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

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**Time and Date**

10.00 am on Thursday, 18th July, 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 March 2024
  - b) Matters arising
4. **Water Quality** (Pages 9 - 16)

Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator
5. **Work Programme 2024/2025** (Pages 17 - 20)

Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator
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, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry

Wednesday, 10 July 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 S Agboola (By Invitation), M Ali (Chair), R Bailey, B Christopher, G Hayre, P Hetherton (By Invitation), L Kelly, G Lloyd (By Invitation), J McNicholas, E Ruane, T Sawdon, R Thay and D Welsh (By Invitation)

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

**Public Access**

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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 March 2024**

Present:

Members:                      Councillor M Ali (Chair)  
                                    Councillor R Bailey  
                                    Councillor S Keough (Substitute for Councillor J Gardiner)  
                                    Councillor R Lakha (Substitute for Councillor A Kaur)  
                                    Councillor C Miks (Substitute for Councillor A Hopkins)  
                                    Councillor R Thay  
                                    Councillor CE Thomas (Substitute for Councillor L Kelly)

Other Members:              Councillor P Hetherton (Cabinet Member for City Services)  
                                    Councillor G Lloyd (Deputy Cabinet Member for City Services)  
                                    Councillor D Welsh (Cabinet Member for Housing and  
                                    Communities)

Employees (by Service  
Area):

Adult Services                      P Fahy (Director), J Crawshaw

Highways, Traffic and  
Road Safety                      M Adams, P Ullah

Law and Governance              G Holmes, E Jones, T Robinson

Apologies:                      Councillors J Gardiner, G Hayre, M Heaven, A Hopkins, A  
                                    Kaur, and L Kelly

## **Public Business**

### **29.      Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **30.      Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2024 were signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

### **31.      Highways Asset Management Programme**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note and comprehensive presentation of the Head of Highways which provided an update on the Highways Asset Management Programme and an overview of the scoring mechanism, as well as delivery of the programme. Additionally, the note focused on the effectiveness of strategy in managing potholes and overall performance in line with the One

Coventry Plan (OCP) indicator National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) resident satisfaction survey data.

In July 2022 the scheme assessment process was reviewed by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4). No additional comments or recommendations were made by the Board.

The use of asset management principles has been applied for many years in Coventry to ensure appropriate investment with longer term planning and this was set out in detail within the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan which was published in 2016.

The briefing note stated that every year during December and January the Councils Highway Maintenance Technical Services engineers, working with the Asset Management Engineer, prepare a draft programme of schemes for approval by senior highway managers which is then presented to Cabinet. The schemes are presented as part of the Transportation and Highway Maintenance Capital Programme in March each year.

Councillor P Hetherington, the Cabinet Member for City Services, drew the Board's attention to a number of important salient points. Namely that, currently the state of highways has been a popular issue in the press and the Council is working hard to tackle not just issues on the roads but also on pavements and footpaths. Modern technology, such as the JCB Pothole Pro, has been a crucial tool in overcoming these challenges. She also highlighted the ongoing long-term issue of climate change, and the impact wetter weather is having in exposing road surfaces to the increased likelihood of potholes and damage. She stated these challenges were likely to remain in the future.

The Board questioned Officers and the Cabinet Member and received responses on a number of matters relating to the Highways Asset Management Programme:

- Clarification that pothole maintenance was identified as worst first for reactive treatment. The IMD and an area's deprivation was used for forward planning.
- Who the Highways Operation Team (DLO) operatives are in each area and how Members get in contact with them.
- Continuing surface treatment plans were still in use as a stop gap. Concerns about the state of unmaintained pavements in residential areas and the financial investment needed to repair footpaths.
- Works carried out by City Fibre, Severn Trent and other utilities companies lifting paving slabs, flooding areas, cutting IT cables, and inflicting permanent damage on pavements and roads as a result – whether fines are imposed as a result of this damage. Concerns raised by Members were noted by officers.
- Enforcement options against illegal dropped curbs.
- Increasing use of vans on roads and the knock-on effect of parking on pavements not built to withstand continual parking.
- The possibility of S&R construction assisting in identifying potholes and the lifecycle of removed paving slabs of good condition.
- The role of the planning committee in determining dropped curbs on new developments for those with specific accessibility needs.

