

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for City Services held at 3.00 pm on
Monday, 8 April 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor P Hetherton (Cabinet Member)
Councillor R Lakha (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Other Members present: Councillor R Bailey
Councillor J Birdi
Councillor K Taylor

Employees (by Directorate):

Place T Cowley, R Goodyer, J Logue, M Salmon, K Seager,
C Whitehouse

Apologies: There were no apologies

Public Business

68. Declarations of Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

69. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 25th February 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

70. Petition - The Firs Cul-de-sac, Resurfacing of Pavements

The Cabinet Member for City Services considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) that responded to a petition requesting the resurfacing of pavements in the Firs Cul-de-sac. The petition, bearing 14 signatures, had been submitted by an Earlsdon Ward resident, who attended the meeting and spoke in support of the petition. Councillor Taylor, the Councillor Sponsoring the Petition and an Earlsdon Ward Councillor, also attended the meeting and spoke on behalf of the petitioners. The report had been requested by the Petition Spokesperson, following receipt of a determination letter, a copy of which was attached as an Appendix to the report that advised of the investigations undertaken, the action proposed and approved in response to the issues raised.

The report indicated that the Firs cul-de-sac was a small no through road and the pavements provided local property access serving eight properties. There was low pedestrian usage as there were no linking routes, either pedestrian or vehicular via this road. It was subject to parking restrictions by way of double and single yellow lines. A location plan was attached as a further Appendix to the report.

Records showed that the last annual programmed safety inspection took place on the 17th July 2018 at which time only two minor defects were identified which required attention and repair. Following receipt of the Petition an engineer made a further visit on 25th September 2018 to make an assessment of the construction and overall condition of the pavements. It was noted that the pavements were one metre in width restricted to less at various locations by overhanging vegetation from the private properties. The pavements were predominately tarmac with some recent reinstatements. The pavements were aged and although not aesthetically pleasing at the time of inspection, there were no intervention level defects identified.

Following the engineer's assessment, and given the current condition and usage, the recommended treatment would be reconstruction of the pavements. This would be held as a site on Coventry City Council's forward programme list and the condition of the pavements would continue to be monitored and scored against all other similar sites citywide. If a priority score was reached it would be included in a future capital funded improvement programme. This was a consistent approach that was taken for the prioritisation of footway schemes across the City.

Councillor Taylor referred to the criteria applied to assess the condition of pavements. He was concerned that residents did not understand what the 'standard' was and what score was reached in order to identify pavements for repair.

The Petition Spokesperson outlined the concerns of the residents indicating that the paving had been deteriorating over many years and, although the kerb stones were in good condition, much of the paving and/or tarmac had broken up or come loose. The effects of the winter weather and cars visiting the local school and parked along the pavements, had exacerbated the problem and the loose stones were now a tripping hazard and were unsafe.

The Council's Highways Technical Services Manager explained that on a safety inspection, Inspectors would identify anything 20mm or greater in depth, and slightly deeper on the highway, as in need of repair work. Independent Surveyors and the City Council's own Surveyors made annual inspections of pavements applying a scoring system to prioritise intervention work. Although pavements at The Firs were old and tired and in some places were significantly narrowed by residents' overgrown shrubbery that required cutting back, the road had only scored 14 against others that had scored much higher, 33 being the highest score recorded. Having regard to the Council's limited budget for this work, criteria had to be applied to ensure that the areas in the poorest condition were dealt with as a priority.

The Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member acknowledged that there were many streets across the City with paving in poor condition but confirmed that budget restrictions required that criteria be applied for intervention level defects to be identified.

The Cabinet Member requested that Highway Inspectors re-visit The Firs to meet with the petition organiser and make appropriate arrangements for the area to be swept of loose or broken paving.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

- 1) Notes the petitioners' concerns.**
- 2) Endorses that the actions confirmed by determination letter to the petition spokesperson, as detailed in point 1 of the determination letter set out in Appendix B to the report.**
- 3) Agrees that a Highways Inspector meets with the Petition Organiser on site and that appropriate arrangements are made for the area to be swept of loose or broken paving.**

71. Petition - To Improve Safety at the Junction of Abbey Road and London Road

The Cabinet Member for City Services considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) that responded to an e-petition requesting the installation of traffic signals at the junction of Abbey Road and London Road, Whitley. The petition, bearing 212 signatures, had been submitted by a Cheylesmore Ward resident, who attended the meeting and spoke in support of the petition. Councillor Bailey, the Councillor Sponsoring the Petition and a Cheylesmore Ward Councillor, also attended the meeting and spoke on behalf of the petitioners. The report had been requested by the Petition Spokesperson following receipt of a determination letter, a copy of which was attached as an Appendix to the report, which advised of the road safety measures recently installed to reduce and prevent accidents at this junction. A further Appendix provided a location Plan.

