

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 24 October 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor M Ali (Chair)
Councillor B Christopher
Councillor L Kelly
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor E Ruane
Councillor T Sawdon

Other Members: Councillors G Duggins (Leader of the Council), S Agboola
(Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities)

Employees (by Service Area):

City Services S Elliot, S Morris

Law and Governance G Holmes, T Robinson, A Veness

Apologies: Councillor R Bailey, G Hayre, P Hetherington (Cabinet Member for City Services), S Nazir (Deputy Cabinet Member for City Services) and R Thay

Public Business

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

12. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th September 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Further to Minute 8, headed Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29 Consultation, the Board were provided with an update regarding information requested on the outcomes on the Women's Census being held in September 2024, together with the statistics for last year's Census. Officers indicated they are gathering information from the services that took part and will report back.

Additionally, further to Minute 9, headed Work Programme, the Board were made aware of an interim briefing note on resident parking schemes which is due to be heard in March 2025.

13. Garden Waste

The Board received a presentation and briefing note of the Strategic Lead for Environmental Services which updated them on the new chargeable Garden Waste Collection Service.

As part of the budget setting process for 2024/25 the introduction of a subscription for garden waste was one of 30 changes that were implemented as part of the revenue and capital budget for 2024/25. If residents wanted to have a garden waste service, they needed to purchase a yearly permit for £40 per bin. The new paid-for garden waste (brown-lidded bin) collections started the week beginning 3 June and the permits for the year run from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025.

The charges had been in place for almost six months, and officers covered the following key areas in the presentation attached at Appendix 1: subscriptions, collections, financials, challenges, impacts on other services including fly tipping, and bulky waste collections.

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

- The previous agreement to weekly food waste collections and ensuring that residents aren't left with food waste for a 2-week period.
- Outreach and engagement to tackle low garden waste subscription in wards such as Foleshill and St Michaels but simultaneous high fly tipping – fluctuations in the data due to properties without gardens and changing attitudes to fly tipping.
- The number of subscriptions (approximately 48,000) in comparison to the total number of properties (approximately 148,000), the steps to contact those properties who haven't yet subscribed, and the removal and re-purposing of non-subscribed bins.
- Staff training in the winter period when previously brown bin collections were stopped.
- Past food waste collection services and communication efforts to educate residents on the costs involved with disposing of food waste in brown bins.
- The development of a future food waste policy, benchmarking with neighbouring authorities to understand cost, and bringing information on food waste budget saving to a future meeting of the Board.
- The correlation between deprivation and low garden waste subscriptions and potential communication strategies – such as sharing information in other targeted languages – to engage residents in those deprived areas.
- Disparities between fly-tipping data and fly-capture data.
- The number of public reports of fly-tipping and the success rate of fly-tipping removal within the 5 working-day target.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Duggins, thanked the officers for the presentation and welcomed the future food waste proposals which had previously received cross-party support. In response to the challenges raised, he encouraged more education for residents to ensure a seamlessness in service and area specific communication strategies to help implement the new system of waste collection next year. The Board reiterated these messages and proposed that food waste collection and a further monitoring of the garden waste subscription service be added to the Work Programme for a future meeting.

RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) considers the information provided in Appendix 1 and that a further item on future food waste proposals be added to the Work Programme.

14. **Fly-tipping Performance 2023/24**

The Board received a presentation and briefing note of the Strategic Lead for Environmental Services on the performance of addressing fly-tipping during 2023/24.

At their meeting on the 25th September 2024, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a Cabinet Report on the One Coventry Performance Plan 2023-2024. Included in the report was progress made on the metric “cleaner streets, supported by action against fly-tipping”.

The number of fly-tipping incidents reduced from 6,840 in 2022/23 to 5,883 in 2023/24. The Environmental Enforcement Team exceeded the target of the 5% reduction and sought to continue to drive down fly-tipping through a combination of education and enforcement, focussing attention on the streets that are causing the most issues. Working closely with colleagues in streetpride and domestic waste, it was hoped that there will be further reductions over the coming years, whilst maintaining or increasing the current level of enforcement.

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

- The efforts taken to drive performance and the correlation between high fly-tipping and wards with the highest number of private landlords – increasing data collection beyond licensed House of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and cross-departmental work with the licensing team to tackle enforcement in areas experiencing this correlation.
- Spending on fly-tipping in the last 5 years and the efforts being made to work with housing organisations such as Citizen to make their fly-tipping agenda more effective.
- Efforts to crackdown on unregistered HMOs and their associated problems in terms of fly-tipping.
- The ‘Wall of Shame’ YouTube series and expanding CCTV cameras to all wards across the city to improve the effectiveness of the deterrent.
- Educating residents to the benefits of the bulky waste service.
- The variations in fly-tipping data (collections) and fly-capture data (national reporting system).
- Fly-tipping in the context of the new waste collection model being piloted next year – identifying problems and assessing solutions in both residential and commercial areas.
- Reactivity versus proactivity and how using new data systems such as PowerBI is making the service more proactive.
- The possibility of a ‘see it, say it, sorted’ reporting policy to allow residents to quickly and easily report fly-tipping.

Councillor Duggins reiterated his thanks to officers and recognised that fly-tipping is a challenge that every resident in Coventry must be committed to tackle. He urged residents to share any evidence of fly-tipping in their neighbourhoods with their councillors or report it directly to the council.

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

- 1) Considers the current performance to address fly-tipping in the city.**
- 2) Requests the Cabinet Member for City Services look at ways to increase income to address fly-tipping including from businesses and private landlords.**

15. Work Programme

The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that detailed issues on the Board's Work Programme for meetings of the Board for 2024/25.

RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) notes the issues on the Board's Work Programme for 2024/25 and requests that:

- 1) 'Housing Retrofitting and EPC Ratings' be added to the Work Programme.**
- 2) 'Litter Picking' be brought forward to a future meeting.**

16. 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 12.00 pm)