- The backlog of highway maintenance jobs due to recent weather conditions.
- Encouragement through council literature such as Citivision for residents converting front gardens into driveways to apply for a dropped curb.

The Cabinet Member concluded the Board's questions by drawing their attention to the Travel Access Plan which will be used as a guide for all road users and pedestrians. She also touched upon the questions raised around the works and damages carried out by City Fibre and the difficult meetings held with them as a result. Additionally, she highlighted the use of new technology such as drones to survey road conditions during different times of the day. New technologies, therefore, feed into the Council's approach to address ongoing climate change issues, with drainage being especially crucial. She emphasised, however, that nothing beats employees on the ground who can address critical issues straight away and continue to do an amazing job across the city.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board notes the content of the briefing note and appendices and had no further recommendations for the Cabinet Member.**

### 32. **Housing & Homelessness Service Update**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note of the Head of Housing and Homelessness which outlined the progress of the Housing and Homelessness Service and the key initiatives that have been implemented. It also provided the Board with the opportunity to discuss the key homelessness issues and trends over the previous 12 months and note any actions that will be progressed during the next 12 months to achieve the key objectives of the Homeless Service.

The Council approved its Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2019-2024) in March 2019 with it being the core strategy that drives the service forward. The Strategy and action plan was refreshed during 2022 to ensure that the actions were still relevant and those that had been completed were removed. The strategy has four key areas of focus:

- Preventing homelessness & supporting homeless households
- Support for people and communities
- Improving existing homes
- Housing development

The Housing and Homelessness Service has undergone significant change over the previous 5 years with a number of initiatives/projects being worked on with the intention of:

- Reducing the financial burden on the Authority whilst providing better quality temporary accommodation options.
- Increasing the number of households where homelessness is prevented or relieved and therefore decreasing the number of households in temporary accommodation.
- Increasing the number of properties available to households in exceptional housing need that are either at social/affordable rents or at the Local Housing Allowance rates if in the private rented sector.

The briefing note stated that the demand for homelessness services in the city has grown significantly over the last 12-18 months. These increases have been reflected nationally with the highest number of households ever recorded currently living in temporary accommodation in England.

The homeless service is currently being approached by an average of 200 individual households each week in need of housing. A number of these receive initial advice and guidance with over 50% progressing to a homeless application.

As of the 26th February 2024 there are a total of 1145 households in TA provided by Coventry City Council. Of these 791 are households with dependent children with the remaining 354 households being single people or childless couples. The number of families in TA has increased at a greater rate than single people with large family accommodation being particularly high demand.

The briefing note similarly highlighted the Council's rough sleepers team which undertakes outreach walks across the city 5 days a week to engage and work with people currently sleeping rough in the city. The frequency of these walks means that the service is fully aware of who is sleeping rough in the city. The team find some people only once whereas they also have people sleeping rough who have done so for a number of years. In January 2024, even though additional accommodation was available due to SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) for 18 nights they found a total of 51 people with approximately 15 individuals sleeping rough on any one night.

Councillor D Welsh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, introduced the Board's discussion by providing a broad overview of the housing and homelessness landscape. Overwhelmingly, the service is experiencing increased demand whilst looking to reduce costs. To do this, the council is working increasingly with partners and providers to continue service provision. He stated that they are trying to help as many people as possible to stay in their accommodation and provide people and families with even better-quality accommodation. Increased demand has resulted in using Bed and Breakfasts (B and Bs) again, however, when viewed as a percentage of overall service use this remains very low. He also emphasised the continuing work being done to encourage residents to downsize to free up larger family homes for families who need them.

