

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 1.00 pm on
Monday, 6 November 2023

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)
Councillor R Thay (Deputy Chair)
Councillor M Ali
Councillor P Male
Councillor C Miks
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor E Ruane
Councillor R Singh
Councillor R Thay
Councillor CE Thomas

Other Members (by invitation:

Councillor A S Khan – Cabinet Member for Policy and Equalities

Employees (by Service Area):

Law and Governance J Adams, O Aremu, A Chowns, G Holmes, L Nagle, M Salmon

Transportation, Highways and Sustainability J Seddon

Apologies: Councillor G Duggins (invited)

Public Business

27. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ridley declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the matter in minute 28 below, headed 'Amendment of the City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)', he left the meeting for consideration of the item.

28. Amendment of the City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer, that would also be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 7th November 2023, on a proposed amendment to the City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order relating to people on bikes in defined pedestrian areas of the city centre. Appendices to the report included: the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Section 59 Public Spaces Protection Order (City Centre) 2023; a map of the City Centre area covered by the PSPO; the consultation document and responses, including responses from key partners; and enforcement activity for the

existing Order. The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities attended the meeting for consideration of this matter.

There had been a visible increase in the number of e-bikes, cycles and e-scooters using pedestrian areas of the city centre, namely, Broadgate, Upper Precinct, Market Way, Smithford Way, Shelton Square, Hertford Street and Bull Yard. This had led to concerns being raised by people feeling unsafe.

The level of concern had been raised particularly due to the volume of e-bikes and motorcycles that looked like bikes being used by delivery teams. Some people had also been observed to be riding recklessly and in a dangerous manner and the speed of some of e-bikes, e-scooters and cycles made some pedestrians feel unsafe.

The Council wanted to ensure that people felt safe when visiting the city centre and mitigate against any potential accidents whilst also recognising the importance of enabling cyclists to travel around the city.

One option that could potentially help to manage this emerging issue was an amendment to the current City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) requiring people on bikes to dismount in defined pedestrian areas of the city centre. To understand what city centre users felt about this proposal a comprehensive consultation was undertaken into the stopping of e-bikes, e-scooters and push cycles being ridden in the pedestrianised area of the city centre. The report outlined the outcome of that consultation and supported a proposal to amend the current PSPO.

Formal consultation responses, detailed in Appendices to the report, were received from Transport for West Midlands, the West Midland Mayor's Walking and Cycling Ambassador and Councillors all asking if a blanket ban on all bikes was necessary or proportional to the current issues. Concerns were raised that it could be counterproductive and send out contradictory messages about how cyclists are treated in the city.

Some respondents to the consultation also opposed the blanket ban and commented that we should target only e-bikes as they caused the majority of the problems.

The Committee considered the report and its appendices, questioned the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities and officers and received responses as summarised below:

- Concerns around enforcement of the additional amendments to the PSPO, in terms of police capacity and priority within the city centre
- Identifying key locations in the city centre for deployment of enforcement personnel
- The powers of the police and how the Council would be working with the police and partners including the BID – collective approach
- How pressure could be put on delivery companies and restaurants to encourage responsible riding in the city centre
- How best to communicate the additions to the PSPO, including communication with schools and colleges as well as local news outlets

- The emphasis on education and changing the behaviour of e-cyclists and e-scooter riders
- Local Government Association applying collective pressure to address this issue nationally
- The possibility of using planning and licensing powers to address the issue longer term
- Potentially identifying parking areas or ranks for delivery drivers
- The possibility of using barriered zones to narrow areas of delivery pick up operation
- The use of visibility clothing and bike lights to enable deliverers to be seen
- The negative economic impact of not just e-bikes and e-scooters in the city centre but anti-social behaviour more widely
- Awaiting a new Transport Bill – will determine and provide law on categories of illegal e-bikes going forward

A briefing note setting out the comments and recommendations made by the Committee would be circulated to the Cabinet for consideration at their meeting on 7th November 2023 when considering the report.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1) **Supports the intentions of the recommendations in the report.**
- 2) **Recommends that Cabinet support the recommendations as set out in the report.**
- 3) **Recommends that Cabinet notes Scrutiny Co-ordination’s concerns about enforcement of the PSPO.**
- 4) **Recommends that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities writes to both the Police Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner requesting a higher policing presence in the city centre and that they use their powers to seize illegal e-vehicles, and that a copy of the letter be circulated to the Committee.**

29. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 2.35 pm)