

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for City Services held at 2.30 pm on
Monday, 7 March 2022

Present:

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

Other Members: Councillor L Bigham, Chair of Communities and
Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
Councillor J Clifford - for Minute 62 below

Employees:

R Goodyer, Traffic Management
L Knight, Law and Governance
R Parkes, Law and Governance
G Raleigh, Transportation and Highways
M Wilkinson, Traffic Management

Apology: Councillor R Lancaster – Minute 62 below

Public Business

60. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

61. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2022 were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

62. Petition - Park Avenue Verge

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Transportation and Highways concerning a petition, bearing 43 signatures, requesting that the verge in Park Avenue be tarmacked. The petition was supported by Councillor Lancaster, a Holbrooks Ward Councillor who was unavailable for the meeting. Councillor Clifford, also a Holbrooks Ward Councillor, attended along with the petition organiser and they spoke in support of the petition.

The Cabinet Member had considered the petition prior to this meeting and requested that the petition was dealt with by determination letter. On receipt of the determination letter, the petition organiser had advised that she wanted the issue to be considered at a Cabinet Member for City Services meeting. A copy of the determination letter was set out at Appendix B to the report.

The report indicated that Park Avenue was a residential cul-de-sac off Holbrook Lane. A location plan was set out at Appendix A to the report.

The determination letter had advised that, in response to the petition, Park Avenue would be added to verge scheme request list; however, verge programme requests were prioritised in line with the verge protection policy, which gave greater priority to roads on major routes. New Bredon gravel had been laid on the verges and a recent inspection found no maintenance issues. Park Avenue would continue to be monitored as part of the highway inspection programme.

The report detailed that Bredon gravel was the standard material used by the Highways Maintenance Team for verge repairs, as it compacted well over time. The annual inspection of Park Avenue had been undertaken recently by the Council's Highways Inspectors and no defects were identified that met the Council's criteria for intervention.

The cost of verge protection schemes was funded from the Highways Maintenance and Investment Capital Programme budget through the Local Transport Plan.

Councillor Clifford informed that the verge was in a very poor condition, especially when the weather was wet. The Bredon gravel would be acceptable if it had been laid properly, however, at the present time the gravel just mixed with the mud which prevented the surface water from draining away. He highlighted the difficulties that this caused for residents.

The petition organiser detailed that the problem experienced by residents had been ongoing for the past 10 years. The gravel had been thrown down and not compacted so it wasn't working. The verge was uneven and presented a trip hazard. The dips caused large puddles. She highlighted the need for proper preparation works prior to the gravel being put down.

Officers clarified that Bredon gravel was the option for such verges. Priority for verge funding works was given to verges on the main arterial routes in and out of the city. It was clarified that the DLO would be requested to carry out a further replacement of the Bredon gravel highlighting the issues that had arisen. If this was unsuccessful then there was a further potential option which could be considered which involved using recycled materials as an alternative solution.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The petitioners' concerns be noted.

(2) Officers be requested to arrange for the Bredon gravel to be replaced on the verge at Park Avenue and, if this treatment is not successful, further consideration be given to an alternative solution.

63. Objections to Proposed Prohibition of Parking in Spon End

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Transportation and Highways concerning three objections that had been received to the City of Coventry (Spon End) (Prohibition of Waiting and Loading) Order, advertised on 18th November, 2021 which prohibited parking in Spon End outside the Spon End Terrace and Nissan Westway. The prohibition was required to facilitate the widening of the running carriageway through Spon End as part of the Air Quality

Action Plan. The objectors had been invited to the meeting and all attended and outlined their concerns to the Cabinet Member.

The report indicated that since 2017 the Council had been working closely with the Government's Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) to develop an action plan to reduce NO2 levels below the legal limit of 40ug/m3 in the shortest possible time.

Following consultation in 2019 and 2020, the Council developed a Local Air Quality Action Plan. To develop this plan, around fifty individual measures had been assessed using traffic and air quality models. A further consultation was held in November and December 2021 on the details of the infrastructure schemes which formed a key part of the package of measures. The package of measures consulted on was the one that best deals with the NO2 on Holyhead Road without transferring the problem to other areas in the city. The plan included work to reduce traffic on Holyhead Road and to direct traffic through a widened Spon End. To enable this to happen, changes were required to three areas around Holyhead Road as follows:

- i) Spon End: remove the pinch point which cause congestion at Spon End and to reduce traffic delays and queuing
- ii) Ring Road Junction 7: remodel Junction 7 including removing the roundabout and Moat Street Car Park and replace with a direct route from Spon End to the city centre
- iii) Upper Hill Street/Barras Lane: close the right turn from Holyhead Road to Barras Lane and remove one of the key congestion points in the city.

The proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to prohibit parking in Spon End outside the Spon End terrace and outside Nissan Westway was required to complete the necessary highway works at Spon End. A location plan was set out at an appendix to the report.

Details of the three objections that were received to the proposals during the 21-day objection period and responses to the objections were summarised in a second appendix to the report. The objectors were concerned that removing the parking would bring the running traffic lane closer to the listed buildings and that the loss of parking would have an impact on the businesses in the Spon End terrace.

The cost of introducing the proposed Air Quality scheme, would be funded by the Air Quality Implementation Fund supported by additional funding from the Transforming Cities Fund.

On completion of the works, the Council would provide alternative off-street parking.

The objectors put forward a number of concerns to the Cabinet Member including they felt that the alternative off street parking being offered wasn't a safe and secure location and would increase insurance costs; correspondence had been received stating works would be undertaken at night time over a 12-18 month period; the 4 lane carriageway would be very close to the properties and would encourage more traffic hence more pollution; the current parking spaces offered a good buffer for the residents and businesses at the location; additional traffic would exacerbate the problems of vibration caused by buses and lorries; and the

proposal would mean a reduction in the value of properties and was compensation an option.

The objectors felt that pollution from the Holyhead Road was just being transferred to Spon End and this would affect the quality of their lives; and concerns were raised about the mitigation measures that had been recommended to the objectors.

Reference was made to the impact the measures would have on the local fish and chip shop with concerns about deliveries and a reduction of passing trade.

A further concern raised involved the consultation process since some properties hadn't received the notification about the TRO and if these residents had been aware of the proposal, they would have submitted objections. Clarification was sought about what had happened to petitions that hadn't been referred to during the consultation process.

The objectors also referred to the health implications of living with the pollution generated by the additional traffic, along with the increased levels of noise.

Councillor Lloyd, Deputy Cabinet Member sought clarification on a number of issues including what could be done to assist the local business with the issue concerning delivery times; the potential option to have a weight limit approach on the road to prevent heavy traffic using the road as a short cut; consultation with Satnav companies relating to concerns about current diversion routes on their systems; to look again at other off street parking options including the Rugby Club; providing residents and businesses with progress updates as works progress with the scheme; a request for additional tubes to be installed in the locality to measure pollution levels; and consideration of additional measures to mitigate against the noise, pollution fumes and vibrations. Councillor Heaven asked about the option to provide off street parking in an area by the local church. The officer undertook to investigate the issues raised.

Councillor Hetheron, Cabinet Member, highlighted the Council's aspirations for encouraging residents to walk, cycle and use public transport with the aim of reducing traffic levels across the city.

RESOLVED that:

(1) Having considered the objections to the prohibition of the parking Traffic Regulation Order, the Order for the removal of the parking in Spon End outside the terrace and outside Nissan Westway be approved.

(2) Officers be requested to investigate the issues raised, as detailed above, to help mitigate potential problems for residents and local businesses.

64. Air Quality - Proposed Junction 7 Subway Closure and Application to Stop Up Highway

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Transportation and Highways which sought approval to close and stop up a subway at Junction 7 to facilitate changes required by the local Air Quality Action Plan to reduce traffic on Holyhead Road and direct the traffic through a widened Spon End.

The report indicated that like many towns and cities throughout the UK, roadside pollution levels, especially those resulting from Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) emissions from traffic, were a concern. The Council had been told by Government to reduce NO2 levels, especially on Holyhead Road where the levels were the highest in the city. If the Council couldn't improve air quality, then Government would force the Council to introduce a charging zone.

The Council had developed a Local Air Quality Action Plan and consultation took place between March and May 2020. This plan included work to reduce traffic on Holyhead Road and to direct traffic through a widened Spon End. To do this, changes were required to three areas around Holyhead Road, including Spon End and Junction 7.