The report indicated that London Road was a major route into and out of Coventry, and carried a high volume of traffic. Abbey Road and the surrounding road network comprised residential properties and a number of Schools.

The installation of traffic signals required a number of important considerations, including personal injury collisions, vehicle flows, dominant turning manoeuvres and project cost. Analysis of personal injury collisions at this junction revealed that accidents predominantly related to speeding vehicles. To prevent collisions at this junction Average Speed Cameras (ASE) had been installed. There were currently no proposals to signalise London Road's junction with Abbey Road, however this junction would continue to be monitored as part of the annual collision review.

As part of the 2018/2019 Local Safety Scheme Programme, ASE cameras had been installed on London Road, from its junction with A46 to its junction with Allard Way. ASE cameras were a new speed enforcement technique that detected vehicles through Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and calculated average speed by measuring the time taken to travel between defined points, a known distance apart. The benefits of ASE included speed management and enhanced road safety over the length of the road, including its junction with Abbey Road. ASE became operational in January 2019 and revealed that the number of drivers speeding at this location had decreased. Ensuring drivers travelled at safe speeds would significantly reduce the likelihood of accidents at this junction. A comprehensive evaluation would be undertaken after ASE had been operational for 6 months, and the results would be shared with the petition organiser and Local Councillors.

In addition to the ASE project, a number of other road safety measures had been installed on Abbey Road and surrounding roads in close proximity to the two Schools. This included the installation of a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) installed in December 2017. An analysis of vehicular speeds since installation indicated that the VAS was successful in ensuring drivers drove within the speed limit; with 85th percentile speeds of 26mph and mean speeds of 17mph recorded. In July 2018, 'School Ahead' signs and carriageway 'SLOW' markings were also installed on Abbey Road and surrounding roads on all approaches to the two Schools with the aim of the measures to ensure drivers travelled at appropriate speeds on Abbey Road and surrounding roads. Observations revealed that each of the measures optimised road safety at this location. A School time 20mph speed limit was proposed to be installed in the 2019/2020 financial year.

The Petition Organiser outlined the concerns of the petitioners indicating that the London Road was a very busy road for buses, vehicles and pedestrians and incidents at the junction of Abbey Road and London Road had resulted in a fatality and many minor accidents. The average speed camera installation had assisted in slowing traffic speed along the London Road but sheer volume of traffic was a real concern. The design of the Abbey Road junction made the turning onto the London Road very hazardous with two lanes of traffic from the left and one lane of traffic from the right to consider. The installation of traffic signals at the junction would be a suggested resolution to the problem. Having regard to the current traffic issues and the impact of any potential further entrances/exits onto the London Road, further developments off London Road would require the careful consideration of access arrangements.

Councillor Bailey welcomed the recently installed average speed cameras on London Road and acknowledged the difference they have made to vehicle speed. He referred to the huge increase in traffic levels and the effects this has had on the Abbey Road and London Road junction, which has become dangerous both for vehicles and pedestrians. Councillor Bailey acknowledged the continued monitoring of the junction as part of the annual collision review and indicated that, having regard to budget restrictions, he would welcome any improvements in the future.

Councillor Lakha acknowledged the increase in traffic levels along the London Road and that the Abbey Road and London Road junction and asked that careful consideration be given to access arrangements at the design stage, for any further developments off London Road.

The Council's Highway Development Manager confirmed that this junction had already been identified as a 'hot spot' and was therefore listed for continued monitoring. He also confirmed that careful consideration would be given to traffic management measures at the junction for any proposed developments.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

1) Notes the petitioners' concerns

- 2) **Endorses the actions confirmed by determination letter to the petition spokesperson, as detailed in paragraphs 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8 of the report, and monitor the impact of measures already installed.**
- 3) **Officers be requested to consider the access arrangements for future developments in the area, having regard to the current traffic issues and the impact of any potential further entrances/exits onto the London Road, particularly at the Abbey Road junction.**

72. **Petition - Derwent Road, Condition of Pavements**

The Cabinet member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) that responded to a petition requesting that the footpaths at Derwent Road be brought up to safety standards. The petition, bearing 51 signatures, had been submitted by a Bablake Ward resident, who was unable to attend the meeting. Councillor Birdi, the Councillor sponsoring the Petition and a Bablake Ward Councillor, attended the meeting and spoke on behalf of the petitioners. The report had been requested by the Petition Spokesperson, following receipt of a determination letter, a copy of which was attached as an Appendix to the report, which advised of the investigations undertaken, the action proposed and approved in response to the issues raised.

