

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 29 January 2026

Present:

Members:

- Councillor M Ali (Chair)
- Councillor R Bailey
- Councillor B Christopher
- Councillor G Hayre
- Councillor G Lewis
- Councillor E Ruane
- Councillor R Thay
- Councillor CE Thomas
- Councillor S Agboola (By Invitation)
- Councillor N Akhtar (By Invitation)
- Councillor J McNicholas (By Invitation)

Employees (by Service Area):

Regeneration and Economy M Lynch, D Nutall, B Saunders, C Styles, S Virman

Law and Governance G Holmes, A Veness

Apologies:

- Councillor T Sawdon
- Councillor P Hetherton
- Councillor F Abbott (sub Councillor C Thomas)

Public Business

54. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

55. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

56. Design Guide Consultation

(a) Draft Shopfront Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

The Board considered a briefing note from the Director of Regeneration and Economy that provided a review of the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) update of the Coventry Shopfront Design Guide.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defined Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) as 'documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They could be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues. Supplementary Planning Documents were capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but were not part of the development plan'.

Officers outlined how it was established good practice to update SPD's over time to ensure that they remained relevant and robust. This draft SPD was a comprehensive review and update of the 2014 Design Guidance on Shopfronts for Conservation Areas and Historic Buildings and was to provide clear guidance for applicants considering works to retail shopfronts across the city.

The quality of retail frontages could have a significant qualitative effect upon the character and quality of streets across the city. The draft SPD sought to provide best practice guidance for shop front design and established ten key principles of good design. The SPD also recognised and advised approaches across a range of architectural styles found across the city, which sought to ensure that the SPD would be able to guide development proposals across a wide variety of contexts.

The presentation outlined key tenets of the plan, including what was and was not allowed in shopfronts and examples of appropriate and inappropriate shop fronts. It also briefly outlined the history of the policy, and its continuing importance.

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

- That stickers obscuring the view of a shop window would be considered a breach of the SPD, as the guidelines stated there needed to be transparency from the window to the street.
- That some existing shops may not be compliant, but the SPD could only be enforced on new planning applications, not on shops approved prior to the SPD.
- That new planning applications are given a balanced judgment when compared to criteria on a case-by-case basis, so the restrictions were not black and white.
- The SPD is designed so meeting guidelines should not cost more, and failures to meet criteria should be due to design issues instead of cost based.
- That at its conception, the SPD was designed to recognise different areas are likely to look different and this would be taken into account so areas aren't forced to conform to design codes that don't suit them.

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

- 1) Notes their support for the public consultation of the updated Shopfront Design Guide SPD.**
- 2) Requested the following comments be considered by the Cabinet Member as part of the consultation feedback:**
 - a. Efforts be made to ensure reports are written in plain English.**

- b. Examples are to be balanced so as not to only use national chain shops as positive examples and smaller local shops as negative examples.**
- c. Ensure the report is clear on guidelines regarding neon signage.**

(b) Initial Coventry Design Code Consultation

The Board considered a briefing note from the Director of Regeneration and Economy that provided a review of the initial scoping consultation for the production of Coventry Design Codes.

Officers outlined how the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023 introduced at paragraph 15F, a requirement for Local Authorities to produce Design Codes which should be considered for planning permissions to be granted.

In September 2025, the City Council adopted its most recent Local Development Scheme (LDS) which set out the initial timelines of development of Design Codes to meet the requirements of the LURA. The timeline noted an initial anticipation of a number of codes being produced to reflect the distinct variety of contexts which were present within the Local Authority area, however that this approach and the number of codes could develop further based upon the findings of public consultation.

The initial stage of consultation took the form of a questionnaire to investigate what our residents viewed as important design characteristics and how they perceived their local context. The findings of this consultation would then inform the future progress and structure of the Design Codes.

Coventry benefited from a range of distinct character areas, and given the authorities tight administrative boundaries, these character areas were often found to be closely adjoining each other, introducing a challenge of how development proposals positively respond to differences in architectural style, scale and spatial characteristics.

In order for individual districts of the city retain their own identity, the design code sought to articulate the defining characteristics of an area, to inform how new development could best contribute to a local sense of place.

Officers worked closely with colleagues in the communications team to explore opportunities for promoting levels of consultation in this process. The findings of the initial scoping consultation were to help inform both the structure and the number of design codes which were produced for the city, drawing upon feedback which highlighted what architectural and character features the city's residents particularly valued.

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

- That although demographic data such as ward is collected, decisions are not made on a ward-by-ward basis as there can be large variations inside

wards, the data location is used in conjunction with how people feel about the areas.

- The team works with the Let's Talk team to ensure there are translation services available and the questionnaire is accessible to a broad range of people.
- Clarified that Question 7 listed roads that reach the city centre, and some significant roads in the city are not included as they terminate before the city centre.

