

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 9 April 2026

Present:

Members: Councillor G Lloyd (Chair)
Councillor M Ali
Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor L Kelly
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor C Miks
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor R Lakha

Other Members
(By Invitation):

Councillor E Reeves
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor P Hetherton
Councillor L Bigham

Co-optees:

Mrs S Hanson
Mr G Vohra

Employees (by Service
Area):

City Services and Commercial P Bowman, M O'Connell

Digital Services P Ward, L Waller

Law and Governance A Veness, G Holmes

Apologies:

Councillor G Duggins
Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor R Singh Sub Cllr R Lakha
Co-optee D Jackson

Public Business

75. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests. It was noted that Councillor Reeves had an interest in the Elective Home Education Task and Finish Group, but as it was deemed not a pecuniary interest she remained in the meeting and took part in the consideration and voting.

76. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2026 were agreed and signed as a true record.

77. Elective Home Education Task and Finish Group

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Coordinator, that set out the work undertaken by Elective Home Education (EHE) Task & Finish Group and to outline the recommendations based on its findings.

Councillor Lynette Kelly, the chair of the board outlined how the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) had established a Task and Finish Group to examine the growing number of children and young people being electively home educated in the city, aimed at understanding the reasons behind this trend, and to review how effectively the Council and partners are supporting these families. The Board had requested that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee consider the recommendations to enable additional time for scrutiny to take place.

The group aimed to identify practical improvements, highlight gaps in policy or practice, and ensure that Coventry fulfils its statutory responsibilities while supporting positive outcomes for children.

The Task and Finish Group formed its recommendations by drawing together key evidence presented throughout its meetings. The update from the Elective Home Education (EHE) Coordinator highlighted Coventry's strong, relationship-based approach, effective safeguarding practice, and the challenges created by rising EHE numbers and the forthcoming Children's Wellbeing Bill. This context shaped the group's view that Coventry's model should be recognised nationally and that the Education Secretary should be asked to ensure proportionate expectations and provide clearer powers and a compulsory national register.

The Committee asked questions and received responses across a number of topics which, in summary, included:

- That although there was limited data and numbers in the report, this information had been presented to the Task and Finish Group for consideration when identifying findings and recommendations.
- That safe and wellness checks were not automatically carried out on families electing to educate at home unless there were child protection concerns raised. The Task and Finish group had discussed and reported the limited ability to enter homes, the circumstances under which police or social care can intervene, and how these constraints shape case management and safeguarding responses. The group also considered the step-by-step escalation process for non-responsive families, including missing education notices and attendance visits, and explored how safeguarding concerns determine whether a child remains on the home education register, as part of the T&F group work.
- Concerns that if significant numbers of children withdraw from schools, this could have an impact on surplus places.

RESOLVED that, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

1. Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- a. **Write to the Secretary of State for Education to highlight Coventry's effective, relationship-based home education practice and emphasise the additional burdens the new Children's Wellbeing Bill will place on Local Authorities.**
 - b. **Engage directly with colleges on expanding 14-16 provision for EHE pupils and use influence to support establishment of Coventry-based provision.**
2. **Add a review of 14–16 and post-16 provision for EHE students, identifying gaps and opportunities to expand access to qualifications to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board work programme for 26/27.**
3. **Note and promote Coventry's strong safeguarding approach, including effective multi-agency working, its above-minimum offer to families, and the resource implications of rising EHE numbers.**

78. Recommendations from School Attendance Task and Finish Group

The Scrutiny Coordination Committee considered a briefing note by the Scrutiny Co-ordinator, which set out the recommendations arising from the School Attendance task and finish group (T&F) of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2).

Councillor Mal Mutton the Chair of the Task and Finish Group outlined how at their meeting on 27 November 2025, the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) agreed to establish a task and finish group to look in more depth at the issues affecting school attendance. The Board requested that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee consider the recommendations to enable additional time for scrutiny to take place.

The task and finish group met twice to look in more detail at what the available data was saying about school attendance, as well as support offered to schools to encourage attendance. It was emphasised that the report contained limited numbers and raw data as this was not a focus of their research at this time.

The Committee asked questions and received responses across a number of topics which, in summary, included:

- Issues surrounding child readiness were recognised by the Council and had been covered in a previous meeting of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board.

Following discussion officers agreed to circulate information considered by the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board on 26 March 2026 relating to school readiness to members of the board.

