Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for City Services held at 3.00 pm on Monday, 20 January 2020

Present:

Members:	Councillor P Hetherton (Cabinet Member)
Other Members:	Councillor G Lloyd (Deputy Cabinet Member)
Employees (by Directorate):	
Place	C Archer, R Goodyer, J Logue, R Parkes, M Salmon, M Wilkinson
Apologies:	There were no apologies

Public Business

56. Declarations of Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

57. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2020 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

58. Petition - Request for Traffic Calming Measures Along Macaulay Road

The Cabinet Member for City Services considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) in response to a petition, bearing 41 signatures, received from Councillor R Brown, a Cheylesmore Ward Councillor, and supported by Councillor J McNicholas, a Lower Stoke Ward Councillor, that read 'This petition calls on Coventry City Council to consider traffic speed calming measures along Macaulay Road. Residents share increasing concern that this road is being used as a rat-run and is subject to a rising trend in speed violation that, left unchecked, could likely result in serious injury or worse.' Councillors Brown and McNicholas attended the meeting for consideration of the matter and to speak on behalf of the petitioners.

In accordance with the City Council's procedure for dealing with petitions, those relating to highway maintenance were heard by the Cabinet Member for City Services.

The report indicated that a determination letter had been sent to the Petition Organiser and Petition Sponsor that advised of the importance of targeting road safety measures in the city. To ensure funding was utilised carefully, personal injury collisions reported to the Police were used. Locations where there had been

six or more recorded personal injury collisions in the previous three years were considered for inclusion in the safety schemes programme. A review of the collision data for Macaulay Road showed that one personal injury collision had been recorded in the last three years, therefore, Macaulay Road did not meet the safety scheme criteria.

A speed survey had also been undertaken in November 2019 that recorded mean weekday speeds of 21.2mph eastbound and 20.6mph westbound. A summary of the speed survey and traffic count, which had been located where the greatest volume of traffic was expected, was detailed in Appendix C to the report.

Based on the collision data and speed survey results outlined above, no further action was proposed. However, petitioners were advised of the Community Speed Watch initiative, a speed monitoring and awareness scheme that was co-ordinated 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. Petitioners were also provided with the relevant contact details, should they wish to get involved in the scheme.

Councillor McNicholas and Councillor Brown spoke in support of the petitioners. They referred to the strength of feeling amongst residents in the area regarding the need to reduce vehicle speeds. They further referred to recent incidents and near misses that were of real concern. Following submission of the petition early in 2019, there had been changes in the area, particularly with the installation of traffic measures on Ansty Road and Binley Road, that had impacted on Macaulay Road and other roads nearby and meant that the traffic data used to assess vehicle speeds out of date. They referred to several roads in the area being used as rat runs to avoid the measures that had been put in place on other local roads for example, to avoid the road humps on Longfellow Road. There was particular concern about the speed of traffic around Ravensdale School, Ravensdale Road, and residents felt that there was a need for a 20mph speed limit at this location. Councillor McNicholas referred to the impact of traffic displacement, suggesting that this needed to be taken into consideration when traffic measures were implemented.

Councillor R Singh, a Lower Stoke Ward Councillor also attended the meeting for consideration of this matter and spoke in support of the petitioners and the matters raised by Councillor Brown and Councillor McNicholas.

Traffic Management Officers outlined the disadvantages of 20mph speed limits which required enforcement by the Police. The preferred option was to look at other traffic calming measures that were self-enforcing as these had been more successful. To ensure that the current traffic situation was considered, it was proposed that CCTV cameras be installed on Macaulay Road at its junctions with Morris Avenue, Hipswell Highway and McDonald Road to enable revised traffic data to be obtained. In addition, a vehicle activated sign would be installed for a period of 3 months. The revised traffic data would be reviewed, and the Petition Organiser, Petition Sponsor and Ward Councillors would be kept informed on the matter.

Having considered the report and the comments made by Councillors McNicholas and Brown and the Traffic Management Officer who presented the report, the Cabinet Member agreed to the proposals outlined by officers.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

1) Notes the petitioner's concerns.

2) CCTV cameras be installed on Macaulay Road at its junctions with Morris Avenue, Hipswell Highway and McDonald Road to enable current traffic data to be obtained. In addition, a vehicle activated sign be installed for a period of 3 months.

