

Agenda

Cabinet Petitions Committee

Wednesday, 28 July 2021 at 5.00 pm
At Council Chamber - OCH

This agenda gives notice of items to be considered in private as required by Regulations 5 (4) and (5) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest from members relating to any item on the agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct and/or S106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

3 Minutes

5 - 20

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February and 23 June 2021 as a correct record.

4 Progress Update

21 - 32

To provide details of petitions received and the proposed course of action.



D Stevens

Chief Executive

Sandwell Council House

Freeth Street

Oldbury

West Midlands

Distribution

Councillor

Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Crompton, Hartwell, Millard, I Padda, Simms, R Singh and Taylor

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Minutes of Cabinet Petitions Committee

24th February 2021 at 5:00pm
Online Virtual Meeting

Present: Councillor Ali (Chair);
Councillors Millard and Taylor.

Also present: Robin Weare – Service Manager – Highways; Trisha Newton
- Senior Democratic Services Officer.

3/21 **Minutes**

Agreed that:-

the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

4/21 **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 5:16 pm



Appendix

Petition Received From	Action Taken/Proposed
1. Residents of Old Warley requesting a pedestrian crossing system at Bleakhouse Road/Castle Road West Junction.	This matter was being investigated by officers and an update would be submitted to a future meeting.
2. 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	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. The traffic surveys had to be rearranged due to the pandemic which resulted in reduced traffic levels and would be undertaken as soon as vehicle numbers returned to normal levels. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.

Cabinet Petitions Committee
24th February 2021

Petition Received From	Action Taken/Proposed
<p>3. Residents of View Point, Tividale requesting installation of night and day gates in the gulley 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.</p> <p>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>4. 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.</p>

Cabinet Petitions Committee
24th February 2021

Petition Received From	Action Taken/Proposed
	<p>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 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. Arrangements would be made for a traffic survey to be undertaken as soon as traffic levels return to normal. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.</p>
<p>5. Residents of the Hateley Heath area requesting that the SAPA building on Hateley Heath estate be brought back into use for the community.</p>	<p>Following an advertisement process in March, an expression of interest was received from a community organisation to re-open the building. The pandemic delayed progress, however, officers were working to see if a plan for the building is possible. Detailed discussions had taken place with the head petitioner and the CEO of the community organisation that has formally bid for a voluntary body lease. The business plan was nearing completion and the organisation had confirmed they were happy to support a community offer from the building. The Investing in the Third and Community Sector Officers Group endorsed an outline agreement for a not for profit organisation to re-open the building. The next stage was to outline the details and timescales for the use of the building via an agreement to lease, followed by a lease to the organisation.</p>

Cabinet Petitions Committee
24th February 2021

Petition Received From	Action Taken/Proposed
	Officers from property services were working on the terms for the lease. The head petitioner had been informed.
6. Residents of Timbertree Crescent, Cradley Heath regarding concerns over the height of trees and damage to property.	Officers were in the process of commissioning contractors and confirmed that the required work would be carried out by the end of March 2021. Following concerns raised by residents with regard to the Council's complaint handling process and further detail on the planned work, the Committee requested that officers liaise with the head petitioner to discuss the works. An update would be submitted to a future meeting.

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Minutes of Cabinet Petitions Committee

23rd June 2021 at 5:00pm
Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

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

In attendance: Councillors Ahmed, S Gill and Shackleton.

Also present: John Satchwell [Dartmouth Park Project Officer, Parks and Countryside, Cultural Services] and Suky Suthi-Nagra [Democratic Services Manager].

5/21 **Minutes**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2021 be deferred for approval at a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.