RESOLVED that, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

1. **Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:**
 - a. **Support officers to interrogate the available data to identify groups disproportionately affected by or at risk of severe**

persistent absence in order to identify appropriate early interventions to support those pupils and families.

- b. Focus services on early intervention and transition points, maximising the opportunities and resources provided through the proposals in the 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' white paper and other strategies such as the Belonging Approach and Best Start in Life**

- 2. That the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) receive a further report in 12 months' time to monitor progress on attendance data and update on the above recommendations.**

79. Parking Services Updates and Future Priorities

The Scrutiny Coordination Committee considered a briefing note from the Parking Manager outlining on current operational arrangements, performance, and strategic priorities within Coventry City Council's Parking Services, with a particular focus on the various enforcement functions and the management of the Council operated car parks.

Officers outlined how Parking Services delivers a wide range of functions, including:

- Civil Parking Enforcement
- CCTV camera enforcement
- Car Park Management
- Resident Parking Schemes
- Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) processing, recovery, and appeals.

The enforcement activities referred to above operated under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and result in penalty charge notices being issued to offenders which incur fines and generate an income for the Council.

Penalty charge levels were set by Government, and the charge level was dependant on the type of offence. Fines could be reduced by 50% if paid within a discount period.

Surpluses generated from enforcement activities were ringfenced and could only be used to fund the service, highways improvements, or traffic safety schemes.

Councils were not allowed to use civil parking enforcement to raise revenue to support general funds.

The Committee, asked questions and received responses across a number of topics which, in summary, included:

- The specific details within the new legislation in relation to pavement parking
- That personnel vacancies are in part caused by the difficult conditions and confrontations with members of the public, and that the council was doing everything in its power to support officers in challenging roles.

- That repeat offenders (referred to officially as persistent evaders) are categorised when 3 or more parking offences are neither paid nor appealed, once this happened the council tows the vehicle where possible.
- That the council pays a competitive rate to its officers and is one of few councils who have an in-house service instead of out-sourcing the service, this would be maintained for the foreseeable future.
- That the council does pay similar prices to agency workers (as compared to in house) hired to fill vacancies, this has the added benefit of flexible staffing for specific events and some increased productivity.
- That increased CCTV coverage will be closely monitored and will help with workload but is limited but national legislation in terms of what the cameras can be used for.
- Cameras can't cover the whole of red route lengths but are prioritised on pinch-points to make best use of the resource.

Following discussions officers agreed clarifying legislative changes regarding pavement parking referenced in paragraph 4.4 of the report.

RESOLVED that, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1. Note the actions and initiatives currently being implemented to address key parking and traffic enforcement priorities.**

80. Offline Support for Residents

The Scrutiny Coordination Committee considered a briefing note from the Director of Digital Services which formed a pre-policy document establishing the council's commitment to Offline Support for Residents.

Officers emphasised that full details of the proposed policy approach were set out in the pre-policy document appended to the report. (Appendix 1) The proposed purpose of this future policy is to define the Council's approach to ensuring residents have fair and dignified access to services through both digital and offline channels.

Specifically, it was suggested that the Council commit to:

- Guaranteeing alternative access routes for residents who cannot or choose not to use digital channels.
- Providing offline options that are clear, consistent, and accessible.
- Ensuring support is available for residents who require temporary or ongoing assistance.
- Promoting digital inclusion as a continuous process, aligned with resident needs and life circumstances.

The Committee asked questions and received responses across a number of topics which, in summary, included:

- That a policy on this matter was important to ensure equity of access to services.
- That the opportunity for scrutiny to be involved at an early point of developing a strategy was welcomed.

- Concerns that the use of parking apps could potentially become the exclusive method of payment for parking.
- That cash or card should always be an option for financial transactions.
- That the language used and understood by AI chat bots wasn't always user friendly.
- That it was important to support those who do want to access digital routes and need assistance or skills to do so, but to also recognise that there are service users who can't or don't want to use digital methods.

RESOLVED that, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

1. **Note the details of the pre-policy document appended to the report. (Appendix 1)**
2. **Note that the relevant political governance and associated briefings will take place as this moves towards being endorsed for adoption as a formal council policy.**
3. **Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Adult Services build within the policy that there will be no public facing, online-only method of payment for Council Services**

81. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2025/2026**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance that provided information regarding the Committee's Work Programme and Outstanding Issues for 2025/26. The Committee noted that would be the last meeting of the municipal year, the chair thanked officers and board members for their good work.

RESOLVED that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee notes the Work Programme attached as an appendix to the report.

82. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4:00pm)