In conjunction to the report, officers reiterated the various challenges the service faced both in terms of the cost-of-living crisis and the housing market but emphasised the number of achievements in preventing homelessness in the city. Specifically, the acquisition of more council properties has broadened the accommodation options the service has available and reduced renting costs. Being able to provide temporary accommodation for almost 800 families with children also demonstrated a significant achievement. However, officers did provide the Board with the stark perspective of the challenges the service faced. Specifically: rising costs, rising demand, increased approaches from homeless service users, and the future prospect of rising mortgage payments.

The Board questioned Officers and the Cabinet Member and received responses on a number of matters relating to the Housing and Homelessness Update:

- The impact of increased asylum seekers on accommodation figures.

- (Note: the Council only has a duty to house people with a legal Duty to Remain in the UK).
- The number of properties owned by the council's accommodation service and the numbers able to be housed.
- The impact of the loss of Vincent Wyles House and William Malcom House and the requirement for larger family properties. Planning Committee's role in reinforcing that need.
- Contact details for Members to identify rough sleepers and to access Streetlink to report rough sleepers.
- The definition of temporary accommodation, there is no time limit, and that the Council would not place a family above the legal limit for overcrowding.
- Whether social housing properties could be combined to make provision for larger bedroom properties and the work being done to address underoccupancy.
- The numbers of empty and 'no-fine' concrete properties in the city.
- Whether the Council can legally build temporary accommodation and the options available.

The Board and the Cabinet Member thanked officers for their continued hard work in delivering a service despite the number of persistent and wide-ranging challenges identified.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board notes the information contained within the report.**

### 33. **Work Programme Review**

The Board noted the Work Programme with the agreement that the following items be added to the Work Programme for the next municipal year:

- 1) Rough Sleeper Strategy
- 2) Housing Strategy
- 3) Flytipping

### 34. **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 business.

(Meeting closed at 11.55 am)

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Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

**Subject: Water Quality**

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

- 1.1 To update the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board on the progress of the 5-year plan to reduce surface water entering the sewage system, mitigate flood risk, and improve water quality, including a pilot programme for the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board are recommended to:
- 1) Consider the presentation provided at Appendix 1, as well as additional information provided at the meeting
  - 2) To identify any feedback to Severn Trent on the draft 5-year plan
  - 3) To identify and recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member

### **3 Information and Background**

- 3.1 Further to the briefing note provided to the Board in January, this item will provide an opportunity for Member to question Severn Trent about the 5 year plan which covers:
- A 5-year plan to 2030 and a pilot program for the use of sustainable drainage (SUDs) over a wider area.
  - A £65 million investment which aims to reduce surface water entering the sewage system, mitigate flood risk, and improve water quality.
  - A Green Futures project based on a pilot in Mansfield that has been included in the 5-year business plan.
- 3.2 Due the General Election pre-election period, OfWat will not provide comment on the draft plan until 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Therefore, the plan has not yet been finalised.
- 3.3 Representatives from Severn Trent will present further information at the meeting and request comments which will be considered as part of the public consultation on the draft plan.

#### **4 Health Inequalities Impact**

- 4.1 On-going projects to improve water quality support the Marmot principle of creating and developing healthy and sustainable places and communities

Gennie Holmes  
Scrutiny Co-ordinator  
Law and Governance  
[gennie.holmes@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:gennie.holmes@coventry.gov.uk)

A photograph of a child in a green jacket and yellow pants wading in a stream with a dog. The child is wearing green boots and is standing on a rock in the water. The dog is a brown, shaggy breed, possibly a Border Terrier, and is also wading in the water. The background is a lush green forest.

# COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL

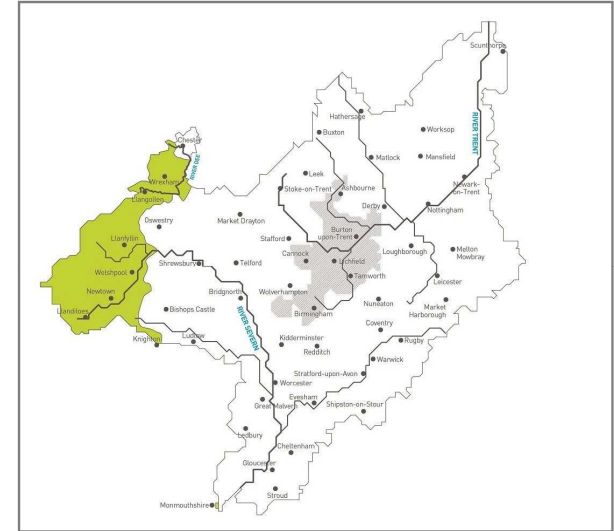
Scrutiny Committee  
18 July 2024



WONDERFUL ON TAP

## SEVERN TRENT WATER: MIDLANDS-BASED FTSE 100 COMPANY

- We supply clean, safe drinking water to our 500,000 plus customers in Coventry and Warwickshire and over 8 million across our entire patch. We deliver two billion litres of clean water every day, and then take the wastewater away to be treated at our sewage treatment works.
- We have thousands of people working in Coventry and Warwickshire, with around 1,000 based at our Headquarters in Coventry city centre. This will continue to grow in the next few years as we embark on our biggest ever investment programme.
- On track to maintain the highest four-star Environmental Performance Assessment for the fifth consecutive year.
- Our Great Big Nature Boost plans to revive 12,000 acres of land, plant 1.3m trees, and restore 2,000km of rivers by 2030.
- Have signed the Carbon Triple Pledge to be carbon net neutral by 2030.
- Investing £566million in our green recovery programme. This includes a scale nature-based approach to reduce the risk of flooding in Mansfield.
- Supported the Kickstart programme and have extensive apprentice and graduate programmes.
- Since 2020 our Community Fund has supported over 1.2million people in Coventry and Warwickshire with over £950,000 donated to 89 community organisations.
- Our average combined bill remains one of the lowest in the country and last year we supported 20,000 customers across Coventry and Warwickshire to avoid water poverty.
- **Our *Get River Positive* and our Storm Overflow Action Plan are working to improve the health of our region's rivers. We're investing £4.4billion across our region to reduce spills and further improve river health, with £300million being spent in Warwickshire, on 141 storm overflow improvements alone.**



# OUR RIVER PLEDGES



**GET RIVER POSITIVE**

CORE PLEDGES:

**OUR RIVER PLEDGES**

Improving the health of our regions' rivers is a team game. We believe that water companies need to show more leadership. We need to listen, be transparent and set out a credible way forward. And that is why we are committing to Get River Positive: our five step plan to the healthiest rivers in the UK.