To facilitate the changes at Junction 7, it was necessary to close and infill the adjacent existing subways. One of the existing subways was designated as highway therefore it was proposed Stop Up this subway. Details of location were set out at an appendix to the report. The subway currently provided a route for pedestrians from Croft Road to Butts Road, beneath the Junction 7 / Moat Street Car Park traffic island.

Upon completion of the proposed works, the re-aligned Junction 7 would accommodate pedestrian access between Butts Road and Croft Road via new footways.

The report highlighted that the Council held a public consultation between 17th November and 15th December 2021 regarding the detail of the latest Air Quality proposals. 269 people completed the online questionnaire, 2,200 viewed the web page with 864 downloading associated documentation. 19 people emailed the air quality inbox to request further information or gave feedback and 39 people attended a drop-in session.

The Cabinet Member was informed that there was a mixture of views on the closure of the subways with some expressing concern at their closure, while others highlighted safety concerns with the subways and welcomed the closures.

The Air Quality programme was fully funded from the Air Quality Implementation Fund grant of £25.447 million already received by the City Council from Central Government. This grant was for the delivery of the Local Air Quality Action Plan as approved by the Council's Cabinet on 21st July 2020, which included the provision of shared use facilities from Spon End to Croft Road.

The closure of the subway would be undertaken following the advertisement of the public notice and the expiry of the minimum 21-day notice period. The timetable for implementation of the Air Quality scheme was expected to take place between Spring 2022 and Winter 2023. The application to Magistrates' Court would be made as soon as was practicable.

RESOLVED that:

1) The permanent closure and infilling of the subway be approved.

2) Approval be given for officers to commence the legal process to Stop Up the subway as identified in Appendix B to the report in accordance with the provisions of Sections 116 of the Highways Act 1980.

3) Approval be given for an application to be made to the Magistrates' Court for an Order stopping up the highway as identified on plan in Appendix B to the report.

4) Authority be delegated to the Director of Highways and Transportation, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance and the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer), to execute all necessary agreements and orders necessary to give effect to the recommendations set out in this report.

65. Air Quality Shared and Segregated Footway and Cycleway

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Transportation and Highways which sought approval for the incorporation of both the shared footway and cycleway and segregated footway and cycleway which formed part of the Spon End/ Butts Road highway improvements included within the local Air Quality Action Plan.

The report indicated that Air pollution was having a harmful impact on the health of people living, working and studying in Coventry. Like many towns and cities throughout the UK, roadside pollution levels, especially those resulting from Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) emissions from traffic, were a concern. The Council had been told by Government to reduce NO₂ levels, especially on Holyhead Road where the levels were the highest in the city otherwise the Council would be required to introduce a charging zone.

In response, the Council had developed a Local Air Quality Action Plan which was the subject of consultation between March and May 2020. This plan included work to reduce traffic on Holyhead Road and to direct traffic through a widened Spon End which required changes to three areas around Holyhead Road including Spon End.

These changes at Spon End included the provision of segregated and shared footway and cycleway (cycle track) which would link the existing cycleway at Upper Spon Street to the city centre. 15 toucan crossings were also proposed to accommodate the increase in cycle facilities. The scheme details were set out in Appendix A to the report.

The report detailed the results of the public consultation held between 17th November and 15th December 2021 regarding the detail of the latest Air Quality proposals including the shared use cycle facility from Spon End to Croft Road.

Public Health England recommended addressing air pollution by providing good quality infrastructure to encourage people to walk and cycle rather than drive. This could mean reallocation of road space to support walking and cycling and restricting vehicle access. Motor traffic was the main deterrent to cycling for many people and fear for their safety was consistently the number one stated reason given in surveys as to why they did not cycle. Providing protected space for cycling

had resulted in huge increases of cyclists on routes in London, Manchester and other major cities and was the basis for high cycling numbers in places such as the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany.

The cost of the works had been included in the Air Quality Implementation Fund grant of £25.447 million already received by the City Council from Central Government to fund the delivery of the Local Air Quality Action Plan.

It was anticipated that the proposed cycleway would be installed by March 2023.

Members asked about the monitoring of air quality; the exceedance levels; and the opportunities for cycle rental at the vicinity and the officer agreed to look in to cycle hire. The benefits of cycling were highlighted.

RESOLVED that the incorporation of the shared and segregated footway and cycleway as part of the Spon End/Butts Road highway improvements be approved.

66. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

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

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.15 pm)