6/21 **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 5:52 pm

Appendix

Petition Received From	Action Taken/Proposed
1. Residents of West Park Road concerning the new entrance and exit for West Smethwick Park.	Officers confirmed that significant consultation had been undertaken prior to the project commencing. Furthermore, whilst officers from Highways were consulted and no concerns were raised, discussions were now 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 in order to identify what measures could be adopted 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. Residents of West Park Road received letters in relation to the Planning Application in 2017. New litter bins would be installed as part of the restoration project and officers continued to deal with any flytipping and littering as it arose. Officers intended to commence work on the new entrance way with immediate effect to allow access and egress for construction traffic. Having considered the objections raised by the head petitioner and local ward member, the Committee were minded to agree that Highways undertook an impact assessment of the traffic calming measures on surrounding roads of West Smethwick Park and inspect the new entrance on West Park Road following its completion and that a further update be provided to the next meeting of the Petitions Committee.

Petition Received From	Action Taken/Proposed
<p>2. Residents of Haysech requesting the pedestrian gate to be locked at night</p>	<p>Officers confirmed that, should a temporary camera be installed, the site would be monitored for any issues and a decision would be made based on the findings. To ensure that protocol for deployment of cameras was adhered to, the request for CCTV had been referred to the Rowley Regis town tasking meeting for consideration and discussion with partners and local community. The site presented difficulties in deploying a camera as there was a lot of tree cover that hindered camera images and a kink in the road would not enable a full view of the road. However, there was a suitable column on the junction of The Crescent and Haysech that provided a better view of the road towards the entrance to the park on the left. Information from the police and ASB colleagues had also been requested. Having considered representations from the head petitioner and local ward member, the Committee requested that the gates be locked and officers gave consideration to giving the key for the gate to the head petitioner or resuming the Council's responsibility to lock the gate as done pre-pandemic. Subject to this, the petition would be closed. The head petitioner had been informed.</p>

<p>3. 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, it was agreed that the matter be deferred to the next meeting to enable photographs of the site to be shared with the Petitions Committee.</p>
<p>4. Residents of Dudley Road requesting repositioning of the pedestrian crossing on Doulton Road/Dudley Road</p>	<p>The crossing facility in place in the vicinity of no. 68 Dudley Road helped to provide a safe crossing place for pedestrians. Consideration could not be given to removing this crossing facility for the purpose of creating extra parking spaces as it was likely to result in an increase in injury collisions on the highway. A number of surveys had been conducted before crossing facilities were installed, including pedestrian movement surveys. This helped to identify the best position for a crossing facility in terms of where pedestrians need to walk. i.e. routes to shops, bus stops, schools, etc. They had been installed in accordance with visibility requirements and in consultation with local residents. Replacing the zebra crossing with a crossing facility at the traffic signals on the junction of Doulton Road would not assist residents on the north east side of Dudley Road if they wished to visit the</p>

	<p>shops etc. It was not considered feasible to replace a zebra crossing, however, it was considered that further signage at the site should be erected to inform drivers of the pedestrian crossing and to slow down. It was agreed to close the petition, however, with regard to the issue of lack of parking at the site, officers were requested to revisit the matter and provided a response to the head petitioner.</p>
<p>5. 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. 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.</p>

	<p>Having considered representations made by the head petitioner, the Committee requested that further details be provided on the consultation process undertaken by officers be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.</p>
<p>6. Residents of Old Warley requesting a pedestrian crossing system at Bleakhouse Road/Castle Road West Junction.</p>	<p>In accordance with Sandwell's Strategic Road Safety Plan, the location mentioned did not meet the criteria for a crossing facility. This was because the funding made available for road safety measures, such as crossing facilities, was targeted in areas where treatable injury collisions are occurring. A three-year injury collision analysis for the junction showed there hadn't been any recorded injury collisions in the last 3 years. However, enquiries were currently being made as to whether there was any money available through walking and cycling funding streams. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.</p>
<p>7. 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</p>

	<p>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. The traffic surveys had to be rearranged due to the pandemic which resulted in reduced traffic levels and would be undertaken as soon as vehicle numbers returned to normal levels. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.</p>
<p>8. Residents of View Point, Tividale requesting installation of night and day gates in the gulley 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>9. 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 purposes. However, a carriageway lining scheme was implemented in October last year in response to enquiries received from residents at Queens Road. 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. Arrangements would be made for a traffic survey to be undertaken as soon as traffic levels return to normal. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.</p>
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<p>10. Residents of Timbertree Crescent, Cradley Heath regarding concerns over the height of trees and damage to property.</p>	<p>Officers confirmed that, following a site visit and conversations with the head petitioner, contractors had carried out the required work. Furthermore, following a quality inspection, officers were satisfied with the work that had been completed. Consequently, the Committee agreed to close this petition.</p>
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Report to Cabinet Petitions Committee

