Ali (Chair)  
Councillor R Bailey  
Councillor J Gardiner  
Councillor A Hopkins  
Councillor R Lakha (Substitute for Councillor A Kaur)  
Councillor R Thay

Other Members: Councillor S Agboola (Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities)

Employees (by Service Area):

Law and Governance: G Holmes, E Jones, U Patel

Safer Housing and Communities: A Chowns

Housing and Homelessness: J Crawshaw

Revenue and Benefits: B Strain

Apologies: Councillors G Hayre, M Heaven, A Kaur, L Kelly and D Welsh (Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities)

## **Public Business**

### **18. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **19. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Further to resolution 3, of Minute 14 headed 'Homes for Ukraine', Members asked whether the letter had been sent to the Secretary of State. Officers undertook to look into and report back.

### **20. Review of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Additional Licensing Scheme 2023**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer which provided information on the review of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Additional

Licensing Scheme 2023. The report was due to be considered by Cabinet on 12 December 2023.

Additional licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) is a discretionary power that is available to Local Authorities under the Housing Act 2004 and if introduced, could be applied to those HMOs which were not required to be licensed under the mandatory licensing powers.

The duty to licence HMOs under the mandatory scheme was introduced in July 2006 and following changes to the definition in 2018, it required all HMOs occupied by 5 or more people to be licensed.

The provision of good quality housing for Coventry residents was a priority for the City Council and Additional Licensing of HMOs was therefore introduced on the 4 May 2020, requiring all smaller HMOs, including those properties converted into self contained flats without building regulations approval (Section 257 HMOs), to be licensed.

The Additional licensing scheme could only run for a period of 5 years, during which time the Council must carry out a review in accordance with the requirements set out in the Housing Act 2004.

Within the Act there is a legal requirement to review the scheme “from time to time”. To fulfil this requirement, a consultation exercise was undertaken between July and October 2023. The full set of results from the review and consultation were attached at Appendix 1 of the report. The review would help to build an evidence base going forward.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses on a number of matters including:

- Responses to the consultation were not weighted at this point to distinguish between respondents living in Coventry, or tenants and landlords.
- The difference between 3 year and 5 year licences and the number of landlords issued with 5 year licences.
- Information shared with landlords to apply for a licence, and whether steps had been taken to streamline the process as far as possible.
- Training delivered to landlords, circulation of newsletters, attendance and success of monthly forums.
- Whether the licensing scheme discouraged good landlords and those leaving the market could be encouraged to convert to family homes.
- That tenants could be evicted from licensed properties as long as the correct legal process was followed. A landlord/tenant liaison officer could provide information on this.

The Board requested further information on what proportion of HMOs were purely student lets in the City.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1. Cabinet be informed that the Scrutiny Board are supportive of the Additional Licensing Scheme.**
- 2. The Scrutiny Board requests the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to consider that work to renew the scheme, starts as soon as possible.**

**21. Supported Exempt Accommodation**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note and received a comprehensive presentation which provided an update on Exempt Supported Accommodation. The item was considered by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee at their meeting on 8 February 2023. The Committee requested a progress update on the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) funding, as well as progress with changes to legislation.

Exempt accommodation is supported housing which was exempt from certain Housing Benefit provisions. It was a sector which often housed more marginalised groups with support needs such as prison leavers, care leavers, those fleeing domestic violence, and homeless people with substance dependence or mental health issues. The accommodation was provided alongside support, supervision or care to help people live as independently as possible in the community.

There is also a small element of care, support and supervision provided to clients, which means it is exempt from Local Housing Allowance (LHA) caps, hence the use of the term 'exempt'. These exemptions enable organisations providing this type of housing to charge higher rates, when compared with general LHA rates, to clients living in their properties. Where the accommodation was provided by an organisation other than a registered provider, Local Authorities bear the additional costs of the provision beyond the LHA rate. In 2022/23 the cost to the Council was approximately £3.4million resulting in a new subsidy loss of £2.7 million.

As securing permanent accommodation had become more difficult, the Supported Exempt Sector had grown significantly both locally and nationally. This type of accommodation was often the only option for groups of people who did not meet the statutory priority need threshold, particularly if their homelessness was planned.

