

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1400 hours on 18th January, Committee Room 2, Council House

Present:

Councillor Chaman Lal (Chair)

Councillors David Barker, Martin Brooks, Colin Green, Timothy Huxtable and Miranda Perks

Also Present:

Stacey Ryans, Parking Services Manager

Kamyar Tavassoli, Highways Services Manager

Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

The meeting started at 14:00 hours

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised those present that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast via the Council's Youtube site and that Members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Councillors Richard Parkin and Alex Aitken.

An apology was also submitted on behalf of Kevin Hicks, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE ACTION NOTES

The action notes of the meeting held on 16th November were approved and the action tracker noted. The action notes from the meeting held on 19th October were previously agreed.

5. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

(See Item No.5)

The Chair welcomed Stacey Ryans, Parking Services Manager for this item.

Stacey Ryans took the Committee through the presentation circulated and during a discussion with Members the following were amongst the points made: -

- With respect to abandoned vehicles cases are assessed on an individual basis with key indicators looked for. The Council must follow the law in respect of this. A number of checks are carried out before a vehicle can be removed such as checking if it is owned and inquiries are made with the DVLA, and contact is made with the registered owner. Vehicles that are owned cannot be removed. It was acknowledged that the contact centre should be kept up to date on the action that the Council and its enforcement partner can take and that a uniform approach is applied.
- The current contract for civil parking enforcement expires in January 2024 with a new contract taking effect from February 2024. Mobilisation will take place during October to January.
- Ahead of the new contract starting the Council is reviewing its resource capability to ensure that it is placed where most needed and gives value for money. There is flexibility to allow Civil Enforcement officers (CSOs) to move to where they are most needed. This is based on feedback from elected members and residents and there is an online form on the Council's website to report issues.
- Enforcement activity is also being targeted in hotspots. A wide area is covered by foot patrols and camera enforcement cars outside schools. In the new contract it is hoped that more schools will be monitored remotely from cameras.
- Due to the number of schools in the city enforcement around schools is limited however the Council does work with schools on travel behaviour through its modeshift stars programme.
- Currently there are 90 CSOs employed with 50-60 deployed daily. CSOs are monitored so there is a log of how many patrols have taken place in a certain area both by foot and mobile. These statistics show where there are issues and traffic offences taking place and where CSO's have been deployed. In this way assessment takes place as to whether more staff are needed or if the patrol area is making a difference demonstrated by the income generated. If there is a need, additional CSOs can be taken on to tackle hotspots and deployed to certain areas.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.

6. FOOTWAY CROSSINGS POLICY

(See Item No. 6)

Kamyar Tavassoli, Highways Services Manager was present for this item.

Kamyar Tavassoli highlighted the key points from his presentation and following a discussion with Members and in response to queries raised the following points were made: -

- The new policy (due to be presented to Cabinet in March) states that perpendicular parking will be expected on all new applications for footway crossings, and this will include applications made for an extension to an existing footway crossing.
- The issue of grass verges being driven over to access driveways is a longstanding issue. There are two aspects to note - provision of a footway crossing and how best to manage unauthorised crossings. To carry out enforcement activity, there must be evidence in place.
- The Council is keen to work with and support residents to apply for permission to construct a footway crossing so there is a case of investigating what support people need if they wish to apply and understand reasons for others who do not wish to make an application.
- Those renting properties can seek permission from the landlord should they wish to apply for a footway crossing.
- Applications made for construction of a driveway are assessed on an individual basis and it is recommended that advice given to residents is followed where space is limited. There are number of cases where complaints have been received by the Council for encroaching of the footway. A policy is being implemented that gives advice on size of a permitted footway crossing. This is also to help deal with issues of on-street parking where space is limited, and where residents may choose to park in front of a footway crossing causing a hazard, danger, and inconvenience for pedestrians.
- The Council does provide footway crossings at normal junctions that are pedestrian friendly for those with mobility scooters, prams, and visual impairment. Further provision can be made based on need and locations can be assessed so that those approved would be constructed as part of a planned programme of works for resurfacing of footways.
- In some areas residents live on narrow roads but have large grass verges outside of their properties. In such cases residents have expressed an interest to park on the pavement or verge as the individual properties are not large enough to construct a driveway but they do need somewhere to park and access their vehicles. In such areas the grass area is seen as an amenity and assessment would need to be carried out to ensure that parked vehicles did not intrude with the footway if a scheme was introduced.
- Proof of disability such as a blue badge or a GP letter is required for those applying for a 50% discount for a footway crossing. A further discount is applied if other footway maintenance work is happening at the same time.

Where construction of a footway crossing is requested through Adult Services residents may be able to access the Disabled Facilities grant to help with the cost.

- It was important to note that not all disabilities are constant, and, in such cases, this should be clarified in the Council's policy as there is a discrepancy between the description given in the policy versus what is classed as a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act that highlights that individuals can suffer instances of disability.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.
2. Kamyar Tavassoli to provide details on the number of cases that have been enforced since 2012 in respect of overriding of footway crossings in the city.
3. The Chair to write to the Cabinet Member for Transport detailing the discussion and highlighting the concerns and issues raised by Members as part of the consultation process for the Footway Crossings Policy. A draft will be shared with Committee for comment.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

(See Item No. 7)

The Chair shared details for the next meeting and it was suggested that following the Committee's visit to University Station in December that colleagues from West Midlands Rail Executive were invited to the meeting on 15th February where Members could share their observations and provide feedback. Members were keen to understand how the Council's financial contribution was being used and how the Council's policies and priorities were to be implemented as part of this station refurbishment and other new stations to be opened in the city and if any lessons learnt currently could be effectively used for the future.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.
2. Invitation to the West Midlands Rail Executive and Council Officers to attend the next meeting in respect of issues raised as part of the visit to University Station in December. Ward Councillors who attended the visit to also be contacted for their views to include as part of the discussion.

8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Noted.

9. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS (IF ANY)

None.

10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

11. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS

Agreed.

RESOLVED: -

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 15:33 hours.