

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for City Services held at 11.00 am on
Wednesday, 14 April 2021
This meeting was held remotely

Present:

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

Other Members: Councillors R Bailey and L Bigham

Employees:

M Coggins, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
T Cowley, Transport and Highways
S Elliot, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
R Goodyer, Transportation and Highways
L Knight, Law and Governance
J Logue, Transportation and Highways
M McHugh, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
R Parkes, Law and Governance
M Salmon, Law and Governance
M Wilkinson, Transportation and Highways

Public Business

40. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest

41. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th February, 2021 were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

42. Petition - Resurface the Footpath between Eden Street and Heath Crescent and Take Action Over Persistent Fly Tipping

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Transportation and Highways concerning a petition, bearing 16 e-signatures, requesting the resurfacing of the footpath between Eden Street and Heath Crescent along with action to prevent the persistent fly tipping. The report had been requested by the petition organiser following the receipt of a determination letter. A statement was read out on behalf of the petition organiser who was unavailable for the meeting.

The report indicated that the footpath was a pedestrian only route from the end of Eden Street to where it emerged at the A444 and joined Watersmeet Road. It was susceptible to fly tipping, particularly at the Eden Street end as this was located adjacent to an industrial estate. This meant it was remote and the opportunity to fly tip was easier particularly outside normal daytime working hours. A location plan was set out at an appendix to the report.

The City Council's Environmental and Regulatory Services team and Street Pride Cleansing team were familiar with the site acknowledging that the area was a known 'fly tipping' hotspot site. The council had installed a camera at the site and as a result would be able to monitor any specific fly tipping activity and take the appropriate action in response. The camera was located on a lamp column on Eden Street and it was on a tour taking in Crabmill Lane and Eden Street. It was intended to look at vehicles going down the road. It was reported that a secondary ANPR camera had now been ordered and was to be installed at the location over the next few days.

The Cabinet Member was informed that the Street Pride Cleansing Team attended this site on a fortnightly basis to pick up litter. In order to help prevent fly tipping the team had installed a bollard at the entrance to the footpath at Eden Street to prevent vehicles being able to access the footpath.

The report detailed that that the last annual programmed safety inspection of the footpath took place in October 2020. Following receipt of the petition an engineer made a separate visit in January, 2021 to make an assessment of the construction and overall condition of the footpath. It was noted that the footpath comprises of a bituminous surface in an aged condition with widths varying from 3.0 to 2.2 metres along its length. Vegetation overhung the footway in various sections and at the time of the visit a build-up of leaves/vegetation partly restricted the pedestrian route. The existing footway surface was broken up in places by exposed tree roots and would need treatment at various locations to provide a level surface. In addition, there was evidence of fly tipping at the northernmost end of the footway which could create access issues to vulnerable users and pushchairs. The pedestrian count was low at the time of inspection and there were no defects observed at intervention level.

Following the engineer's assessment, and given the current condition, pedestrian usage and comparing the general condition with other footpaths across the City, the recommended treatment would be resurfacing to restore the line and level and provide an even and uniform walking surface. Until such time that this work could be carried out, the Council would continue to make safe any defects at or above the intervention level as identified by way of small localised repairs. Future capital maintenance programmes and proposed treatments to roads and pavements were established on a 'worst first' basis across all road categories. Consequently, the actual scheduling of the works for the location would be based on priority of the scheme and funds available.

Officers reported that there had been 45 incidents of fly tipping during the last twelve months and fixed penalty notices had been issued where possible. Seven of the referrals had come from members of the public. There was also one ongoing prosecution case concerning fly tipping in the area.

The statement submitted by the petition organiser referred to a recent announcement from the Council about additional funding of £11m for roads and £2m for pavements. It was clarified that the funding had been awarded by the Department of Transport and included conditions for specific repairs. The footpath between Eden Street and Heath Crescent didn't meet the criteria for improvement works. Reference was also made to the overgrown vegetation and it was reported

that works would be undertaken. The organiser had requested the installation of a new wooden fence and the planting of new flowers and trees.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The petitioners' concerns be noted.

(2) It be approved that the footpath be held on Coventry City Council's forward programme list and its condition will continue to be monitored and scored against all other similar sites citywide. If budgets permit, then this stretch be resurfaced no sooner than 2022/23. In the interim the footpath will continue to be kept safe by way of localised repairs to any areas that meet the Council's current intervention levels.

(3) The measures already put in place to monitor and deter fly tipping incidences at this location be noted.