Case law states that there only needed to be a "more than minimal" level of care and support to qualify as 'exempt', which meant that some providers secured high rental levels while providing a small amount of support.

Exempt accommodation clients were usually housed in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), which were often large properties that had been converted.

Due to the complicated nature of defining a building as an HMO, not all accommodation could be classified as such and therefore, would not fall under the provision of the citywide HMO licensing scheme. Furthermore, in some cases if they were operated by, or under the umbrella of a registered social landlord (RSL) then they would be afforded an exemption from licensing under the Housing Act 2004.

While there are many good examples of exempt accommodation providers, there had been instances where the quality of accommodation had not been up to standard, and the support being provided was found to be inadequate.

The three main types of providers in Coventry are:

- Registered Providers who provide supported housing e.g. Citizen, St Basils
- Non-Registered Providers which are well established organisations e.g. Salvation Army, Coventry Cyrenians, Mind
- Community Interest Companies who often had limited expertise/experience of accommodating vulnerable groups

Coventry had seen an increase in provision over the last few years, from 2829 units in 2019/20 to 3570 units as of January 2023.

Increases in this type of accommodation was not something that was impacting Coventry, but research by the charity Crisis in 2021 estimated that there could be more than 150,000 households living in this type of housing. This had increased by 58% from the 95,149 people living in exempt accommodation in 2016.

Exempt accommodation not commissioned by the City Council currently had no specific regulatory framework. Therefore, whereas the Housing and Homelessness Team monitored the provision of commissioned supported housing in the city for people who were homeless, this was not in place for the non-commissioned providers.

There had been a number of concerns raised by residents of Supported Exempt Accommodation, partner agencies, local residents impacted by these properties and elected members in the city regarding the quality of support provided to residents and the disruption this type of accommodation could cause in neighbourhoods.

Approximately 18 months ago, a number of issues were raised regarding specific properties/providers in the city. The council collectively, across all key departments developed a joined-up approach to deal with issues working alongside the police. This had resulted in some provision no longer being available in the city and a small number of providers improving their service. This work has been enhanced significantly during 2023/24 following the successful bid for funding through the Government's Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP).

The issue of poor quality exempt accommodation was also an issue of national interest. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) private members Bill was currently going through the House of Commons. Additionally, a cross-party Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee in a report published on 27 October 2022 stated that '*exempt housing and support services are a complete mess*'.

It should be noted that there were a range of good quality supported housing providers who fund their provision through the Exempt Accommodation provisions in the city.

Additionally, there continued to be the requirements for this type of provision if it was quality accommodation with appropriate levels of support being provided to residents.

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

- Associated subsidy loss – where providers are registered, the Council could get the funding back from government, so providers are encouraged to register.
- With regard to comments, concerns and compliments, consideration be given to introducing a reward scheme to encourage providers to improve standards
- Success/uptake of monthly forums and how these are communicated

Members requested that the Coventry City Council guide to “Standards for Supported Exempt Accommodation” be emailed to members of the Board, together with information on the success and uptake of monthly forums.

Members thanked officers for a comprehensive presentation.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board:**

- 1. Notes the current position and funding.**
- 2. Supports the co-ordinated response to managing Exempt Accommodation in the city.**
- 3. Requests the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to explore introducing a quality charter to encourage providers to improve provision.**
- 4. Requests that Exempt Supported Accommodation be added to the Board’s Work Programme for next year.**

## **22. Work Programme 2023/2024**

The Scrutiny Board considered their Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1. The work programme be updated with the addition of ‘Supported Exempt Accommodation’.**
- 2. An update be provided at the next meeting in relation to an item on ‘Water quality’ and whether Severn Trent had been contacted/invited to attend.**

## **23. 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 urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.40 am)





Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To: The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

**Subject: School Streets (Update)**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To provide an update of 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 Many schools experience significant road traffic problems at school start and finishing times, and this can result in resident frustration, increased vehicle emissions and road safety problems associated with hazardous driving and dangerous vehicular parking. Historically, residents living close to schools have requested solutions to these problems, and, recently, Local Highway Authorities have been granted the legal mechanisms to install measures that prevent non-residents from travelling on problematic streets close to schools at school opening and closing times.
- 3.2 School Streets use Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to restrict School based traffic from entering roads at the start and end of the school day with the intention of creating an environment with fewer vehicles, that encourages and enables walking and cycling.
- 3.3 The proposed School Streets programme is a collaborative initiative between Coventry City Council and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM); and is principally 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.

