

To Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Date 21st March 2012

Subject Response to call-in of the decision of the Cabinet Member (City Services) 28th February 2012: Response to Petitions Received Concerning the 'Shared Space' Concept

1.0 The decision which is the subject of the Call-in and the reason for Call-in

1.1 On 28th February 2012, the Cabinet Member (City Services) agreed to:

1. Endorse the continued implementation of the 'low speed environment' principle, as part of the public realm schemes associated with the Coventry 2012 project.
2. Approve continued detailed monitoring of the new road layouts through traffic, personal injury accident, pedestrian and speed data surveys.
3. Approve funding allocation to the Visual and Impairment Team to provide additional rehabilitation resources to retrain visually impaired service users to enable them to be confident that they can use the new road layouts safely.

1.2 The decision was called in by Councillors Nellist, Bailey and Field and the reason for the Call-in is:

1. To further explore arrangements for enforcing the proposed 20 mph speed limit at the junctions where 'low speed environment' principles have been applied;
2. To further explore how 'detailed monitoring of the new road layouts is actually to be organised and reported back on, particularly in the light of recent academic research on comparable schemes;
3. To further explore the level of funding for, and timescale of, arrangements to be put in place for additional rehabilitation resources for visually impaired service users.

2.0 Background to the decision

2.1 The Cabinet Member (City Services Report) of 28th February 2012 report, which was circulated with the agenda for this meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and is the subject of the call-in, approved the continued implementation of the 'low speed environment' principle, continued detailed monitoring of the new road layouts and funding to retrain visually impaired service users. The following reports provide the context leading to this report:

Cabinet Report, 30th March 2010,
Public Report 5 – Title: Transportation and Maintenance Capital Programme
This report approved the Gosford Street scheme.

Cabinet Reports, 21st January 2011,
Public Report 5 - Title: Coventry 2012 – The Olympics Legacy
Public Report 6 - Title: Coventry 2012 – Public Realm
These reports approved the main programme of city centre works including Broadgate, Station to Bull Yard and associated schemes including Hales St/Burges.

Cabinet Report, 15th March 2011,
Public Report 17 – Title: Transportation and Maintenance Capital Programme
This report approved the capital funding from the 2011/12 programme for the city centre works.

Cabinet Member (City Services) report, 12 April 2011
Public Report 4 – Title: Report - Objections to proposed Traffic Regulation Orders relating to the Coventry 2012 Public Realm and Olympic Legacy
This report dealt with the Traffic Regulation Orders relating to traffic movement and changes to pedestrian crossings.

Licensing & Regulatory Committee, 4th October 2011
Public Report 5 – Title: Objections to the proposed city centre taxi rank changes
This report dealt with objections to the changes to city centre taxi ranks.

Licensing & Regulatory Committee, 7th October 2011
Public Report 3 – Title: Objections to the proposed city centre taxi rank changes
This meeting was reconvened from the 4th October and included a site visit to look at new city centre taxi ranks and access to them.

Cabinet Member (City Services) report, 28th February 2012
Public Report 6 – Title: Responses to proposed changes to controlled pedestrian crossings in the city centre.
This report approved the removal of certain traffic light facilities and the installation in their place of new zebra crossing facilities at various locations across the city centre.

3.0 Material Facts relating to the specific reasons for this Call-in

1. To further explore arrangements for enforcing the proposed 20 mph speed limit at the junctions where 'low speed environment' principles have been applied;

We are changing the driving environment in the city centre to create a 'low speed environment'. The changes are based on national guidance contained in Manual for Streets 2 and the Department for Transport's Local Transport Note 1/11 'Shared Space'.

The low speed environment will be reinforced by the introduction of a 20mph Zone encompassing the whole city centre. It will be clearly signed at gateways to the city centre and will be further reinforced throughout the city centre by the use of roundels painted on the road. The introduction of the 20mph zone will be accompanied with a publicity and education campaign to explain how the new traffic layout in the city centre works and the reasoning behind it. We are, in particular, targeting bus and taxi operators and their drivers and work is already underway on this.

The cumulative effect of these measures will be to make the 20mph zone self enforcing. An early indicator of success has been the reduction in average speed on Gosford Street from 24mph to 18mph. The advantage of this approach over reliance on fixed cameras is that compliance is much greater over the city centre as fixed cameras only influence speed over a short section of road. Moreover, fixed cameras can divert drivers' attention away from the surrounding environment and they encourage braking and accelerating.

Achieving lower speed is central to the success of this scheme and a formal regular monitoring regime is in place (see reason 2 for call-in below for details). If any problems are identified, short-term solutions will be applied, until they can be fully resolved through changes in the design of the street.

2. To further explore how 'detailed monitoring of the new road layouts is actually to be organised and reported back on, particularly in the light of recent academic research on comparable schemes;

Aside from regular monitoring by officers on site and through CCTV, all schemes are subject to formal monitoring through the Stage 3 (post completion), Stage 4a (12month) and 4b (36month) Road Safety Audit process. Any issues identified, along with any proposed changes to address them, are to be reported back to the Cabinet Member.

We have collected 'before' data and are putting in place regular monitoring of speed and traffic flows across the city centre. The first formal monitoring will take place late September/early October 2012. This will allow for all the changes to be put in place and is clear of the holiday period. We are proposing to monitor on a 6 monthly basis initially. All accident data will be monitored on a regular basis.

It is proposed to report back to the Cabinet Member on a 6 monthly basis with the outcome from the monitoring exercise and to identify any actions that may be necessary.

3. To further explore the level of funding for, and timescale of, arrangements to be put in place for additional rehabilitation resources for visually impaired service users.

Funding was approved for the Visual and Hearing Impairment Team (VHI) to provide additional rehabilitation resources to retrain visually impaired service users at the Cabinet Member meeting of 28th February 2012. This is in line with the 2010 Equality Act that requires us to make 'reasonable adjustments' where we carry out works that may impact on disabled people.

The VHI Team currently have 20 cases on their waiting list for mobility training where the person needs assistance due to the city centre changes. The average rehabilitation program for this type of mobility training entails 35 hours of work per person, at current levels the additional workload is around 700 hours additional work. Therefore to deal with the current demand for referrals this will cost around £14,000.

The Guide Dog Association (GDA) has indicated they have 15 Guide Dog owners who are most likely to use the city centre and are in need of retraining. They have estimated they would need approximately £2,000 to retrain them.

Accordingly £16,000 has been set aside as part from the Coventry 2012 Public Realm Improvements budget to fund these additional training requirements, with the additional re-training to be implemented as soon as possible upon substantial completion of the city centre works, which is scheduled for May/June 2012.

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