43. **Objections to Proposed Speed Limit Reduction - Princethorpe Way, Quorn Way and Bredon Avenue Area**

The Cabinet Member considered a report and received a presentation of the Director of Transportation and Highways concerning one objection that had been received to a Traffic Regulation Order advertised on 18 February 2021 which proposed to extend the existing 20mph speed limit on Princethorpe Way, Quorn Way and associated side roads to include part of Bredon Avenue and the side roads abutting it, to improve road safety. A location plan and a summary of the objection and the responses to the issues raised were set out in appendices to the report. As the meeting was being held remotely, in line with the revised government regulations, the objector had been offered the opportunity to submit any additional comments in writing in response to the report. The objector had been provided with additional information on watching the live stream meeting.

The report indicated that on 25th March 2014 the Cabinet Member for Public Services committed to the aspiration that Coventry becomes a 20mph city and to recommendations made by a Task and Finish Group established by Public Services, Energy and Environment Scrutiny Board (4) to consider how to assess and prioritise requests for 20mph zones and 20mph limits outside of the safety scheme process, taking into consideration requests from the community.

The Quorn Way Area 20mph speed limit was installed in 2002 and extended further along Princethorpe Way in 2010. However, the 20mph section on Quorn Way did not have the necessary signage. It was therefore proposed to install the required entry signage to encourage slower driving behaviour. In addition, it was proposed to extend the 20mph area to include part of Bredon Avenue, as residents had previously raised concerns about vehicular speeds and this would assist to achieve the aspiration to become a safer speed city.

The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was advertised proposing to extend the existing 20mph speed limit on Princethorpe Way, Quorn Way and associated side roads to include part of and Bredon Avenue and side roads abutting it. The general effect of this proposal would be to increase the existing 20mph speed limit

area to improve road safety. The speed limit reduction would also assist to improve the safety of vulnerable road users, in particular pedestrians.

The objection received, was not against the proposal to reduce the speed limit in the area proposed in the TRO, but was due to the objector's belief that 20mph speed limits should be made across the city in one action.

It was recommended that the order be made as advertised since the area was a self-contained network of residential roads, many of which already had existing traffic calming features together with natural road bends and narrowings, which would help keep speeds low. Additionally, reducing speeds to 20mph could have a wide range of benefits for the community, including encouraging cycling and walking, because of the calmer environment for 'vulnerable' road users. A reduction in speeds could prevent collisions and could also reduce the severity of injuries sustained in collisions that occurred. A pedestrian was likely to suffer slight injuries if struck by a vehicle travelling at 20mph. However, at 30mph they were likely to be severely injured, and at 40mph or above, they were likely to be killed. It was considered that the proposed 20mph speed limit would assist in improving safety for all road users, including pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

RESOLVED that, having considered the objection to the proposed 20mph speed limit extension, the implementation of the City of Coventry (Princethorpe Way, Quorn Way & Bredon Avenue Area) (20mph Zone & Consolidation) Order 2021 be approved.

44. **Objection to Proposed Speed Limit Reduction - London Road**

The Cabinet Member considered a report and received a presentation of the Director of Transportation and Highways concerning one objection that had been received to a Traffic Regulation Order advertised on 21 January 2021 proposing to reduce the speed limit on London Road from 40mph to 30mph on that section from Allard Way to its junction with A45, Toll Bar Island to improve road safety. Along with the objection, 4 e-mails in support of the proposal had also been received. A location plan and a summary of the objection and the responses to the issued raised were set out in appendices to the report. As the meeting was being held remotely, in line with the revised government regulations, the respondents were offered the opportunity to submit any additional comments in writing in response to the report. The objector had been provided with additional information on watching the live stream meeting. Councillor Bailey, a Cheylesmore Ward Councillor, attended the meeting and outlined his support for the proposal.

The report indicated that the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) proposed to reduce the speed limit on London Road from 40mph to 30mph on that section from a point 9 metres south east of its junction with Allard Way to its junction with A45 (Toll Bar Island). The objective was to make this section of London Road safer for all road users.

The Cabinet Member was informed that the speed limit on the rest of London Road, apart from on a short length in the vicinity of the Ring Road, was reduced from 40mph to 30mph on 9th March 2020. Making all of London Road the same speed limit would ensure consistency and improve road safety for its entire length.

The reduction in speed limit was in response to historical and recent road safety concerns from residents and local Councillors associated with difficulties experienced by vulnerable road users, and in particular pedestrians attempting to cross London Road. Large sections of London Road from its junction of Allard Way to its junction with St James Lane had four running lanes (two lanes in each direction) and this made it difficult for pedestrians who tried to cross the road with the current speed limit of 40mph.

