

15<sup>th</sup> August 2016

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for City Services – Councillor J Innes

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director of Place

**Ward(s) affected:**

Foleshill

**Title:**

Petition – Removal of Vegetation and Associated Raised Bed Structures at Honeyfield Road, (outside numbers 6 & 11) and Edmund Road (outside numbers 4 & 28)

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

This report responds to a petition containing 32 signatures which was submitted to Coventry City Council. The petition is supported by Councillor Jaswant Birdi. The petition requests that the Council removes the planted bushes and the associated raised bed structures as they are an 'eye sore' for the area and visitors to the nearby Nanaksar Gurdwara Gursikh Temple.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member for (City Services) is recommended to:

1. Establish via consultation with local Ward Councillors and the occupiers of the properties where the raised beds are located on the recommended option before their removal as it is not clear from petition signatories if this has been done prior to submission. This will confirm if there is local community consensus for the work to be carried out.
2. Following consultation and with majority consensus approve the removal of all shrubs, raised bed structures, stone bollards and surrounding slab footway in the four specific locations detailed in the report and replacement with tarmac footway and new bollards. This work is for inclusion in the 2017/18 maintenance programme of work, subject to Cabinet's approval of the Capital Highway maintenance budget at their meeting in March 2017.

**List of Appendices included:**

Site plan showing adopted highway and location of raised bed structures.

**Other useful background papers:**

None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title:**

Petition - Removal of Vegetation and Associated Raised Bed Structures at Honeyfield Road, (outside numbers 6 & 11) and Edmund Road (outside numbers 4 & 28)

**Context (or background)**

- 1.1 A petition was received to request that a total of four number raised bed structures and the established vegetation are removed from two locations at Honeyfield Road and Edmund Road. The petition also states that as well as the actual planters themselves showing signs of deterioration there are safety concerns due to overhanging thorny vegetation and an environmental concern due to litter and possible vermin infestation and requests that the Council arranges for their removal.
- 1.2 Records show that the last programmed vegetation maintenance visit took place between November 2015 and March 2016 a further visit has been programmed in for August 2016.
- 1.3 Since receiving this petition an officer of the City Council has made a separate visit (July 2016) to make an assessment of the construction and overall condition of the raised beds, vegetation and surrounding footway.
  - 1.3.1 Raised bed construction and vegetation condition – The raised beds have been constructed using concrete paving slabs laid on their sides. The average height of them is 550mm and they are filled with soil and mature shrubs & vegetation. Generally they are in a reasonable condition though there are some damaged slabs and recent repairs are evident. The established vegetation is of varying varieties and in full summer growth. There are also some small trees besides some of the raised beds and these are also in full leaf.
  - 1.3.2 Surrounding Pavement Type & Condition – The footway on the actual build outs are also of a slab construction with various tarmac repairs/ reinstatements. The footways around and behind the raised beds are generally in a reasonable condition with the exception of 6 Edmund Road, which is somewhat deteriorated. There are also existing granite bollards in front of the raised beds which offer them protection from vehicle strikes. Although the footway slabs are showing signs of cracking in a number of locations in the main they are in a safe condition with no intervention level defects at present. It was noted that the lighting within the road has recently been upgraded.

**2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 Following this assessment, and given the current age and condition of the raised beds, vegetation growth, and taking into consideration any on-going maintenance and cost of continuing to carry out localised repairs and vegetation maintenance, suitable options were considered.
- 2.2 To retain but carry out a full replacement/refurbishment of the raised slab constructed beds and surrounding footway areas. Replant the beds with new smaller more pedestrian friendly shrubs. Although this option would retain the 'green' street scene the cost of this would be high and as it is not currently a recorded safety matter then the opportunity to do this would in reality not be considered for some considerable time.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the local Ward Councillors and the occupiers of the properties where the raised beds are located be consulted on the recommended option before their removal as it is not clear from petition signatories if this has been done prior to submission. This will establish and confirm if this is whole community consensus for the work to be carried out.

2.4 The recommended and preferred option would be to remove the existing planters, vegetation and surrounding bollards at all four locations. Excavate the existing footway and resurface with a 'tarmac' finish. New bollards would also have to be installed to prevent illegal parking and continue to offer protection to the trees from vehicle strike. This recommendation will satisfy the petitioners, remove the need for on-going and repeated structural and vegetation maintenance thus offering long term savings for both these service areas. As the trees would be retained the green street scene would also be maintained.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1 There has been no consultation on this matter

### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

4.1 Future capital highway maintenance programmes and proposed treatments to roads and pavements are established on a 'worst first' basis across all road categories. The decision for inclusion in any year's programme will be taken by Cabinet at their meeting in March preceding any given financial year. It will also be dependent on the level of funding that is made available for Capital Highway maintenance in that year. Therefore the actual scheduling of the works will be based on priority of the scheme and the funds available.

### **5. Comments from Executive Director of Resources**

#### **5.1 Financial implications**

Undertaking the removal of the raised bed structures and reinstatement of the subsequent area and surrounding footway would be funded from any future Highways Capital budget based on the priority of the scheme and the funds available. The work is currently valued at approximately £9,000.

#### **5.2 Legal implications**

Under section 41 of the Highways Act 1980, the Council has a duty to maintain those adopted highways that it is responsible for to a standard where they are reasonably passable for ordinary traffic. Any contracts for works to the highway will be approved and let in accordance with the Council's rules for contracts set out in the Constitution.

### **6. Other implications**

#### **6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

Highway maintenance is part of Coventry's vision for better pavements and roads which is a key objective. Completing this work would contribute to this objective.

#### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

Financial risks are managed through monthly monitoring meetings of the capital programme board team. Risk assessments are carried out as part of the design process to ensure that risks are designed out and that construction takes place by an approved contractor in a safe way.

#### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

The work would be delivered using existing resources.

#### **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

No equality impact assessments have been undertaken.

#### **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

Positive impacts on the environment in the locality would be achieved if the works go ahead. This would be in the form of:-

Reduction in littering into planters will alleviate environmental concerns related to potential vermin. Removal of planters and thorny vegetation with ease passage for pedestrians.

#### **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

None specifically but all Highway users of Honeyfield Road and Edmund Road would benefit from the improvement to build outs and improved street scene.

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**Directorate:**

Place

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Councillor J Innes	Cabinet Member for City Services	-	27/07/16	01/08/16
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**Appendix – Plan showing adopted highway and build out locations in Honeyfield Road and Edmund Road.**