3) The revised traffic data be reviewed, and the Petition Organiser, Petition Sponsor and Ward Councillors be kept informed on this matter.

59. **Objections to Whittle Arch Experimental Traffic Regulation Order**

The Cabinet Member for City Services considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), concerning objections received to the Whittle Arch Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). The objectors were invited to attend the meeting, and both attended, and one spoke on the proposal.

The report indicated that in 2002, as part of the Phoenix Initiative Regeneration Project the junction of Trinity Street and Fairfax Street was closed off to all traffic, and pedestrianised. Following the closure, bus usage of the Pool Meadow Bus Station was significantly reduced making the bus station facility unsustainable in the long-term.

To address these concerns, in 2005, the City Council 'opened up' the Trinity Street/Fairfax Street junction (Whittle Arch) to buses and cycles to enable improved bus access to the bus station. Since 2005 there had been further changes which had resulted in the creation of the bus gate and additional vehicles being able to travel through the bus gate at certain times.

In 2018 further changes were proposed. The bus gate had been operating for several years and during this time alterations had been made to the road layout as part of the ongoing public realm works. In addition, issues had been raised by Adjudicators from the Traffic Penalty Tribunal regarding the clarity of the signage when hearing appeals.

The proposed changes simplified the operation of the bus gate, allowing buses, cycles and taxis to travel through the bus gate at all times and also simplified the associated signage. To monitor the impact of these changes the TRO was implemented as an Experimental TRO and came into operation on 10th September 2018. The closing date for objections was 10th March 2019 and Two objections were received.

In accordance with the City Council's procedure for dealing with objections to TROs, they were reported to the Cabinet Member for City Services for a decision on how to proceed.

The costs relating to making permanent or amending the ETRO was funded from the Highways Maintenance and Investment Capital Programme budget through the Local Transport Plan.

Issues raised in the objections included:

- As a motorist, they considered the bus gate a licence to print money,
- Taxis should not be allowed through the gate as they were just a form of privileged transport for those who could afford to pay, and it undermined the concept of more pedestrian only areas.
- The changes had 'absolutely nothing to do with promoting the economy but were simply trying to give black cabs an unfair commercial advantage they neither needed nor deserved'.
- Both objectors referred to Hales Street (west) and that changes should be made to assist cyclists, such as the re-instatement of the contra-flow cycle lane.

An objector spoke about supporting climate change and the consider environmentally friendly options and resolutions where possible. He requested that the Authority support more pedestrianisation and cycling options in the City where appropriate and outlined his concerns regarding the lack of a quality impact assessment for this proposal. He confirmed that he was a regular bus user and was confident that when busses used the Whittle Arch Bus gate, they made their intentions to turn at the junction with Fairfax Street clear by indicating left or right. However, he expressed his concerns regarding other vehicles that were permitted to use the Bus Gate who often saw the route from Hales Street through the Bus Gate and onto Fairfax Street as a 'straight run' and offered no indication as to their intentions, which he felt was confusing and dangerous to cyclists and pedestrians. The Objector suggested that there was a crash risk at this location and that it would benefit from a collision survey.

Having considered the report and the comments made by the objectors and the Traffic Management Officer who presented the report, the Cabinet Member referred to a project that was now underway in which the City Centre was being looked at as a whole with a view to making improvements where appropriate and to consider more pedestrianisation. She agreed that the current Experimental Traffic Order should not be made permanent. On the Order's expiry in March 2020, an alternative Experimental Traffic Order should come into operation, which allows buses, cycles, taxis and private hire vehicles to travel through the bus gate at all times. She further agreed that monitoring be undertaken on the operation of the revised bus gate.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

1) **Considered the objections to the City of Coventry (Whittle Arch) (Bus Gate) Experimental Order 2018.**

2) **Subject to recommendation 1) above, approves the current Experimental Traffic Order is not made permanent, and on its expiry an alternative Experimental Traffic Order comes in to operation, which allows buses, cycles, taxis and private hire vehicles to travel through the bus gate at all times.**

3) **Subject to recommendations 1) & 2) above, approves that monitoring is undertaken on the operation of the revised bus gate.**

60. **Objections to Proposed Speed Limit Reduction - London Road**

The Cabinet Member for City Services considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) concerning objections received to the City of Coventry (London Road) (40mph Speed Limit Revocation) Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). The objectors were invited to attend the meeting for consideration of the matter and one objector and also Councillor Bailey, a Cheylesmore Ward Councillor, and Councillor Brown attended and spoke on the proposal.