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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 before a decision is made on whether the scheme should be made permanent after 18 months after considering objections.
- 3.6 Coventry City Council is trialling School Streets at five locations.
- 3.7 The first School Street scheme has recently been installed in the Knights Templar Way Area (Templars Primary School). This became operational on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023. This was funded separately and not through the Walking and Cycling Programme and was introduced in response to safety concerns raised by local residents and Councillors. An initial 12 month review of the successes of the Knights Templar Way School Street is ongoing, and the outcomes will be shared as soon as they become available.
- 3.8 With the implementation of the City's first School Streets, 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
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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 limited displacement of traffic onto other streets.
- 3.12 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 and Research Outcomes by TfL**

- 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 2024, based on a number of criteria including, level of school/local political support, links to Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (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.
- 4.4 **Research from Transport for London (TfL) where over 500 School Streets are in operation across 31 London Boroughs has highlighted very good outcomes including:**
- Improvements relating to a safer, calmer, cleaner and more healthy area where the School Streets have been installed.
  - School staff and parents appreciating the first-hand benefits of reduced traffic congestion, improved child safety and reduced pollution.
  - Improved social interaction and convivial pleasant atmosphere at School gates.
  - Growing sense of “neighbourhood”.
- 4.5 Key learning from the TfL research highlighted the importance of allowing behaviour change over time, as changes to driving patterns is unlikely to be linear and will take time to embed into drivers' mindsets. Other learning from the study was that operational times are explicit to parents. Coventry will ensure that all signage is correct and that School leaflets detailing the operational times will be distributed in advance of scheme go-live.

## **5 Consultation with Local Residents and Councillors**

- 5.1 Coventry City Council has engaged and consulted all schools, parents, local Councillors and residents at all four school locations. Consultation has taken place using email communications, letters and by distribution of a “streetnews” consultation leaflet.
- 5.2 A streetnews leaflet highlights the scheme aims and includes the benefits of the scheme. It also provides residents with the opportunity to complete a questionnaire to feedback support for the scheme or oppose the scheme. The leaflet also enables residents to provide qualitative feedback on whether the scheme could be improved or amended to make the scheme more effective.
- 5.3 All feedback was analysed and then integrated into the overall scheme where possible. Coventry City Council requires “overall” support for the scheme to progress, and the vast majority of responses from residents fully support the initiative.
- 5.4 The most significant feedback from residents were broadly positive but requested cameras enforcement instead of Police enforcement. The enforcement of School

Streets are critical to their success. Changes in legislation enables the Council to support the Police and carry out camera based enforcement of restrictions of this type, the Council is required to demonstrate over an extended period that non camera based enforcement been trialled and found to be ineffective before being granted the powers to use cameras. Cameras that can effectively enforce this type of restriction has limitations, as the technology is new.

- 5.5 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.

## **6 Budget, Monitoring and Enforcement**

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 Extensive monitoring of each of the four schools comprising the trial has been undertaken, including vehicular speeds, vehicular numbers and personal injury collision investigations. These have been captured before the schemes become operational and will be repeated at 6 months, 12 months and 18 months post go-live. The comparisons in the data will provide a barometer of whether the scheme is working effectively or whether we need to amend/ change the scheme. Changes to the scheme are permissible as an ETRO has been used to install the schemes.
- 6.5 Post scheme go-live, qualitative sampling from residents, parents, Councillors and school staff will be analysed to understand whether the schemes are perceived as being effective or not.