28 July 2021

Subject:	Petitions Progress Report
Contact Officer:	Trisha Newton Trsha_newton@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

That the Cabinet Petitions Committee approve the action taken or proposed as details in the third column below.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

To receive petitions and approve action taken/proposed in response.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

		Petitions are one of the many ways in which people who live and work in the Borough can influence the decision-making process. Many of the issues typically raised by petitions underpin the Council's Vision. Petitions alert members and officers to current local issues and ensure that services are being targeted appropriately in delivering the Council's priorities.
		
		



4 Context and Key Issues

Section 46 of the Localism Act 2011 removes the requirements for principal local authorities in England and Wales to make, publish and comply with a scheme for the handling of petitions made to the authority, with effect from 1 April 2012. At its meeting on 22 May 2012, the Council decided to retain a petitions scheme, although there was no longer a statutory requirement to have such a scheme.

5 Background Details

5.1 Petitions received since last reporting period

Signatories	Subject	Action Taken/Proposed
5.1.1 128 – Residents of Lightwoods Hill, Smethwick (Abbey)	Request for the implementation of traffic calming measures	This matter is being investigated by officers and an update will be submitted to a future meeting. (Received 19/07/2021)
5.1.2 24 – Residents of Essex Avenue, Wednesbury (Friar Park)	Concerns regarding insufficient parking and request for removal/maintenance of trees	This matter is being investigated by officers and an update will be submitted to a future meeting. (Received 29/06/2021)

5.2 Progress on outstanding petitions

Signatories	Subject	Action Taken/Proposed
5.2.1 63 – Residents of West Park Road (St Paul's)	Concerns regarding the new entrance and exit for West Smethwick Park	Officers have provided an update on the submitted petition to the head petitioner. Officers confirmed that a significant consultation had been undertaken prior to the project commencing. Furthermore, while officers from Highways were consulted and no concerns were raised, discussions are now in place to address the concerns



highlighted by the residents. Officers continue 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 in order to identify what measures can be adopted 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. With reference to above information, Officers intend to commence work on the new entrance way with immediate effect. Assessments on impact of traffic calming from other roads will be undertaken as soon as the work has been completed. An update will be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 29/04/2021)



5.2.2 168 - Residents of Old Warley (Old Warley)	Request for pedestrian crossing system at Bleakhouse Road/Castle Road West Junction.	<p>The current Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2017 / 2022 investigates road casualty statistics over a period of time and helps identify the most vulnerable groups to target with interventions. This is done proactively every year using a risk-based approach, by undertaking in depth road casualty analysis across the borough. This helps identify sites where road casualties are happening year on year, on a regular basis, and will likely to continue happening unless safety improvements are put in place. Historic casualty data is investigated to help steer our safety programmes. Officers focus on those sites that are the most dangerous or where the greatest improvements can be achieved, identified from recorded evidence of regular casualties. Considering the Junction of Bleakhouse Road and Perry Hill Road, this has been investigated previously to understand if a solution can be found to both answer resident's concerns whilst meeting current council policies and available budgets. Based on the current police reports, that there have been no reported injury accidents or road casualties in and around this junction in the past 5 years. Unfortunately, the only viable improvement would involve moving buried utility apparatus and such a scheme</p>
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would cost around £200,000 in total. There is no budget available for work at a location that has a historically good road casualty record with no recorded injuries in the previous 5 years. Following representations received at the previous meeting, enquiries were currently being made as to whether there was any money available through walking and cycling funding streams. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.

