

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for City Services held at 3.00 pm on
Wednesday, 29 September 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor P Hetherton (Cabinet Member)
Councillor G Lloyd (Deputy Cabinet Member)
Councillor M Heaven (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Other Member: Councillor G Duggins

Employees:

M Coggins, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
R Goodyer, Traffic Management
R Hammond, Law and Governance
L Knight, Law and Governance
M Wilkinson, Traffic Management

Apologies: Councillor L Bigham, Chair, Communities and
Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board 4

Public Business

16. Declarations of Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

17. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th August 2021 were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

18. Petition - Request for Average Speed Cameras or Other Restrictions to Reduce Speed on Lentons Lane

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Transportation and Highways concerning a petition, bearing 113 signatures, requesting average speed cameras or other restrictions to reduce speed on Lentons Lane. The petition was supported by Councillor G Duggins, a Longford Ward Councillor, who, together with the Petition Organiser, attended the meeting and spoke on behalf of the petitioners.

The Cabinet Member had considered the petition prior to this meeting and requested that the petition was dealt with by determination letter. However, before the determination letter was issued, the petition sponsor requested that the issue be considered at a Cabinet Member for City Services meeting.

The report indicated that to ensure available funding was utilised carefully, locations were prioritised according to the number of personal injury collisions recorded by the Police. Locations where there had been six or more recorded personal injury collisions in the previous three years were considered for inclusion in the safety scheme programme. Where the number of collisions was high and there was a history of speed-related collisions, locations were considered for average speed enforcement. A review of the collision data for Lentons Lane showed that there had been one recorded personal injury collision on the road in the last three years. Therefore, the junction did not meet the safety scheme or average speed enforcement criteria. The request made in the petition for further information on the Community Speed Watch initiative had been forwarded to the Police, who administered the scheme.

In addition to the review of personal injury collision data, a speed survey was also conducted on Lentons Lane in July 2021. This showed a mean weekday speed (the speed used to determine local speed limits) of 26.5mph eastbound and 29.3mph westbound and an 85%ile speed of 34.9mph eastbound and 35mph westbound.

A site inspection also identified that some of the speed limit and chevron signs on Lentons Lane were faded or damaged. Arrangements had been made for the affected signs to be replaced.

The agreed determination letter was to advise that a review of the personal injury collision history for Lentons Lane showed that there had been one personal injury collision recorded by the Police on Lentons Lane in the last three years. Therefore, it did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the safety scheme programme. However, faded and damaged signage on Lentons Lane would be replaced and the petitioners' request for information regarding the Community Speed Watch initiative would be forwarded to the Police.

The cost of road safety measures was funded from the Highways Maintenance and Investment Capital Programme budget through the Local Transport Plan.

Councillor Duggins expressed support for a Community Speed Watch to be undertaken, requesting that any exercise took place when residents thought the speeding problems were the greatest. He requested that the faded and damaged signs be replaced as soon as possible.

The petition organiser informed the Cabinet Member that the signs were not located in the most appropriate place on the road, since much of the speeding occurred near to the cemetery where the road changed to a country lane. He requested additional signage in this problem area. He raised concerns about the danger of speeding vehicles to pedestrians since many residents walked along the lane. He also referred to incidents when pets were run over.

The Cabinet Member requested that further speed checks be undertaken on the road in the vicinity of the cemetery and the pub.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

1) Notes the petitioners' concerns.

- 2) **Endorses the actions which had been agreed to be issued by determination letter to the petition organisers (as detailed in paragraph 1.5 of the report).**
- 3) **Requests that further speed checks be undertaken on Lentons Lane in the vicinity of the cemetery and the pub and that officers give further consideration to the signage along the road.**

19. **Petition - Request for Traffic Calming Along Valley Road up to Blackberry Lane**

The Cabinet Member for City Services considered a report of the Director of Transportation and Highways concerning a petition, bearing 48 signatures, concerning a request for traffic calming measures along Valley Road up to Blackberry Lane. The petition had been organised by Councillor K Caan, an Upper Stoke Ward Councillor, who was unable to attend the meeting.

The Cabinet Member had considered the petition prior to this meeting and requested that the petition was dealt with by a determination letter. On receipt of the determination letter, the petition organiser advised that he wanted the issue to be considered at a future Cabinet Member for City Services meeting.