The report indicated that Derwent Road was a local residential road and the footways provided access for pedestrians to and from properties and connected to Greycoat Road and Rylston Avenue. Some properties were served by the appropriate vehicle access arrangements but others were driving over the footway to access their frontage hard standing. An Appendix to the report provided a location plan.

Records showed that the last annual programmed safety inspection took place on the 11th November 2018 at which time some of the paving slabs were identified as requiring removal and replacement with tarmac to provide a safe and sustainable repair, some further areas had been attended to in January 2019.

Following receipt of the petition an engineer made a separate visit (11th February 2019) to make an assessment of the construction and overall condition of the pavements. It was noted that the pavements were 1.8 metre in width consisting mainly of slab construction with some areas of bituminous material reinstatements. The pavements were aged and although not aesthetically pleasing at the time of inspection, there were no intervention level defects identified.

Following the engineer's assessment on the 11th February 2019, and given the current condition and usage, the recommended treatment would be reconstruction of the pavements. The pavements along Derwent Road would be held on the Council's forward programme list and their condition would continue to be monitored and scored against all other similar sites citywide. If a priority score was reached at any time, the pavements would be included in a future capital funded improvement programme, budget permitting, and until such time, any defects at or above the intervention level as identified would continue to be made safe.

Councillor Birdi referred to the report and thanked officers on behalf of the residents for the continued monitoring of the condition of the Derwent Road pavements and its inclusion on the Council's forward programme list.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

- 1) **Notes the petitioners' Concerns.**
- 2) **Approves that the pavements along Derwent Road be held on Coventry City Council's forward programme list and their condition continues to be monitored and scored against all other similar sites citywide. If a priority score is reached the pavements to be included in a future capital funded improvement programme, budget permitting, and until such time, continue to make safe any defects at or above the intervention level as identified.**

73. **Section 278 and Section 38 Fees**

The Cabinet Member for City Services considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) relating to the proposed amendment of Section 278 and Section 38 highway adoption fees.

In accordance with the City Council's procedure for dealing with fees and charges, those relating to highway adoptions, were heard by the Cabinet Member for City Services. It was standard practice to review each of the fees and charges and increase in line with current inflation levels on an annual basis. This year however, it was proposed to uplift and amend the existing Section 278 and Section 38 fees above the current rate of inflation, such that the fees were aligned with the level of fees charged by neighbouring Authorities.

In addition, a level of fee charges would be introduced for developments that continued beyond a 2-year construction phasing programme. Currently the Authority applied the fee to the cost estimate of the works, which was based on the highway operational charge out rates. On larger scale developments officer time and input could be required over a significant length of time due to developer delays and the introduction of the additional fee regime would assist in recovering costs for that time. This should also encourage developers to complete their developments in a timely manner and see the adoption of new highways coming forward more efficiently to the benefit of the residents of the new estates.

It was also intended that the increase in fees would provide sufficient additional revenue to provide continuing flood risk and drainage work in connection with the Section 278 and Section 38 process.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services approves the uplift and amendment to fees in connection with the Technical Approvals of Section 278 and Section 38 works, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

74. **Petitions Determined by Letter and Petitions Deferred Pending Further Investigations**

The Cabinet Member for City Services considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) that provided a summary of the recent Petitions received that were to be determined by letter, or where decisions had been deferred pending further investigations and holding letters were being circulated. Details of the individual Petitions were set out in an Appendix attached to the report and included target dates for action. The report was submitted for monitoring and transparency purposes.

The report indicated that each Petition had been dealt with on an individual basis, with the Cabinet Member considering advice from officers on appropriate action to respond to the petitioners' request. When it had been decided to respond to the Petition without formal consideration at a Cabinet Member meeting, both the relevant Councillor sponsoring the Petition (if any) and/or the petition organiser/spokesperson could still request that their Petition be the subject of a Cabinet Member report.

Members noted that where holding letters were being sent, this was because further investigation work was required. Once matters had been investigated either a follow up letter would be sent or a report submitted to a future Cabinet Member meeting.

RESOLVED that the actions being taken by officers as detailed in the Appendix to the report, in response to the Petitions received, be endorsed.

75. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

76. **Any other items of Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.50 pm)