

Minutes of Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

26 February 2026 at 6.04pm at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor Davies (Chair)

<p>Councillors: Amardeep Singh (Deputy Chair) Councillor Jag Singh</p>	<p>Councillors: Richard Jeffcoat</p>
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Apologies: Councillors Ashraf, Hackett, Hemingway and Pall.

Officers present: Ben Percival (Service Director – Environment and Public Protection), Jennie Webb (Strategy and Development Manager), Heidi Marsh-Geyton (Waste Consultant) and Anthony Lloyd (Democratic Services Officer).

Meeting ended at 7.09pm.

7/26 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations made.

8/26 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2026 are confirmed as a correct record.

9/26 Urgent Additional Items of Business

There were no urgent additional items of business to consider.

10/26 Litter Bin Strategy

At its meeting on 4 November 2024 (minute 34/24 refers), the Board had recommended that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways consider the establishment of a formal litter bin strategy policy.

Before this, and in the absence of a strategy, there had been minimal coordination of litter bin installations. Sandwell had a very large number of litter bins totalling around 1659. The majority were in a good or average condition. However, based on the consultation results, the number of

requests for bin emptying and for new bin installations, there was a clear opportunity to improve litter bin distribution.

A Draft New Bin Scoring Matrix had been developed to help improve litter bin distribution which considered a range of criteria including the intensity of use of a location, proximity to existing bins and facilities and the number of requests received for a bin at that location six months prior.

The overall aim of the Strategy was to ensure that bins were in the locations where they were most needed. It was noted that the Strategy also aimed to ensure that those who littered were consistently prosecuted to promote a zero-tolerance approach to littering within Sandwell. If it was perceived by the public that enforcement activity was not often pursued, individuals were more likely to litter as it would be assumed that their actions would have no consequences.

Engaging and educating residents was key to improving litter issues in Sandwell. The Strategy also recognised the valuable contribution that Litter Watch made on education, raising environmental awareness and managing the litter pick volunteers.

The draft Litter Strategy and New Bin Scoring Matrix had been developed in 2024, but it was decided at that time to delay the implementation until after alternate weekly collections had been introduced to allow the Strategy to address any littering issues that may have arisen from the new service. The new service was successfully introduced in September 2025, and no changes had been made to the original draft.

Following questions from members, clarifications were provided as follows:-

- other local authorities with high performance in regards to good quality recycling waste still struggled with obtaining uncontaminated waste from street bins;
- street bins had no provision for recycling, however new bins would be installed to reflect the current arrangement with residential bins;
- segregated bins would be introduced to parks however, these were emptied by the parks team and not serco;
- the Strategy created a standardised approach to the roll-out of bins with many being introduced as older bins require replacement;
- the Strategy worked in tangent with proposals to invest significantly more in enforcement;
- certain areas had significantly more requests for litter bin emptying due to the location being in a built up area such as a local high street; and
- elected members would be consulted in the future on any potential locations of new street bins.

Members sought clarification on the rationale of the Council's current arrangements for the emptying of litter bins situated in Sandwell's parks and green spaces.

The Board expressed concern that introduction of the new style of litter bins, both in parks and on public streets, would mean that inconsistencies would occur with how data was recorded and that data may be harder to collect due to the differing arrangements. Members felt that a consistent approach would allow the Council to obtain data to better determine not only recycling performance, but also to identify where additional bins may be required.

Resolved that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways reviews and rationalises who is responsible for the emptying of litter bins in Sandwell's parks and green spaces to ensure the best use of resources.

11/26

Street Cleanliness and Fly Tipping

Fly-tipping was a significant issue in Sandwell. Each year between 8,000 and 10,000 fly tipping instances were reported. In the first three quarters of 2025/26 more than 97% of reported fly-tips on public land were cleared within 24 hours. Despite this, it was reported that enforcement had been less successful, with only a small number (fewer than 20) of fixed penalty notices (FPN) issued each year.

However, since the end of October 2025, 15 FPNs had been issued. Whilst many had been paid, the remainder had either successfully been prosecuted or were currently with Legal Services to process to court for prosecution.

Following officer consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways, the following priorities had been agreed by the Cabinet Member:-

- Residents better supported to manage household waste.
- Improved recycling / reduced recycling contamination.
- Reduced fly-tipping / increased fly-tip enforcement.
- Dedicated Fly tip enforcement teams.
- Additional Recycling support officers
- Expanded CCTV provision.
- Provision of replacement lighting columns (where required) to accommodate CCTV cameras in existing and emerging hotspot areas.
- Pop-up recycling centres.
- Segregated Street bins.
- On-street bin storage with locks were necessary.

The outcomes from the interventions would be carefully monitored and comprehensive performance management frameworks were already in place for both recycling and fly tipping.

Following further discussion, the following clarifications were made:-

- fly-tipping enforcement was taken against perpetrators that were outside of the borough and not just those from within;
- contact had been made with other authorities who currently ran "pop-up" recycling centres successfully;

- the use of pop-up recycling centres would be limited to those in the surrounding postcode; and
- pop-up tips would be also used to provide members of the public with information on how they could raise concerns about potential fly-tippers and how to spot them.

It was noted that a reasonably large amount of waste received at the Council's recycling centre was in good condition or only in need of minor repairs. Members were therefore keen to explore options for the introduction of a re-use facility at the recycling centre so that waste that was in good condition could be recycled or re-used before being redistributed to members of the public, either for free or for a small price. Not only would this assist the Council's climate and sustainability goals, but may also assist residents who were struggling or in need of furniture.

Resolved that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways introduces a "re-use" facility at Sandwell Council's household recycling centre so that furniture and other household goods can be recycled, upholstered or re-used by members of the public.