The report indicated that speed limits were reviewed within Coventry on a regular basis. The primary reason for evaluating speeds limits and speed limit changes were predominantly related to making roads safer for all road users.

On 28th November 2019, a TRO was advertised proposing to reduce the speed limit on London Road from 40mph to 30mph (from Allard Way to the approach to the ring road) to improve road safety. The reduction in speed limit would also assist to improve the safety of the proposed toucan crossing to be located on London Road near the access to Charterhouse. In addition, the Allard Way and Humber Road approaches (and exit) to the roundabout junction with London Road would also be reduced from 40mph to 30mph.

Three objections and three letters of support for the proposed speed limit reduction were received. In accordance with the City Council's procedure for dealing with objections to TROs, they are reported to the Cabinet Member for City Services, for a decision as to how to proceed.

The cost of introducing the proposed TRO, if approved, would be funded from the Highways Maintenance and Investment Capital Programme budget through the Local Transport Plan.

Three letters received in support of the speed limit reduction included comments ‘completely agree on doing this with or without the pedestrian crossing facility’ and the speed limit reduction will ‘stop these idiots who continue to drive too fast with no consideration for anyone else’. Other comments received in support of the speed limit reduction include ‘many road users drive at excessive and dangerous speeds’ on London Road.

Three objections were received and highlighted numerous concerns including the speed limit reduction was ‘bad for the environment with emissions increasing due to the non-smooth traffic flow’ and the speed limit reduction could result in an ‘increase in accidents as people slow down so quickly at point of speed reduction’. Other comments objecting to the speed limit reduction included this contributing to an increase in ‘congestion and pollution’ on London Road. A further comment related to many and in places, the majority, of drivers ignoring low speed limits.

Two late comments had been received from Councillor Bailey, relating to various speed limit options that could be considered on specific parts of the London Road, concluding that the whole road would benefit from a reduced speed limit of 30mph.

Councillor Bailey indicated that he had been contacted by a number of residents about this issue. He referred to the positive effect reducing the speed limit would have, not only for safety, but also for the environment in that it would encourage traffic flow and minimise idling traffic.

Councillor Brown indicated his support for a speed reduction on the London Road and endorsed the proposal which he confirmed would improve safety for vehicles and pedestrians and keeps traffic moving.

Mr Lowe, a Whitley resident, thanked Elected Members for representing the residents of Whitley and their work to address issues and improve the area. He further thanked officers for their work and the good working relationship established with resident's groups in the area.

Having considered the report and the comments made by the objectors, supporting representatives and the Traffic Management Officer who presented the report, the Cabinet Member noted that the road characteristics and forthcoming amenities would attract non-motorised users including pedestrians and cyclists (Toucan Crossing Facility). London Road comprised a series of long straights, and this could increase the likelihood of excessive vehicular speeds, as drivers tended to look at where they were going and not what was immediately in front of them, a phenomenon often referred to as 'tunnel vision'. There were a number of junctions along London Road that included adjacent roads, frontal developments and houses. Junctions and accesses significantly increased the road safety risks of inappropriate vehicular speeds. An existing pedestrian crossing facility was located on London Road near Riverside Close to accommodate school children, pedestrians and other vulnerable footway users, crossing flows to the superstore. A proposed Toucan Crossing facility was also proposed close to the Charterhouse project. A speed limit reduction would make this section of London Road safer for all road users. The Cabinet Member therefore agreed that the implementation of the City of Coventry (London Road) (40mph Speed Limit Revocation) Order 2019 be approved.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for City Services:

1) Considered the objections to the 30mph speed limit reduction.

2) Subject to recommendation 1) above, approves the implementation of the City of Coventry (London Road) (40mph Speed Limit Revocation) Order 2019.

61. **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) which 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.

62. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

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

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.20 pm)