The report indicated that Councillor Caan had been advised of the Community Speed Watch initiative, a speed monitoring and awareness scheme that was coordinated by the Police and run by a group of local volunteers who used speed detection devices to monitor traffic and identify speeding drivers on a specific road or small area. The relevant contact details were provided, should the petitioners wish to get involved in the scheme.

In addition to the review of collision data, a speed survey was also conducted on Valley Road in July 2021. This showed a mean weekday speed (the speed used to determine local speed limits) of 26.7mph northbound and 25mph southbound and an 85%ile speed of 31.3mph northbound and 30.6mph southbound.

The determination letter advised that a review of the personal injury collision history for Valley Road showed that there had been no personal injury collision recorded by the Police on Valley Road in the last three years and therefore that it did not meet the safety scheme criteria.

The cost of introducing road safety measures was funded from the Highways Maintenance and Investment Capital Programme budget through the Local Transport Plan.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

- 1) **Notes the petitioners' concerns.**
- 2) **Endorse the actions confirmed by determination letter to the petition organisers (as detailed in paragraph 1.5 and 1.6 of the report).**

20. **Petition - New Pedestrian Crossings on Blackberry Lane - Sewall Highway**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Transportation and Highways concerning a petition, bearing 63 signatures, concerning a request for the installation of pedestrian crossing facilities at the junction of Blackberry Lane and Sewall Highway. The petition organiser was invited to the meeting but was unable to attend.

The Cabinet Member had considered the petition prior to this meeting and in response to the request made, had requested that the petition was initially dealt with by determination letter. On receipt of the determination letter, the petitioner had requested the issue to be considered at a future Cabinet Member meeting.

The report indicated that there were no plans to upgrade the signals this financial year. To ensure the funding was utilised carefully, personal injury collisions were reported to the police and this aided the Council in its decision making. A review of the collision data at the junction of Blackberry Lane and Sewall Highway showed that there were a total of five personal injury collisions at this junction with one of them involving a pedestrian walking into the side of a vehicle.

On the basis of the collision data and that there were no issues with the equipment or age of the site, no further action was proposed. However, the signal timings would be looked at and amended if appropriate to aid pedestrians crossing the road. Improvement works would be considered at this junction in future years as additional funding may be available by this point. The officer indicated that additional funding opportunities would be continued to be explored.

The determination letter had advised of the outcome of the investigations undertaken in response to the issues raised, as a result of which no further action was proposed.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

- 1) Notes the petitioners' concerns.**
- 2) Endorses the conclusions of officers' investigations, as confirmed by determination letter to the petition spokesperson, that no further action is proposed.**

21. **Taxi Licensing Matters**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services that provided information to assess whether there should be new Pedicab Private Hire Drivers Conditions of Licence, the existing limit on hackney carriage vehicle licences should be dispensed with, and whether Coventry City Council should adopt a unified approach with regard to Group 2 Medicals.

The report proposed to authorise new Pedicab Private Hire Drivers Conditions of Licence to dispense the requirements for a motor vehicle Driving Assessment and the Private Hire Drivers Road Knowledge Test for Private Hire Drivers who were licensed to drive Pedicabs.

Coventry City Council had a set of conditions for a Pedicab Private Hire Vehicle Driver, one of which restricted these vehicles, if licensed, to driving within the inner ring road. If the licensed Pedicab Private Hire Driver subsequently wished to obtain a Private Hire Driver's licence to expand using a motor vehicle outside the ring road then that driver would have had to undertake the current Private Hire Driver Road Knowledge Test and Driving Assessment. The revised Conditions of Licence, with the proposed changes highlighted, were set out in an Appendix to the report, the current Private Hire Conditions of licence were set out in a further Appendix to the report.

The report also proposed to dispense the requirement for the existing limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences at 859 in view of the decreasing demand for hackney carriage vehicle licences.

Since November 2018 the number of hackney carriage vehicles licensed had dropped to 561. An unmet demand survey, required every three years to ensure that there were sufficient vehicles to provide the service required, entailed a cost of just over £10,000 to the licensed trade and in view of the decreasing demand for hackney carriage vehicles to be licensed, there seemed to be no requirement to retain the cap on the numbers of hackney carriage vehicles. All the names on the waiting list were written to and there was currently no waiting list to obtain a hackney carriage vehicle licence.