## **7 Timescales and Milestones**

- 7.1 The School Streets initiative has undertaken extensive consultations and will be delivered by the end of March 2024 and the following milestones have already been achieved or are on schedule to be achieved by the defined timescales.
- **Milestone 1:** Consultation has gained support of residents, Councillors and Schools at all four Schools:
  - **Milestone 2:** Detailed Scheme Design is completed, and the scheme is scheduled to be installed in February 2024:

- **Milestone 3:** ETRO has been drafted and this will become operational in March 2024
- **Milestone 4:** Scheme to be enforced in March 2024, followed by ongoing monitoring to assess whether the experiment is working effectively or requires “camera enforcement”.

## **8 Health Inequalities Impact**

- 8.1 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. Principally

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# Agenda Item 5

Communities and Neighbourhoods Work Programme 2023-24

Last updated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

<b>13 July 2023</b>
Review of the Implementation of the Homefinder Allocations Scheme Review of Additional Licensing Scheme
<b>9<sup>th</sup> November (moved from 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023)</b>
Average Speed Camera Update Homes for Ukraine
<b>7<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b>
Additional Licensing Scheme Exempt Supported Accommodation
<b>8<sup>th</sup> February 2024</b>
School Streets
<b>7<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>
Update on Empty Properties Housing and Homelessness Highway Asset Management Strategy
<b>2023/2024</b>
Resurfacing and pothole treatment Homefinder Review
<b>2024-25</b>
Reducing Litter on our Streets – Community Initiative Waste Services Exempt Supported Accommodation Local Flooding and Water Quality (first meeting)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
<b>13 July 2023</b>	Review of the Implementation of the Homefinder Allocations Scheme	Requested at the meeting on 8 <sup>th</sup> December.	Cllr Welsh Jim Crawshaw
	Review of Additional Licensing Scheme	A review of the Additional Licensing scheme for the private rented sector	Adrian Chowns Cllr Welsh
<b>9<sup>th</sup> November (moved from 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023)</b>	Average Speed Camera Update	An update on implementation and impact of ASC across the city. Referred from Scrucro 12 <sup>th</sup> July	Cllr Hetherton Joel Logue Rachel Goodyer
	Homes for Ukraine	An update on the progress of moving refugee Ukrainians from homes with sponsors to their own homes	Cllr Welsh Peter Barnett Ros Johnson
<b>7<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b>	Additional Licensing Scheme	To receive the Cabinet Report with the conclusion of the review	Adrian Chowns Cllr AS Khan Cllr Welsh
	Exempt Supported Accommodation	To receive an update on progress and outcomes achieved through SHIP funding and any government consultation	Cllr Welsh Jim Crawshaw Adrian Chowns
<b>8<sup>th</sup> February 2024</b>	School Streets	The Board requested a follow up item once the experimental traffic regulation orders had been in place and reviewed. To include national data for comparison purposes.	Joel Logue Cllr Hetherton
<b>7<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	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



Communities and Neighbourhoods Work Programme 2023-24

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	Housing and Homelessness	Update on services including Affordable House definitions and numbers; Number of properties purchased in Coventry through Right to Buy / Voluntary Right to Buy; Energy efficiency and running costs of modular buildings; Management of Anti-Social Behaviour; number of social housing properties. Social Housing numbers. Prevention of homelessness.	
	Highway Asset Management Strategy	To look at how the effectiveness of the strategy is in managing potholes. Over view of the scoring mechanism, as well as delivery on the programme. Also to include performance on OCP indicator NHT resident satisfaction survey data.	Mark Adams Cllr Hetherton
<b>2023/2024</b>	Resurfacing and pothole treatment	To look at the effectiveness of pothole repairs and resurfacing (Public suggestion)	Mark Adams Cllr Hetherton
	Homefinder Review	A 6-months progress report including update on providing transparency to Homefinder applicants as to allocation wait times	J Crawshaw Cllr Welsh
<b>2024-25</b>	Reducing Litter on our Streets – Community Initiative	To include steps to address dog fouling Waiting until after budget agreed	Cllr Hetherton Andrew Walster
	Waste Services		
	Exempt Supported Accommodation	To receive an update on progress and outcomes achieved following the meeting on 7 <sup>th</sup> December 24	Cllr Welsh Jim Crawshaw Adrian Chowns
	Local Flooding and Water Quality (first meeting)	Referred from Scruco	Mark Adams/ Neal Thomas Cllr Hetherton Severn Trent

