

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 18 March 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor L Bigham (Chair)
Councillor F Abbott
Councillor M Ali
Councillor R Bailey
Councillor M Heaven
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor J Mutton
Councillor R Thay
Councillor S Walsh

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

Employees: D Butler, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
V Castree, Law and Governance
N Cowper, Transportation and Highways
C Eggington, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
C Hickin, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
G Holmes, Law and Governance
M Lawlor, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
M McHugh, Streetscene and Regulatory Services

Apologies: Councillor AS Khan (Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities)

Public Business

25. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

26. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February, 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

27. **Impact of Covid-19 on the Hot Streets Surveillance Project**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note about the Impact of Covid-19 on the Hot Streets Surveillance Project. The Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and equalities, Councillor P Akhtar, introduced the item and emphasised the importance of stopping fly-tipping.

Key points raised included;

- There was a focus on the top 30 hot streets. These were streets which saw the highest levels of fly-tipping. Very few residents reported fly-tipping on these streets.
- The pilot involving cameras was agreed in recognition of the fact there were fewer on foot patrols.
- The use of camera surveillance was not new but had predominantly been used to tackle commercial fly tipping as opposed to fly tipping in residential streets.
- COVID meant there was a challenge and delay to implementing Safer Streets, as the procurement and installation of the cameras was pushed back and staffing resource had been challenged due to shielding, self-isolation and redeployment.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers and the Deputy Cabinet Member, and received responses on the following issues including:-

- The streets were chosen due to high levels of fly tipping as well as good lines of sight for the cameras. Six streets were included in the pilot. The highest levels of fly tipping in the City were in Foleshill ward.
- Fly tipping in St Michael's ward could be addressed through cameras installed as part of the safer streets fund which would be operational by April.
- All wards had fly tipping hotspots. If the pilot was successful, then the service would look to expand it, should funding be available to do so. The pilot had been largely funded by fixed penalty notices for littering. Each camera cost around £8,500 which covered five years data and maintenance. The cameras could be redeployed to new locations.
- The aim of the pilot was to engineer behaviour change so that enforcement was unnecessary.
- Street Pride Officers letter dropped the areas in the pilot to explain the aims of the scheme. Street champions had been requested who would let the team know when there was flytipping so that the footage could be reviewed. Waste crews also knew to let the team know when there was a problem.
- The footage from the cameras could be used as evidence in all criminal activity.
- The 30 hotspot streets had remained in similar locations during COVID as pre-COVID.
- There had been a rise in flytipping across the City. The last 12 months had been challenging as COVID had impacted on waste collections and access to the tip during a time when many people were spring cleaning.
- Cameras were mounted on the lampposts to protect them from damage.
- Camera locations were data driven.
- The data could be accessed remotely.

- There were 20 cameras in total – 12 for the pilot and 8 mobile cameras.
- The list of current hot streets would be shared with Members.
- Joint work took place with the housing association when flytipping took place on their land.

The Scrutiny Board requested the following information:

- Waste tonnage at the Recycling and Reuse Centre
- Share the 30 hot streets with Members

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

- 1) Notes the actions and programmes in place to deliver this project.**
- 2) Requests that a further report is brought back to the Board in October 2021.**
- 3) Requests that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities references the ability to enforce and prosecute on signage used as part of the pilot project**

28. Draft Statement of Community Involvement

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, Councillor D Welsh, introduced the item and indicated that there was a consultation taking place on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement and that the Scrutiny Board's comments would be considered as part of that process. The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement and questioned officers and the Cabinet Member and received responses on the following issues including:-

- The Scrutiny Board welcomed the document which had last been refreshed in 2012.
- The statement would help to engage communities with the planning process. With larger developments this would mean getting developers to engage at an early stage and better publicity and notification when applications were due to go to Committee.
- There were opportunities to evolve how we engage with communities – continuing to use traditional methods when appropriate but also using technology to offer alternatives and attract input from a wider demographic
- The planning framework was set nationally and the Council would work flexibly within the constraints of it to get as much involvement as possible
- Local Plans need to be reviewed five years from adoption to see whether they remain up to date. The five-year trigger for Coventry is December 2022.
- It was possible for neighbourhoods preparing Neighbourhood Plans to cross local authority boundaries but a forum which recognised the area would need to be created and recognised.

- If the housing numbers were reviewed now, it would lead to an uplift in housing targets due to the Government making changes to the way in which housing need is calculated.

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

- 1) **Notes the content of the report**
- 2) **Supports the Statement of Community Involvement in principle**
- 3) **Supports the updating of the Coventry City Council Planning Portal to improve involvement of residents in the planning process**
- 4) **Recommends that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities arranges all Members briefings on the Statement of Community Involvement and on future changes to the planning process as prescribed by legislation**

29. Highway Maintenance Capital Funding - Challenge Fund Delivery

The Cabinet Member for City Services, Councillor P Hetherington, introduced the item and indicated that the last two years had seen wet winters which had impacted negatively on the state of the roads and pavements. The fund provided the Council with £400K to ensure the city roads are maintained to a safe standard. Examples of the improvements made to the pavements were shown.

The Scrutiny Board asked that their thanks be passed to officers for the work they had delivered using the funding.

RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) notes the progress on delivering the Challenge Fund Programme.

30. Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2020/21

The Scrutiny Board requested items on the impact of the introduction of a booking system on the use of the Recycling and Reuse Centre and the Statement of Community Involvement be included for consideration when developing the work programme for 2021/22.

31. Any other items of urgent business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.10 pm)