The report further proposed to approve the new frequency of medical certificates and approve the acceptance of medical certificates for hackney carriage and private hire driver licence applications on templates from other West Midlands authorities within four months of being completed by a medical practitioner.

At the Taxi Licensing Harmonisation Group on 9th July 2021 it was agreed that the frequency of assessment recommended by the DVLA and the Health and Safety Executive should suffice in order to bring harmonisation throughout the West Midlands, remove the bureaucracy of non-transferable certificates proving the same thing, and reducing unnecessary demand on the healthcare sector. Medical certificates would be accepted for applications up to four months after medical examination.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

- 1) Authorises new Pedicab Private Hire Drivers Conditions of Licence to dispense the requirements for a motor vehicle Driving Assessment and the Private Hire Drivers Road Knowledge Test for Private Hire Drivers who are licensed to drive Pedicabs (as set out in Appendix A to the report).**
- 2) Agrees to dispense the requirement for the existing limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences at 859 in view of the decreasing demand for hackney carriage vehicle licences.**

- 3) **Approves the new frequency of medical certificates and the acceptance of medical certificates for hackney carriage and private hire driver licence applications on templates from other West Midlands authorities within four months of being completed by a medical practitioner.**

22. **Remove Requirement for Mercedes Vito Taxis to have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System (LSMS) (which permits the 'turning circle')**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services that provided information to assess the requirement for Mercedes Vito Taxis to have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System (LSMS) which the taxi trade had stated was not fit for purpose as it kept breaking down and was difficult and expensive to repair.

Under the Council's Emissions Policy for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles all the Mercedes Vito Taxis with the 180-degree turning circle would be phased out during 2024 when their licence expired as there were no current models being produced with the converters, Penso, going into liquidation. In 2024 renewal vehicles would have to be Zero Emission Capable and there was no model with that capability.

The report proposed that Euro 4 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles must have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System decommissioned on safety grounds. In addition, that Euro 5 and Euro 6 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles must have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System decommissioned where Whitley Depot's MOT testers identify faults. Decommissioning must be undertaken by an approved agent of Mercedes Benz, to return the vehicle back to its original steering design. This policy would apply to the current licensed fleet of Mercedes Benz Vito hackney carriage vehicles which comply with the London Conditions of Fitness of safety. Vehicles already registered would be allowed to continue to be licensed in line with other licensing requirements. Any new Euro 4 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles would no longer be licensed.

The policy would apply to the current licensed fleet of Mercedes Benz Vito hackney carriage vehicles dispensing in the London Conditions of Fitness, as stipulated above, on the grounds of safety and supply. Any future Euro 4 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles will no longer be allowed to be licensed.

Decommissioning must be by an approved agent of Mercedes Benz with the replacement of the rear wheel steer trailing arms with original Mercedes Benz rear suspension or trailing arm units (new ones). Disposal of rear steering equipment including the button in the driver's compartment (which should be replaced by a cover plate). Complete disconnection and re-sealing of wiring so it cannot be used again. The vehicle to have a full 4-wheel alignment. That the vehicle proprietor provides the Council with documentary evidence that the work has been carried out as specified above.

Appendices to the report detailed support from Unite and members of the trade to remove the requirement for the turning circle in Mercedes Vito HCVs and to show the cost of replacing the LSMS system.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

- 1) Approves that Euro 4 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles must have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System decommissioned on safety grounds.**
- 2) Approves that Euro 5 and Euro 6 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles must have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System (LSMS) decommissioned where Whitley Depot's MOT testers identify faults.**
- 3) Approves that decommissioning must be undertaken by an approved agent of Mercedes Benz, to return the vehicle back to its original steering design.**
- 4) Agrees that this policy will apply to the current licensed fleet of Mercedes Benz Vito hackney carriage vehicles which comply with the London Conditions of Fitness of safety. Vehicles already registered will be allowed to continue to be licensed in line with other licensing requirements.**
- 5) Agrees that any new Euro 4 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles will no longer be licensed.**

23. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

24. Any other items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.50 pm)