

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 23 October 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor M Ali (Chair)
Councillor R Bailey
Councillor B Christopher
Councillor G Lewis
Councillor E Ruane
Councillor R Thay
Councillor C Thomas (Substitute for Councillor G Hayre)

Other Members: Councillor P Hetherton, Cabinet Member for City Services
Councillor S Agboola, Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing
and Communities
Councillor P Akhtar, Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and
Equalities

Employees (by Service
Area):

Adults and Housing: J Crawshaw

City Services and
Commercial: A Chowns, M O'Connell, M McHugh, S Morris, R Sekhon

Law and Governance: C Sinclair, A West, A Veness

Apologies: Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor G Hayre
Councillor N Akhtar (Cabinet Member for Housing and
Communities)
Councillor A Khan (Cabinet Member for Policing and
Equalities)

Public Business

42. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

43. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

44. Fly-tipping Performance 2024-25

The Board considered a briefing note and presentation from the Director of Law and Governance and the Director of City Services that provided an update on the Councils fly-tipping performance in 2024-25.

Officers explained that following an item at their meeting on 24th of October 2024, the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) requested a further progress update on fly-tipping performance.

The presentation given by officers covered the following information:

- Workload
- Performance 2024/25
- Additional Resources
- Partnership Working
- Projects
- Impact of increased fines
- Future plans for Street Enforcement
- Ball Hill Pilot
- Suburban Shopping Sites

Officers in particular noted that, due to increased funding from Government they had been able to expand the number of teams they had running and ensured rapid response to any fly-tipping reports. They further emphasised that despite this increased effectiveness they relied on the public reporting incidents, particularly to catch perpetrators. There was an ongoing focus on spreading awareness and ensuring public participation.

In considering the briefing note, the Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed matters as summarised below:

- That mandatory courses to explain the legality and impact of fly-tipping were to introduce a greater level of proportionality for low level offences and not be a replacement for fines and other enforcement action.
- The amount that businesses were fined under selective licensing was legislated nationally and therefore could not be changed by officers.
- That dummy cameras were not currently being considered by the council as this would reduce the overall integrity of the system.
- Options being pursued for situations where offenders were not financially able to pay their fines.
- Noted that the timescale of 21 days to social housing providers to remove fly tipped waste was controlled by national legislation.
- The consideration of installing more camera compatible lampposts.
- Matters relating to the siting and coverage of cameras
- Installation of LED street lighting and compatibility with CCTV camera installation
- Efforts were being made to ensure private landowners clean up or fund the clean-up of waste on their properties, but this relied heavily on public reporting.
- Initiatives relating to identifying property boundaries and ownership to ascertain those responsible for fly-tipping.

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

- 1) **Noted the Briefing Note and performance data including steps taken to address fly-tipping provided in Appendix 1.**
- 2) **Recommend that the Cabinet Member for City Services continues to work with social landlords to explore all options to address fly-tipping to the standards of the City Council.**
- 3) **That the Board have an opportunity to consider the report on the revised policy prior to its submission to Cabinet.**
- 4) **That a similar annual performance report on fly-tipping for 2025/26 be brought to a future meeting of the Board.**

45. **Street Lighting**

The Board considered a briefing note and presentation from the Director of City Services that provided an update on the LED upgrading of PFI (Private Finance Initiative) Streetlights citywide.

Officers explained how in January 2025 the Council approved the upgrading of up to 29,500 streetlights to LED at a cost of £10.2m. The timeline presented in the briefing note was:

Cabinet Approval	December 2024
Design Work	January to April 2025
Legal Framework Agreement	February to July 2025
Finalise Commercial Agreement	April to July 2025
Council Sign & Seal	July 2025
Material Order	July to November 2025
Installation	November 2025 to November 2027

The final number of streetlights being upgraded as part of the LED upgrade was to be 28,847. The remaining 653 (of the original 29,500) would be picked up as part of on-going scheme works.

Once the streetlights were upgraded to LED the proposal was that they were to operate on the following profiles:

- Residential: On at 60% and dim to 30% at 10pm until switch-off
- Traffic: On at 70%, dim to 50% at 10pm and dim further to 30% at 12am until switch-off

The dimming of the streetlights was to allow the Council to regain the £700k savings lost from reversing the part night switch off but still keeping the lights on overnight.

The reversal of the part night streetlight was to be achieved due to a decrease in the energy price from approx. 38p kwh down to 24p kwh. The decrease in energy price allowed the Council to still achieve the targeted financial savings whilst being able to switch the lights back on overnight.

The Council had negotiated that the maintenance savings; from not needing to change lamps in the LED streetlights for the remainder of the contract, was to be paid upfront which reduced the Council's capital expenditure by £1.7m.

