

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 17 July 2025

Present:

Members:

Councillor M Ali (Chair)
Councillor R Bailey
Councillor B Christopher
Councillor G Lewis
Councillor K Maton
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor E Ruane
Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor R Thay

Other Members (by invitation)

Councillor P Hetherton
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor S Agboola

Employees (by Directorate):

Law and Governance: G Holmes, A Veness

Housing and Communities: R Back, P Fahy, D Nuttall

Apologies:

Councillor T Khan Sub Councillor M Mutton
Councillor G Hayre Sub Councillor K Maton
Councillor S Nazir

Public Business

36. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ali indicated that as a result of a perceived disclosable pecuniary interest, she will not participate in the Task and Finish Group referred to in item 5 below.

37. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

38. Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities 2025/26

The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) received and noted two briefings, the first from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities and the

second from the Cabinet Member for City Services. The briefings outline the priorities for their portfolios for 2025/26.

The Cabinet Member (and Deputy Cabinet Member) for Housing and Communities highlighted the following areas:

Housing and Homelessness – Two new temporary accommodations have been built including New Leaf House. The council will need to continue to work with Citizen to improve housing stock.

New National Planning Legislation – Changes in planning legislation will create challenges that the Planning Committee, the Cabinet Member and the Board will need to work together to overcome.

Cultural Gateway Building – Work is well on the way at transforming the old IKEA building into the Cultural Gateway Centre and is on track to be completed on time.

Community Resilience Team – Obtaining further funding for breakfast clubs and working to continue settlement schemes from Ukraine and Afghanistan. Working particularly with Sharon Thompson to increase grant funding and building an inclusive and diverse city.

Culture and Creative Economy – focus on the Creative Economy and Creative Industries Strategy, including the Heritage Strategy and the City Centre Cultural Gateway Project and the new lease for the Priory Visitor Centre.

The Cabinet Member for City Services highlighted the following areas:

Switching Lights Back On – The lights will be switched back on little by little, the process will be funded partially through PFIs and will be made more efficient and cheaper in the long term through the move to LED lighting with attached smart meters.

Potholes – With four extra teams and increased funding, for the first time the team can be proactive instead of reactive. They are improving the roads, cleaning the gutters and preparing for the more and more frequent extreme weather events that have come about due to climate change.

Litter Picking – The council is working closer and closer with volunteer litter pickers to increase their efficiency, increased organisation and cooperation has had it more disciplined and better at targeting at risk areas.

Road Safety – Through the effective use of resources and targeting particular dangerous areas the council aims to cut fatalities and make the city safer. This is being done through the use of 20mph speed limit areas and installations such as puffin crossings.

Extreme Weather and Climate Change Mitigation – Targeted flood risk prevention in areas such as Orsley and Eastern Green will be implemented alongside broader emissions reduction and mitigation measures.

Waste Management – Combined efforts with Solihull have addressed numerous waste issues including gas canisters damaging chimney stacks. There is also work to ensure waste no longer goes to landfills and materials are always properly recycled when possible.

Members discussed the priorities highlighted by both Cabinet Members and made comments, asked questions and received answers in respect of topics raised above. This included:

- Requesting written information to be circulated before these priority meetings so councillors can better prepare questions and understand performance indicators.
- Information regarding the cabinet member priorities be circulated.
- A presentation on the Councils Flooding strategy given to the RSCC be circulated to members.
- Made numerous suggestions for additions to the work programme listed in minute 41.

39. **CCTV in Taxis Task and Finish Group**

The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) considered a briefing note of the Director of City Services on the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to investigate whether the Council should require taxis to have CCTV as part of licensing requirements.

Mandatory CCTV has been considered previously by way of a Cabinet Member report in 2022, where a 12-week consultation was undertaken, where 67.9% of respondents did not support the proposal.

Voluntary CCTV is currently a policy requirement. There are strict requirements in terms of data protection, and drivers that voluntarily install CCTV have to register with the ICO (Information Commissioners Office) as they are the 'data controller'. In January 2025 a taxi driver from Coventry was jailed for sexually assaulting a woman in the back of his cab in December 2022.

The task and finish group will consider several factors regarding the mandatory use of CCTV in licensed taxis, including national legislation, guidance, current policy, crime data, local comparators, costs and anything else which would come within the scope of the investigation.

The T&F will report back to the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4), including recommendations to the Cabinet Member this municipal year. It was planned that any findings and recommendations would also be shared with Licensing and Regulatory Committee.

In considering the Briefing Note, the Scrutiny Board asked questions, received responses and discussed a number of matters as summarised below.

- That the board disagrees with potential centralisation of power in the national devolution bill and has concerns it will prevent the council conducting vital work.
- The board should consider solely audio or video instead of full CCTV.

- That there are difficulties in establishing exact numbers when it comes to sexual assault and harassment numbers particularly when it comes to the overlapping policies and jurisdictions of Uber, private hire taxis, the council and the police.
- That although 67% of those surveyed were opposed to the CCTV that survey was conducted amongst taxi drivers and therefore may not be representative of the general population.
- That as councillor Ali has a disclosable pecuniary interest she will not participate in the Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)

- 1) Established a task and finish group on CCTV in Taxis.**
- 2) Invited the Chair of Licensing and Regulatory Committee to be part of the task and finish group.**

40. Work Programme 2025/2026

The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) received a Briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that provided a schedule of items for meetings of the Board over the coming Municipal Year. The draft Work Programme for 2025-26 was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Scrutiny Work Programmes were working documents that would adapt and change over the year to react to Members' requirements. Any items agreed at this meeting did not preclude any future amendments to the Work Programme.

Councillors also requested that future work programmes should list which Cabinet Members/Lead Officers are in charge of each item.

RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4):

- 1) Notes the schedule of items for meetings of the Board over the Municipal Year 2025/26, that already included a number of items relating to the Cabinet Member's key priorities.**
- 2) Agrees that the Work Programme be updated to include the following changes:**
 - **Move street lighting item from the 23rd of October meeting to the 4th of September meeting.**
 - **The Electric Bikes, Road Safety and Parking Enforcement item will now explicitly include e-scooters.**
 - **The Electric Bikes, Road Safety and Parking Enforcement be moved to an earlier meeting date.**
 - **The Housing Strategy item should include invitees from outside housing provider bodies including Citizen and others.**
 - **The governments new Planning and Infrastructure Bill be linked to Planning performance and preparations for changes to regulations.**
 - **An item be included on the governments new Renters Reform Bill.**

- **An item be included on the Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 agreements – focussing specifically on developers.**

41. 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 public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.25 am)