Reducing the speed limit to 30mph would ensure vulnerable road users such as pedestrians (including elderly pedestrians) could manoeuvre across London Road more safely. The existing Average Speed Enforcement Cameras would be recalibrated to optimise speed compliance. Crossing a road with a 30mph speed limit was significantly safer for pedestrians than crossing a road with a 40mph speed limit. A lower speed limit, therefore lower traffic speeds, resulted in additional time for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users cross a road, collision severity was also a factor of speed. However, it was noted that pedestrian should always find a safe place to cross.

The objection received highlighted numerous concerns including, the existing speed limit (40mph) was currently enforced by average speed cameras and therefore why was it is necessary to legally change the speed limit to 30mph. In addition, the objection stated that by reducing the speed limit, more drivers would get a fine or points on their licence.

It was recommended that the order be made as advertised because of the road characteristics and road safety hazards associated with vulnerable road users manoeuvring across four lanes of traffic (two lanes in each direction) on a 40mph speed limit road. In addition, junctions and accesses significantly increased the road safety risks on 40mph speed limit roads and there were a number these along London Road. A speed limit reduction would make this section of London Road safer for all road users and provide a consistent speed limit on the entire length of London Road.

RESOLVED that, having considered the objection to the proposed 30mph speed limit, the implementation of the City of Coventry (London Road) (40mph Speed Limit & Revocation) be approved.

45. **Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Service which sought approval for 12-week public consultation on the amendments required to the existing City Council Taxi Licensing requirements to bring them in-line with new standards for taxi and private hire vehicles required by the Department of Transport. The standards were set out in the Department's "Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards". The report detailed how these recommendations would impact the City Council's Taxi Licensing processes. The report was also to be submitted to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee at their meeting on 27 April 2021.

The report indicated that the recommendations in the DfT report were designed to regulate better the taxi and private hire vehicle sector through the development of a national set of core common minimum standards. The document set out a

framework of policies that any licensing authority in England and Wales “must have regard” to when exercising their functions. Standards detailed replaced previous 2010 Best Practice Guidance issued by the DfT and were expected to be implemented unless there was a compelling local reason not to.

The Cabinet Member was informed that some of the standards highlighted in the DfT document were already covered in Coventry’s current processes and this report highlighted the recommendations that would require amendment to current policy and practice as follows:

i) Taxi Licensing Policies - licensing authorities to make publically available a cohesive policy document that brings together all of their procedures in relation to the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles.

ii) The Disclosure and Barring Service - drivers should undergo enhanced DBS checks at least every six months to enable the licensing authority to routinely check for new information. Vehicle proprietors should also undertake a basic disclosure from the DBS annually (where they are not also drivers).

In order to ensure that licence holders continued to comply with the standards required they would be required to notify the licensing authority within 48 hours of: an arrest and release, charge or conviction of any sexual offence, any offence involving dishonesty or violence and any motoring offence. The DfT report also recommended that licensing authorities should use national databases to share information about licence refusals and revocations to mitigate the risk of non-disclosure of relevant information by applicants. The report recommended that licensing authorities should use national databases to share information about licence refusals and revocations.

iii) CCTV in Vehicles - The DfT considered that the use of CCTV could provide a safer environment for the benefit of both the drivers and users of taxis / private hire vehicles. All licensing authorities were required to consult to identify if there were local circumstances which would indicate that CCTV camera in vehicles would have a positive or negative effect on users and drivers.

iv) Private Hire Operators – additional conditions were required for holders of operator’s licences which were set out in the report.

v) Enforcing the Licensing Regime - licensing authorities should, where required, jointly authorise officers from other authorities to be able to take compliance and enforcement action against licensees from outside their authority area. In addition, the DfT report provided further information on considerations for the assessment of previous convictions which would assist Licensing and Regulatory Committee when whether an individual was ‘fit and proper’ to hold a taxi or private hire vehicle licence.

The report detailed implications associated with these recommendations.

It was proposed that a 12 week public consultation be undertaken on the changes to current policy and process required to meet the standards highlighted. A full list of consultees was set out at an appendix to the report. The consultation would include identification around the considered requirements to make the use of

CCTV cameras in licensed taxis and private hire vehicles a mandatory licensing requirement.

RESOLVED that a 12-week public consultation on the proposals to amend the Councils current Taxi Licensing requirements to ensure that they are in line with the standards required by the Department for Transport be approved.

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

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Transportation and Highways 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.

47. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

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

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.45 am)