In considering the briefing note, the Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed matters as summarised below:

- The new lights should reduce light pollution and focus away from houses, if there are any specific issues shields can be installed.
- That the pre upgrade LED lights are the same brightness as they were pre turn off.
- That the PFI contract will end in 2035 and 7 years prior to that the Council will begin considering how to proceed and if to bring the contract in house.
- The contract has a 20-year warranty, but the LED bulbs will last significantly longer than that.
- Ward order for rollout being based partly on logistics such as footpaths, existing infrastructure, and traffic slowing rollout and partly based on reverse order of the previous installation.
- The possibility of bringing the contract in-house.
- The lamppost's protective plastic coating covering galvanized steel lasting 40-50 years – 15 years longer than the PFI.
- That work is due to begin next month in November 2025, the council was on track to meet its deadlines, although the monthly estimates may increase/decrease once installation has begun.
- That the Council had secured fixed rates for its energy costs and this would stand for 18 months, following that officers were confident they could keep the same rates.
- Whole streets were being completed in one go even if they crossed ward boundaries.
- Rollout was based on current ward boundaries regardless of future changes.

Members also requested that information be circulated outlining the difference in cost of PFIs compared to the Council borrowing the money.

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

- 1) Supports the progress with the LED upgrade roll out in order to share with members.**
- 2) Supports the progress with the dimming of LED streetlights overnight but keeps them in light overnight.**

46. Severe Weather Emergency Protocol

The Board considered a briefing note and presentation from the Director of Adults and Housing that introduced the proposed changes to the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) process.

Local authorities were required to implement SWEP in line with national guidance at times of severe weather.

In Coventry SWEP was triggered when

- 1) Temperatures are at a 'feels like' 0c' or
- 2) A yellow weather warning

Previously, the protocol was used by lots of people unknown to the rough sleeping service, people who haven't been found rough sleeping either before or after SWEP. Therefore, there were to be changes as to how SWEP was to operate in 2025/26.

Officers in particular noted that 30% of those referred to SWEP did not turn up to their arranged accommodation, furthermore, most rough sleepers took up the offer of shelter but not the support. In these respects Coventry was an outlier compared to local and national averages, so efforts had been made to amend this.

The Council was therefore moving to a tiered approach. Tier one applied when weather was below zero, support would be offered to pre-identified lists of clients who were particularly vulnerable. Tier two would apply when the weather was zero or below for three consecutive nights or when the met office issued an amber alert. In this case the eligibility was widened, and referrals were invited in for a SWEP assessment, outside of this, clients could call the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) and were offered a place to sleep provided they presented to services the next day.

In considering the briefing note, the Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed matters as summarised below:

- That the change to the two-tier system did not mean rough sleepers would not be able to access accommodation if they needed it.
- That the Councils Outreach Team performed daily and extensive trips to assess and log rough sleepers, this combined with data going back six years gave the Council an extensive and comprehensive breakdown of rough sleepers in Coventry.
- That the Council used its extensive knowledge of rough sleepers in Coventry to invite those at-risk using SWEP.
- That the 30% of rough sleepers not attending their booked accommodation cost the Council a significant amount and the tier system was designed to rectify that.
- That it would not be harder for rough sleepers to find accommodation with the Council but there were now some requirements for engagement and recording of these rough sleepers.
- As many participants failed to give any additional information, officers suspected previous users had alternate accommodation options but preferred to use SWEP.
- That the changes to SWEP were not aimed at cost cutting but focused on prioritising service for those most in need.
- That hotels and bed and breakfasts were rarely used as accommodation, only when necessary.
- That there were a suspected 72 rough sleepers across the city and currently 14 staff in the Outreach Team who are in regular contact.

Members requested:

- The number and take up of the previous year's SWEP. That officers facilitate arrangements for those members of the Board who wish to join SWEP officers with the Outreach Team during their evening session.

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

- 1) Notes the focusing of SWEP provision for 2025/26 on people known to be at risk of harm through the 2-tier model.
- 2) Invites officers to report back to the Board this municipal year to provide information on the SWEP usage and the impact of the changes made.

47. Work Programme 2025/2026

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

- 1) Requests that future meetings have no more than 3 items on the agenda due to time limitations.
- 2) Requests the following items be added to the Work Programme 2025/26:
 - A further annual report on fly-tipping listing the annual report performance numbers.
 - A follow up report updating the Board on the annual statistics of SWEP before May.
 - Noted that the Renters Reform Bill be scheduled as the only item for December, however arising from discussion at the meeting members agree that a further item on selective licensing be considered at that meeting.

48. 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 items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.30 pm)