

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 5 November 2020

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)
Councillor F Abbott
Councillor R Bailey
Councillor M Heaven
Councillor R Thay

Other Members: Councillor P Hetherington (Cabinet Member for City Services)

Employees: V Castree, N Cowper, G Holmes

Apologies: Councillor M Ali

Public Business

6. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

7. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September, 2020 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

8. Revision to Domestic Vehicle Footway Crossing Policy 2020

The Scrutiny Board were provided with information about the Cabinet Report on Revision to Domestic Vehicle Footway Crossing Policy 2020.

Officers briefed the Scrutiny Board on the criteria and process for residents to apply for and build a legal vehicle crossing over the pavement to their property. The policy was last revised in 2016 to encourage more residents to apply for lawful crossings. However, some residents continue to drive over pavements not intended to carry vehicles, resulting in damage to pavements, putting pedestrians at risk through damaged pavements and costing the Council many thousands of pounds each year.

To reduce the number of unauthorised crossings and associated damage to pavements, the following principal policy changes were proposed:

- Reduce the depth of private frontage required to meet the policy from 4.5m to 4.0m.
- Make applicants responsible for ensuring a vehicle does not overhang the Highway by applying conditions.
- Strengthen enforcement of overhanging vehicles.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers and the Cabinet Member and received responses on the following issues including:-

- There were no proposals to change the current enforcement procedure of two stages.
- On average it cost residents about £1500 to install a domestic vehicle footway crossing at their property and it could take about 3 months for the process to be completed.
- If a resident changed car or a new resident moved into the property they would still need to abide by the regulations and not block the footpath
- Adequate on-street parking was assessed by the officer when deciding if a dropped kerb would impact on the supply of on-street parking
- There had not been an issue in areas where there were resident parking schemes, but this would need to be considered in future if the new policy enabled more people to park off-street
- The application process was through the planning portal, whether or not planning permission was required and took 8 weeks. All of the information about applications could be accessed through the Council website.
- Enforcement was based on reports into the Council, and there were not the resources to monitor the whole city pro-actively.
- There are about 25 applications for dropped kerbs processed monthly
- A press release would be prepared on the agreement of the new policy by Cabinet and it was important to see this new policy as a good news story.

RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4):-

1) Support the Recommendations to Cabinet detailed in the report.

2) Recommend that Cabinet:-

- a. Promote the new Domestic Vehicle Footway Crossing Policy through a communications campaign including an article in Citivision**
- b. Consider increasing enforcement activity regarding illegal footway crossings and enforcement of the new Policy**
- c. Consider the impact of the proposed Policy on On-street Parking Controls including residents parking schemes when determining applications for dropped kerbs**

9. Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) Work Programme and Outstanding Issues

RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) note their Work Programme for 2020/21.

10. Any Other Items of Public Business - Councillor N Akhtar

Cllr N Akhtar thanked the Scrutiny Board for their support during his role as Chair.

The Scrutiny Board responded with their thanks for the work Cllr Akhtar had done and congratulated him on his recent appointment as Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.

(Meeting closed at 10.40 am)