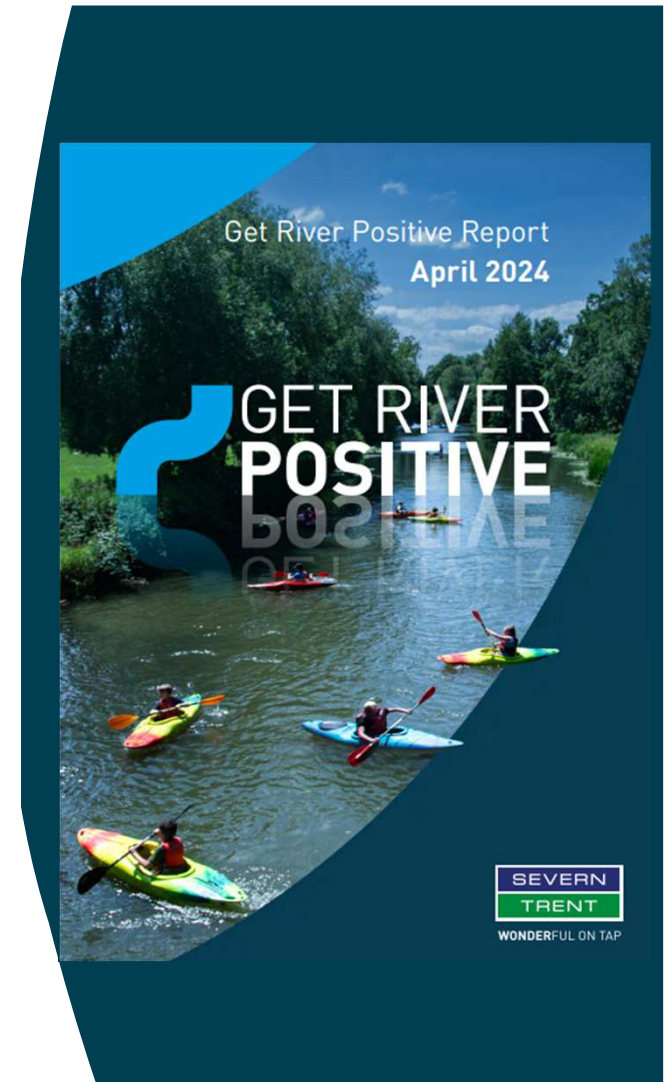
Get River Positive is underpinned by five key pledges that pave the way for the restoration and revitalisation of our regions' rivers.

-  **Ensure storm overflows and sewage treatment works do not harm rivers**
-  **Create more opportunities for everyone to enjoy our region's rivers**
-  **Support others to improve and care for rivers**
-  **Enhance our rivers and create new habitats so wildlife can thrive**
-  **Be open and transparent about our performance and our plans**

www.getriverpositive.co.uk

[Get River Positive | Severn Trent Water \(stwater.co.uk\)](https://www.stwater.co.uk) is our dedicated website outlining our pledges in more detail and the work we are doing. In addition, our Storm Overflow map providing close to real-time information about our storm overflows across our region is now live. This can be seen here: [Storm Overflow Map | In My Area | Severn Trent Water \(stwater.co.uk\)](#).

Since January 2022, our team of River Rangers have worked with customers, citizen scientists, community groups and environment organisations to protect and enhance our local rivers.



# GET RIVER POSITIVE | FACT SHEET

APRIL 2024

## Our network:

**3.1 billion**  
litres of wastewater treated every day and manage **>92,800km** of pipes

**300 million**  
data points about how our storm overflows are performing in a year

**100%**  
of our storm overflows have event duration monitors

## Our progress:

Continuing to invest **£100m** a year on our waste network

Increasing **sewer capacity** and **storage** to slow the flow of storm water during wet weather

We continue to work with our **Advisory Panel** who oversee our progress against our river pledges. We expanded membership this year to **seven** experts

## Our bigger efforts:

Moving **two** stretches of river towards bathing quality by **2025**

Received the highest **four-star rating** from the Environment Agency for the fourth year running in 2022 and are confident we will be awarded the highest rating for an unprecedented fifth year in 2023

Severn Trent is currently responsible for **14%** of RNAGS in our region

**10** River Rangers, working in communities and with partners to improve river health

### RAIN RAIN RAIN

You've seen some of the wettest months on record.

**35%**  
more rain in the region compared to 2022.

**30%**  
close to 30% of river gauge stations in our region recorded their highest ever levels in **October** during Storm Babet.

### WHERE DOES THE RAIN GO?

Our sewers deal with rainfall on roads and built-up areas. But they can sometimes get too full.

**Heavy rain** means that the majority of storm overflows spill is rain water.

We can now see **300million** data points on our monitored overflows - every single year.

### WE'RE WORKING ON IT

We're improving the network. That means fewer spills from storm overflows.

**£384m**  
current programme of investment

**Our aim:** no storm overflow to spill more than **10** times a year, on average.

**£1.1bn**  
in 2025-2030 to meet targets at least **five** years ahead of those set by regulators and Government.

### HOW WE'LL DO IT

Here's where you'll see the difference.

