

Minutes of Cabinet Petitions Committee

1st September 2021 at 5:00pm
Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor Millard (Chair);
Councillors Hartwell and Simms.

In attendance: Councillor Chidley.

Also present: Robin Weare (Service Manager – Highways) and
Trisha Newton (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

10/21 **Declaration of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest.

11/21 **Minutes**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th
July 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

12/21 **Progress Report**

Details were submitted of petitions received and of the action
taken or proposed in each case, as detailed in the Appendix.

Agreed that the action taken or proposed, as detailed
in the second column of the Appendix, be approved.

Meeting ended at 5:38 pm

Appendix

Petition Received From	Action Taken/Proposed
<p>1. Residents of Steven Drive, Bilston, requesting traffic calming measures.</p>	<p>The Committee requested that Highways undertook an assessment of the traffic at the location and police accident statistics to determine whether traffic calming measures could be implemented at the site. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.</p>
<p>2. Residents of Lightwoods Hill requesting the implementation of traffic calming measures.</p>	<p>Having considered the issues raised by the head petitioner, the Committee requested that Highways undertook a traffic survey, once traffic patterns had normalised. Officers confirmed that a traffic calming scheme was proposed for Lightwoods Hill and a consultation process with residents would be conducted during September 2021. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.</p>
<p>3. Residents of Essex Avenue concerning insufficient parking and request for removal/maintenance of trees.</p>	<p>Having considered representations from the head petitioner and local ward member, the Committee requested that Highways investigate the feasibility/potential cost of implementing parking bays, a permit scheme or other measures to mitigate the issues experienced by residents and consider whether funding was available to support the work required. In addition, officers would undertake an investigation into the removal or maintenance of the trees and grass. There were parking bays in place adjacent to the highway along Essex Avenue and these bays accommodated approximately 12 vehicles. To increase the number of parking bays, the layout would need to be changed so that parking ran perpendicular to the highway. To</p>

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	<p>achieve this, part of the grass verge would need to be removed (approximately 2metres), along with 4 mature trees. If it was agreed that the trees could be removed, these would need to be replaced with 8 trees in the local vicinity in accordance with Council policy. The new layout could create a further 12 parking spaces which would give a total of 24 spaces. The possible presence of utility mains and cables was currently being investigated. As soon as the cost of any required diversion work was established, the total scheme costs would be reported back to housing services for them to confirm that budget was available. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.</p>
<p>4. Residents of West Park Road concerning the new entrance and exit for West Smethwick Park.</p>	<p>Significant consultation had been undertaken prior to the project commencing. Furthermore, while officers from Highways were consulted and no concerns were raised, discussions were in place to address the concerns highlighted by the residents. Officers continued to work alongside partners in the local community to address the issues raised. The issues highlighted were addressed as part of the local town forum to identify appropriate measures to mitigate any concerns. All existing entrances into the Park would be improved as part of the restoration project, with an exception of the existing car park entrance which was proposed to be relocated. Properties on West Park Road received letters notifying residents of the Planning Application on the 10th April 2017. New litter bins would be installed as part of the restoration project and Officers continue to deal with any flytipping and littering as it arises.</p>

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	<p>Officers confirmed that work on the new entrance had commenced. It was agreed that officers undertook an assessment on the impact of traffic calming from other roads as soon as the work had been completed and a further update be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.</p>
<p>5. Road users and residents in Wednesbury requesting a traffic light system at the junction of Park Lane/Manor House Road and Hobs Road/ Hawthorn Road, Wednesbury.</p>	<p>The funding for road safety schemes, such as traffic signals was prioritised where injury accidents were occurring. A five-year injury accident analysis showed there had been three recorded injury accidents during this period which was low when compared to other locations that were being considered for major traffic calming schemes. Although this junction did not meet the criteria for the installation of traffic signals, a road safety scheme to implement additional carriageway markings and vehicle activated speed signs either side of the junction would be undertaken, which would help to warn drivers and reduce vehicle speeds on the approach to the junction. The Committee requested that the junction be monitored to ensure that the traffic calming measures made a difference. Arrangements had been made for a further traffic survey to be undertaken along Park Lane. The data would then be compared to the traffic survey which was undertaken prior to the installation of the vehicle activated speed sign. Officers confirmed that the traffic survey had been conducted and officers were awaiting the results. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.</p>

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<p>6. Residents of View Point requesting installation of night and day gates in the gully located at View Point.</p>	<p>Greenbelt Group wished to assist in reducing anti-social behaviour and would not oppose the installation of gates in principle, if this represented the wishes of the 299 households which were currently billed in respect of the areas. However, Greenbelt Group had specified that the Council would need to be responsible for the maintenance thereafter, agree to indemnify Greenbelt Group in respect of the gates (e.g. to cover any injury) and agree to fund the removal of the gates, if and when required. The head petitioner had advised that residents were not prepared to contribute. As the land was not in Council ownership the Council could not take on the liability or maintenance of the gates. No further action was proposed by the Council. Following representations, further investigation would be undertaken, and a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.</p>
<p>7. Residents of Queens Road, Smethwick regarding speeding and traffic accidents on Queens Road, Smethwick.</p>	<p>A seven-day traffic survey had been undertaken for Queens Road between Basons Lane and the traffic island at the junction with Warley Road. It showed that 85% of vehicles were travelling at 32.8mph or less (both directions). A three-year injury collision analysis had also been undertaken and it showed there had been one recorded injury collision. When Queens Road was compared to other roads in Sandwell it had a very low number of injury collisions and did not therefore meet the criteria for the implementation of a traffic calming scheme. Although the vehicle speeds were slightly higher than the 30mph speed limit, this was still within the parameters of 35mph set by the Police for enforcement</p>

