

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

21st March 2012

Scrutiny Co-ordination

Committee Members Present: Councillor Blundell
Councillor Foster
Councillor Lakha
Councillor Lancaster
Councillor Lapsa (substitute for Councillor Taylor)
Councillor Mrs Lucas (Chair)
Councillor McNicholas (Deputy Chair)
Councillor M. Mutton
Councillor Ruane
Councillor Sawdon
Councillor Welsh

Other Members Present: Councillor Bailey
Councillor Harvard (Cabinet Member (City Services))
Councillor Nellist

Employees Present: H. Abraham (Customer & Workforce Services Directorate)
P. Boulton (City Services and Development Directorate)
G. Holmes (Chief Executive's Directorate)
C. Knight (City Services and Development Directorate)
J. Parry (Assistant Chief Executive)
M. Salmon (Customer & Workforce Services Directorate)
P. Young (City Services and Development Directorate)
A. West (Chief Executive's Directorate)

Apology: Councillor Taylor

Public Business

111. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

112. Minutes

(a) The minutes of the meetings held on 18th January 2012 and 8th February 2012 were signed as true records.

(b) There were no matters arising.

113. Consideration of Call-in Stage 2 – Response to Petitions Received Concerning the ‘Shared Space’ Concept

The Committee received a report of the Director of City Services and Development that had been considered by Cabinet Member (City Services) (his minute 71/11 referred) and was Called-in by Councillors Bailey, Field and Nellist.

The Cabinet Member report sought approval for 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 Cabinet Member had 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.

The reason for the call-in was:

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.

The Call-in had been deemed valid by the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on advice from the Assistant Director (Democratic Services), in conjunction with the Council Solicitor/Assistant Director (Legal Services), the Call-in reason having met the requirements of the Council's Constitution Scrutiny Rules on the Call-in Procedure and the criteria decided by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.

Councillor Bailey and Councillor Nellist were in attendance at the meeting and spoke in support of the Call-in, their comments included:

- Concern that the Department of Transport's Local Transport Note 'Shared Spaces' provided examples of Shared Space principles that were not comparable to Coventry.
- Witnessed a vehicle travelling at speed through a Shared Space – legal enforcement required to restrict speed of vehicles to 20 mph.
- Education in the use of low speed environments/Shared Spaces was essential - out of town vehicles and Olympics visitors may not have understanding of the concept.
- Concern that the funding allocated to retrain visually impaired service users was insufficient and that funding provision for those with dual impairments needed consideration.
- Following consideration of the City Centre proposals by the Blind Association and their subsequent response, further discussions were required to ensure that the issues they had identified were addressed.

The Committee received a Briefing Note of the Director of City Services and Development that responded to the Call-in:

Enforcing the proposed 20 mph speed limit at the junctions where 'low speed environment' principles have been applied

The driving environment in the City Centre was being changed, based on national guidance contained in Manual for Streets 2 and the Department for Transport's Local Transport Note 1/11 'Shared Space', to create a 'low speed environment'. The environment would be reinforced by the introduction of a 20mph Zone encompassing the whole City

Centre and would be clearly signed at City Centre gateways; they would be further reinforced by roundels painted on the road. The introduction of the 20mph zone would be accompanied by a publicity and education campaign to explain how the new traffic layout worked and the reasoning behind it. Work was already underway on this with Bus and taxi operators and their drivers. The cumulative effect of these measures would be to make the 20mph zone self-enforcing. An early indicator of success had been the reduction in average speed on Gosford Street from 24mph to 18mph. This approach was advantageous, over reliance on fixed cameras, as compliance was much greater over the City Centre. Fixed cameras only influenced speed over a short section of road, could divert drivers' attention away from the surrounding environment and encouraged braking and accelerating. Achieving lower speed was central to the success of the Scheme, a formal regular monitoring regime was in place and any problems identified would be resolved with short-term solutions, until they could be fully resolved through street design changes.

Detailed monitoring and reporting back on the new road layouts

In addition to regular monitoring on site and through CCTV, all schemes were subject to formal monitoring through the Stage 3 (post completion), Stage 4a (12 month) and 4b (36 month) Road Safety Audit process. Any issues identified, along with any proposed changes to address them, would be reported to Cabinet Member (City Services). 'Before' data had been collected and regular monitoring of speed and traffic flows across the City Centre was being put in place. The first formal monitoring would take place late September/early October 2012, which allowed for all the changes to be put in place and was clear of the holiday period. All accident data would be monitored on a regular basis and 6 monthly reports would be submitted to Cabinet Member on the outcome of the monitoring exercise, identifying any actions necessary.