- 1 Separation**  
Keeping rainwater out of our sewer system.
- 2 Treatment**  
Treating more sewage reduces spills.
- 3 Storage**  
Additional capacity on the network storing water during heavy rainfall.

- We have reduced our impact on rivers to be responsible for 14% of RNAGs in our region.
- Despite the wet weather challenges, we have had no serious pollutions in 2023.

# STORM OVERFLOW IMPROVEMENTS IN 2024

- Across the Severn Trent region we are planning to deliver storm overflow solutions across 900 locations, with a total investment for 2024/25 of £450m aiming to reduce total storm overflow spills by 20% per year.
- This includes:
  - New **storage solutions** to capture and store more flows
  - A large-scale community trial of over 8,000 free **water butts**
  - New ‘nature based’ solutions including the creation of 70 new **reed beds** to treat sewage from storm overflows.
  - Enhancements to **increase the flow of sewage to treatment works**
  - **Flap valves** to prevent river ingress into the network
  - A **Zero Spills hub** dedicated to storm overflow improvements



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# Agenda Item 5

Communities and Neighbourhoods Work Programme 2024-25

Last updated 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

<b>11<sup>th</sup> July 2024</b>
Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities Water Quality
<b>5<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>
Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy Temporary Accommodation
<b>24<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>
Garden Waste Collections
<b>5<sup>th</sup> December 2024</b>
Exempt Supported Accommodation
<b>30<sup>th</sup> January 2025</b>
Street Lighting
<b>13<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b> <b>2024-25</b>
Waste Services Update on Empty Properties Housing Strategy Residents Parking Schemes Rough Sleeper Strategy Pot-Holes Litter picking

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> July 2024</b>	Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities	An opportunity for the Board to hear the Cabinet Members priorities for the year	Cllr Hetherton Cllr Welsh
	Water Quality	Referred from Scrucro to address concerns about water quality and to receive progress on Severn Trent's 5-year plan to 2030 and a pilot program for the use of sustainable drainage (SUDs) over a wider area. A £65 million investment which aims to reduce surface water entering the sewage system, mitigate flood risk, and improve water quality. A Green Futures project based on a pilot in Mansfield has been included in the 5-year business plan	Mark Adams/ Neal Thomas Cllr Hetherton Severn Trent
<b>5<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>	Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy	To consider the strategy as part of the Cabinet approval process	Cllr Welsh Jim Crawshaw
	Temporary Accommodation	To consider the details that will inform the Cabinet Report on recommissioning of temporary accommodation. Support to families including mental health?	Cllr Welsh Jim Crawshaw
<b>24<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>	Garden Waste Collections	To scrutinise the impact of the introduction of charges for the garden waste collection, including budgetary savings.	Cllr Hetherton Sarah Elliot
<b>5<sup>th</sup> December 2024</b>	Exempt Supported Accommodation	To receive an update on progress and outcomes achieved following the meeting on 7 <sup>th</sup> December 23 Information on the uptake and success of monthly forums to be included	Cllr Welsh Jim Crawshaw Adrian Chowns
<b>30<sup>th</sup> January 2025</b>	Street Lighting	To look at the impact of switching off streetlights, including the budgetary savings	Cllr Hetherton Rav Sekhon
<b>13<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b>			

Communities and Neighbourhoods Work Programme 2024-25

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
2024-25	Waste Services		
	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
	Housing Strategy	To look at local housing provision, including social housing number, as part of the Local Plan	Cllr Welsh Jim Crawshaw
	Residents Parking Schemes	To consider the review of residents parking schemes	Cllr Hetherton Paul Bowman
	Rough Sleeper Strategy	As requested following the item on Housing and Homelessness at the meeting on 8 March 2024	Jim Crawshaw Cllr Welsh
	Pot-Holes		
	Litter picking	Community groups and volunteers. How the Council is supporting local groups.	Cllr Hetherton Martin McHugh/ Sam Morris

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