

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 2 July 2026

Present:

Members: Councillor E M Reeves (Chair)
 Councillor M Fogden
 Councillor A Hopkins
 Councillor S Keough
 Councillor D McCann
 Councillor S Nazir

Employees (by Service Area):

Law and Governance G Holmes, A Veness

Housing and J Crawshaw, P Fahy
Communities

Apologies: Councillor P Hetherton
 Councillor M Lapsa sub Keough

Public Business

67. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

68. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th of March 2026 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

69. Severe Weather Emergency Protocol Update

The Board considered a Briefing Note of the Director of Care, Health and Housing that set out the changes to the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol in Coventry and the rationale for these changes.

Officers explained how SWEP in 2025–2026 had transitioned from a high-volume emergency response to a more targeted and controlled service aimed specifically at people sleeping rough. This had resulted in better use of resources, improved engagement, and a more consistent delivery model.

However, they also highlighted emerging challenges around access, communication, and the need to respond more effectively to both new rough sleepers and individuals with no recourse to public funds. SWEP is there as a

response to support people who are rough sleeping and it could be seen that previously it was used by many others. It could provide opportunities to engage people earlier, but when the Rough Sleeping Team did this, it took attention away from those people sleeping out at night now and reduced the input for the people the service is targeted at.

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

- Before the implementation of the new policy, out of 334 rough sleepers referred 101 did not show up to accommodation.
- Officers explained that not all homeless people were rough sleepers, as they could be in temporary accommodations or “sofa surfing”, however all rough sleepers were homeless.
- That although budget savings had not been a reason for the policy change there had been financial savings as a result of the new policy as a better targeting those in need.
- The Council worked in conjunction with charities such as the Salvation Army to provide temporary accommodation to as many people as needed.
- Officers assured the Board that no one missed out on the service that needed it and that there was always temporary accommodation available for anyone that qualified for it.
- That although the Salvation Army had stringent criteria for those they housed, SWEP did not and would always provide accommodation regardless of drug use, criminal background or immigration status.
- That SWEP applied to both hot and cold weather and had come into effect at the most recent heatwave.
- SWEP could involve other emergency weather support, such as in hot weather providing water and space to stay out of the sun.
- SWEP could also come into effect if there was heavy rain or other dangerous weather conditions that could be dangerous for rough sleepers, in situations like these it was up to the discretion of the officers.

Officers agreed to circulate data surrounding previous years rough sleepers and homeless accessing SWEP compared to numbers following the changes to policy.

RESOLVED The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) noted the content of the briefing note made the following recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities.

- 1. Bring a written report to the board following the completion of consultation with partners on the impact of the changes.**

70. Work Programme 2026/2027

The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) received a Briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that provided committee members an opportunity to discuss potential items for the work programme 2026-27. The draft work programme for the Community and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) for 2026-27 was attached at Appendix 1.

Scrutiny work programmes are working documents and will adapt and change over the year to react to Members' requirements. Any item agreed at this meeting does not preclude any future amendments to the work programme.

Items brought over from the previous year were discussed as well as a document analysing work programme items covered in previous years detailing which had been covered and how the item was progressed.

RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) noted the work programme and agreed to add the following items to the work programme following consultation with officers:

- **Empty Properties Strategy**
- **Local Housing Authorities Temporary Accommodation Fund**
- **Litter Picking Task and Finish Group**
- **Cultural Gateway Spend**
- **Saint Basils Work Scheme**
- **Potholes and Road Surface Quality**

71. 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 10.48 am)