Level of funding for, and timescale of, arrangements to be put in place for additional rehabilitation resources for visually impaired service users

Funding had been approved for the Visual and Hearing Impairment Team to provide additional rehabilitation resources to retrain visually impaired service users, in line with the 2010 Equality Act that required 'reasonable adjustments' where works were carried out that may impact on disabled people. The Team's waiting list was currently 20 cases for mobility training where assistance was needed due to City Centre changes. The average rehabilitation program for this mobility training entailed 35 hours work per person and at current levels the additional workload was around 700 hours. The current demand for referrals would cost around £14,000. The Guide Dog Association had indicated that they had 15 Guide Dog owners most likely to use the City Centre that would require retraining. At an estimated cost of £2,000. Accordingly, £16,000 had been set aside from the Coventry 2012 Public Realm Improvements budget to fund training requirements. Additional re-training was to be implemented as soon as possible upon substantial completion of the City Centre works, scheduled for May/June 2012.

The Cabinet Member (City Services) informed the Committee that research evidence, together with accident statistics, suggested that safety in Coventry had been enhanced by the implementation of the Shared Space Concept. The Concept had shown that shared spaces encouraged more care and prompted natural caution. The Cox Street Scheme had been in place for 6 months and had shown a 75% reduction in accidents to date. He confirmed that public safety was paramount and that the Schemes would be regularly monitored with any accidents being reported to Cabinet Member (City Services) immediately. He also confirmed that the CCTV in the City Centre would be 'stepped up' as necessary to assist with monitoring and that work would continue to ensure that schemes were successful and safe.

The Committee questioned officers on aspects of the report and received the following information:

- Examples of Shared Spaces around the country, comparable to Coventry, had indicated that change to the local transport environment had an effect on driving that prompted natural caution, awareness and consideration of others.
- Shared Spaces were part of a holistic approach to a low speed environment across the City Centre and all gateways to the City Centre would have speed limit signage, narrowed roadways and increased on-street parking to support the Scheme.
- Any problems identified would be designed out and modifications introduced as necessary - modifications had been introduced at the Gosford Street Scheme.
- Formal monitoring of the speed of vehicular traffic and the pattern of pedestrian flow, would be reported through a comprehensive road safety audit process.
- Incidents would be reported immediately to Cabinet Member (City Services), the report would include details of accidents and the speed and volume of traffic.
- CCTV was currently used to monitor vehicular and pedestrian movement and would be increased as appropriate.
- New Traffic Regulation Orders for On-street parking in the City Centre, and the use of CCTV, would enhance parking enforcement.
- Night-time vehicular and pedestrian activity at Shared Spaces would be monitored.
- The installation of/moving of Zebra crossings would be undertaken to address any problems.
- Shared Space awareness training would be provided for Bus Drivers & Taxi Drivers.
- Further discussions would be held with the Blind Association to address issues they had raised in their response to the City Centre proposals.
- Further funding would be made available as necessary to assist with training for visually impaired service users.

The Committee requested that:

- Officers explore the inclusion of Shared Spaces information on the Council's Smartapp for the Olympics.
- To assist the visually impaired, consideration be given to the installation of Pelican crossings in the City Centre, where appropriate.
- The monitoring of Shared Spaces be enhanced during the Olympics, when there would be many visitors to the City.
- Following the implementation of each Shared Space, monitoring reports be submitted to Economy, Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Board (Scrutiny Board 3) and Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Board (Scrutiny Board 4) as follows: 3 months after implementation, 6 months after implementation, 12 months after implementation, then follow the formal Road Safety Audit process thereafter.
- Monitoring reports to include the number of accidents, range of vehicle speeds, traffic volume, pedestrian movement and any modification proposals to address problems identified.

The Committee considered the Call-in, the comments of the Elected Members supporting the Call-in, the response by Cabinet Member (City Services) and the information provided by Officers, and, following a show of hands, decided to concur with the Cabinet Member (City Services) decision.

RESOLVED that:

(1) the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee concurs with the decision of Cabinet Member (City Services) to:

- **Endorse the continued implementation of the 'low speed environment' principle, as part of the public realm schemes associated with the Coventry 2012 project.**
- **Approve continued detailed monitoring of the new road layouts through traffic, personal injury accident, pedestrian and speed data surveys.**
- **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.**

(2) That Officers explore the inclusion of Shared Spaces information on the Council's Smartapp for the Olympics

(3) Following the implementation of each Shared Space, monitoring reports be submitted to Economy, Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Board (Scrutiny Board 3) and Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Board (Scrutiny Board 4) as follows: 3 months after implementation, 6 months after implementation, 12 months after implementation, then follow the formal Road Safety Audit process thereafter.

114. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2011/2012

The Committee noted the Work Programme for 2011/2012 and that the 'if required' meeting scheduled for 18th April 2012 would not be required.

115. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

116. Meeting Evaluation

The Committee concluded that the Call-in discussion had been very thorough.

(Meeting closed at: 11.20 a.m.)