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	<p>purposes. However, a carriageway lining scheme was implemented in October last year in response to enquiries received from residents at Queens Road.</p> <p>Following representations submitted to the Committee, a further traffic survey would be undertaken in spring/summer and compared to the survey results from the winter. Officers confirmed that the traffic survey had been conducted and officers were awaiting the results. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.</p>
<p>8. Residents of Church Road, Smethwick, requesting a residents parking scheme</p>	<p>A residents' parking scheme had been considered for part of Church Road, Smethwick between the junctions of Bearwood Road and Stanhope Road. The on-street parking space available was not deemed adequate for a permit scheme. Approximately 120 metres of on-street parking space was available for permit bays along the south side of Church Road. This did not provide one parking space per household. Due to the width of Church Road, parking bays would not be installed on the north side. In view of this, it was not possible to design a permit scheme on this occasion. Having considered representations from the head petitioner at the previous meeting, the Committee requested that Highways investigate the feasibility and cost of utilising the grass verges to provide additional parking spaces. It was reported that this option was not viable due to the grass verges accommodating utility boxes and apparatus. Therefore, it was not possible to convert the grass verges into parking bays without moving the utility boxes and apparatus, which would incur a significant cost to the Council.</p>

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	<p>Furthermore, level differences between the grass verge and footpath created additional complications and costs. If approved, the scheme would involve the removal of 6 mature trees. A public consultation would need to be conducted to identify if the scheme is met with any objections. If the scheme was agreed to, 12 new trees would be planted to replace the 6 trees felled, in compliance with Council policy. While there was not enough space to accommodate one parking space per house, an additional 40 spaces could be created at this location. It was estimated that the cost to undertake this work amounted to approximately £230,000. Officers confirmed that Highways did not have the budget available but were in discussions to identify if Housing were able to fund the scheme. The Committee requested an update from a Housing Officer at a future Cabinet Petitions Committee.</p>
<p>9. Residents of Smethwick regarding removal of trees on Smethwick High Street</p>	<p>An update was provided on the proposed pedestrian and cycleway scheme along Tollhouse Way and Smethwick High Street, being delivered as part of Sandwell's successful Accelerated Towns Fund programme funding bid. The Tollhouse Way scheme detailed design had been assessed and was currently continuing to be monitored by the Urban Forestry Manager. With regards to the concerns around the impact on trees, for every tree felled as part of this scheme, two new semi-mature trees would be planted. The trees to be felled were along a short section of the overall Tollhouse Way scheme and the new total tree planting scheme consisted of 46 new trees, doubling what was there previously.</p>

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	<p>Works were in progress to determine suitable locations within the High Street area for the new trees which would be implemented during Autumn 2021. Where possible, replanting would take place as close as possible to where the current trees are to be felled. Doubling the number of trees at this location would assist in absorbing more CO2 whilst providing an alternative means of travel to vehicle journeys aimed to reduce vehicle emissions and improve Air Quality. Following representations made by the head petitioner at the previous meeting, the Committee had requested further details on the consultation process undertaken and these were submitted. The head petitioner was in attendance and also raised concerns regarding the language barrier with the methods of consultation used. The head petitioner also requested more information on how replanting and doubling the number of trees on Smethwick High Street assisted in absorbing more CO2. The Committee agreed to note that future consultations should ensure consideration of different resident needs and languages. Officers were asked to provide the head petitioner with further information on the Council's tree replacement policy. The Committee agreed to close the petition.</p>
<p>10. Residents of Old Warley requesting for a pedestrian crossing system at Bleakhouse Road/Castle Road West Junction.</p>	<p>Utilising the current Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2017 / 2022, officers investigated road casualty statistics over a period of time which helped identify the most vulnerable groups to target with interventions. This was done proactively every year using a risk-based approach, by undertaking in depth road casualty analysis across the borough. This helped</p>

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	<p>identify sites where road casualties were happening year on year, on a regular basis, and were likely to continue happening unless safety improvements were put in place. Historic casualty data was investigated to help steer safety programmes. Officers focused on those sites that were the most dangerous or where the greatest improvements could be achieved, identified from recorded evidence of regular casualties.</p> <p>Considering the junction of Bleakhouse Road and Perry Hill Road, this had been investigated previously to understand if a solution could be found to both answer resident's concerns whilst meeting current council policies within available budgets. Current police reports showed that there had been no reported injury accidents or road casualties in and around this junction in the past 5 years. Unfortunately, the only viable improvement involved moving buried utility apparatus and such a scheme would cost around £200,000 in total. There was no budget available for work at a location that had a historically good road casualty record with no recorded injuries in the previous 5 years. Following previous representations, the Committee a detailed report considering the potential mitigation measures to address the issues experienced by the residents had been submitted. Officers advised of the possibility to submit future bids for grant funding. The Committee requested that officers prepare a bid for external grant funding, in readiness for when the opportunity arose. The Committee agreed to close the petition.</p>

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