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

- 1) Notes their support of the initial public consultation for the development of Design Codes for Coventry.**
- 2) Raised the following points on the consultation process:**
 - a. Request that a link to the online circulation be circulated to members to share on their social media.**
 - b. There should be further liaison with the Let's Talk team to ensure accessibility of non-English speaking members of the public and consider how to engage people face to face.**

57. Request by Culture Coventry Trust to Dispose of Collection Items, in line with Relevant Policies and Accreditation Standards.

The Board considered a briefing note from the Director of Regeneration and Economy that provided Members of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) with the context and details of the latest request by Culture Coventry Trust to dispose of collections items, in line with relevant policies and Museum Accreditation standards.

The note provided Members of Scrutiny with information concerning the nature of each item proposed for disposal and the rationale behind each recommendation. Large municipal organisations such as Coventry City Council collected a wide range of historical and artistic artefacts over time, through a combination of statutory archiving, donations and gifts, bequests, loans, commissions, and purchases.

It was requirement of Arts Council England's (ACE) Museum Accreditation scheme that Culture Coventry Trust (CCT) has a Collections Development Policy as part of the conditions laid down for granting Accredited Status to museums. Accreditation was a nationally recognised standard for Museums.

For one or more reasons, including the risk of contamination, a review of relevance and educational value of items to residents, or to free up space and resource to collect items of greater relevance to local people, the museum could have periodically reviewed arrangements and proposed to dispose of certain items from the collections in its care. It is important to note that 'Disposal' in this context was an asset management term, meaning deaccessioning/transfer out of the collection, rather than disposal in the waste/domestic sense.

The Collections Development Policy (shown in appendix 1 of the document pack) set out the principles that provided the governing bodies and workforce of the museums with a framework for responsible and ethical acquisition and disposal of collections. It provided clear procedures and decision-making processes common to Accredited Museums. The policy enabled museums to demonstrate the public benefit in their approach to collections development.

Members of Scrutiny Board were invited to an online workshop on 27th January 2026, ahead of the Scrutiny Board meeting, to consider in detail the items proposed for disposal. At the workshop Members responded to the full item list and supported the proposed disposals.

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

- That there is a formal process CCT uses when identifying if items require disposal and as requirements change and new items came in, they reconsidered the need and value of items in their collection.
- Culture Coventry Trust has roughly 300,000 items, which if not displayed are kept in storage.
- If items are no longer needed, they are first offered to other accredited museums, before being offered to other collections; destruction is the final resort.
- Although the museum does not swap items with other museums, they do advertise items to other museums and can acquire items from other museums.
- If CCT is considering selling items that were gifted to them, they check there are no conditions attached or legal issues that could arise from the sale.
- Items are only destroyed in extreme cases like mould or chemical damage which could impact the rest of the collection.
- When repair is not reasonable or financially viable, it could be possible for the items to be given to accredited or non-accredited collections willing or able to repair the items.
- All proceeds from sales are used in the maintenance and management of collections.

The Board specifically thanked officers for their hard work and reiterated the importance and value of bringing reports covering the full list of items to the Boards attention and would welcome future input into decisions on disposals.

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

- 3) Noted the contents of the presentation and report.**
- 4) Agreed with the outcome of the workshop to consider the full proposals, held on the 27th of January 2026.**
- 5) Supported the disposal process outlined in the briefing note and recommended that the Cabinet Member support the proposed list of collection items to be disposed by Culture Coventry Trust in accordance with their policy.**

58. **CCTV in Taxis - Task and Finish Group**

The Board considered a briefing note from the Director of Law and Governance that provided an overview of the recommendations from the CCTV in Taxis Task and Finish Group.

At their meeting on the 17th of July 2025, Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) agreed to establish a task and finish group to establish whether the Council should require taxis to have CCTV as part of Licensing requirements.

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

The Task and Finish Group have met twice so far. The first meeting was to agree the scope of the Task and Finish Group, as well as to provide some background and context to the work being planned. The second meeting was to consider research summarising key points from other local authorities' experience, as well as information on data collected by the police.

Information was circulated on the Governments proposals on national taxi licensing in response to the recommendations in the National Audit on Group Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Members were informed that the Department of Transport were proposing to launch a consultation on national standards for taxi licensing. Although there was no specific timeline on this and some of the details were still to be announced it was noted this could impact and recontextualise any recommendations made by the task and finish group on taxi licensing requirements.

Members of the T&F group agreed to meet one more time to consider the questions contained in the government's consultation and requested that the Council formally respond within the given consultation period.

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

- That Recommendation 1 was aimed at addressing concerns over a lack of formal reporting mechanisms of taxi driver-based crimes to the council.
- That any potential introduction of CCTV in taxis would help with the protection of both taxi drivers and passengers.

The board made note that although no formal recommendation had been made by the task and finish group on the matter, the board supported the introduction of CCTV in taxis in principle.

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

1. Request that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

- a. **Formalise the process for reporting taxi licence revocations under delegated process to ensure licencing committee are kept informed of licences that have been revoked.**