(Received 11/01/2021)

5.2.3 413 – various road users/ residents (Wednesbury North)

Request for traffic light system at the junction of Park Lane/Manor House Road and Hobs Road/ Hawthorn Road, Wednesbury

The funding for road safety schemes such as traffic signals is prioritised where injury accidents are occurring. A five-year injury accident analysis shows there have been 3 recorded injury accidents during this period. This is low when compared to other locations that are being considered for major traffic calming schemes. Although this junction does 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 will be undertaken. This will help to warn drivers and reduce vehicle speeds on the approach to the junction. The Committee requested the junction be monitored to ensure that the



traffic calming measures made a difference. Arrangements have been made for a further traffic survey to be undertaken along Park Lane. The data will then be compared to the traffic survey which was undertaken prior to the installation of the vehicle activated speed sign. The traffic surveys had to be rearranged due to the pandemic which resulted in reduced traffic levels. Traffic survey is on order for this site. This survey will be undertaken as soon as vehicle numbers return to normal levels. An update will be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 17/4/2019)

5.2.4 33 – residents of View Point, Tividale (Tividale)

Request for installation of night and day gates in the gulley located at View Point.

Greenbelt Group wish 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 are currently billed in respect of the areas. However, Greenbelt Group have 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 has advised that residents are not prepared to contribute. As the land is not in Council ownership the Council



cannot take on the liability or maintenance of the gates. No further action is proposed by the Council. Following representations, further investigation would be taken and a further report would be submitted to the Cabinet Petitions Committee at a future date. The head petitioner has been informed.

(Received 5/3/2019)

5.2.5 79 – residents of Queens Road, Smethwick (Smethwick)

Concern regarding speeding and traffic accidents on Queens Road, Smethwick.

A seven-day traffic survey has been undertaken for Queens Road between Basons Lane and the traffic island at the junction with Warley Road. It shows that 85% of vehicles are travelling at 32.8mph or less (includes both directions). A three-year injury collision analysis has also been undertaken and it shows there has been 1 recorded injury collision. When Queens Road is compared to other roads in Sandwell it has a very low number of injury collisions and does not therefore meet the criteria for the implementation of a traffic calming scheme. Although the vehicle speeds are slightly higher than the 30mph speed limit, this is still within the parameters of 35mph set by the Police for enforcement purposes. However, a carriageway lining scheme was implemented in October last year in response to enquiries received from residents at Queens Road. Following



representations submitted to the Committee, a further traffic survey will be undertaken in spring/summer and compared to the survey results from the winter. Traffic survey is on order for this site. This survey will be undertaken as soon as vehicle numbers return to normal levels. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 24/8/2019)

5.3 Petitions requiring final approval

Signatories	Subject	Action Taken/Proposed
5.3.1 26 - Residents of Church Road (Soho and Victoria)	Request for permit holder parking on Church Road	The minimum on-street parking space required for a permit scheme should provide at least one parking space per household. To introduce a permit scheme in part of Church Road, Smethwick between Bearwood Road and Stanhope Road, the parking bays would be installed along the south side. The combined total length of the parking bays would be 120 metres. Allowing a parking space of 5 metres per car provides 24 parking spaces. There are 29 properties without off street parking. Drawing Number 40527 S/4. Due to the width of the carriageway a parking bay could only be installed along one side of Church Road. Placing parking bays along both sides of the road would obstruct passing



traffic. Site constraints mean additional parking space cannot be created to accommodate all cars belonging to residents. Having considered representations from the head petitioner at the previous meeting, it was agreed that the matter be deferred to the next meeting to enable photographs of the site to be shared with the Petitions Committee and these have been circulated to the Committee and will be available at the meeting.

(Received 10/06/21)

5.3.2 11 - Residents of Smethwick (Smethwick)

Concern regarding removal of trees on Smethwick High Street

An update has been 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 has been assessed and is 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 will be planted. The trees to be felled are along a short section of the overall Tollhouse Way scheme and the new total tree planting scheme will consist of 46 new trees, doubling what was there previously. Works are in progress to determine suitable locations within the



High Street area for the new trees which will be implemented during Autumn 2021. Where possible, replanting will take place as close as possible to where the current trees are to be felled. Doubling the number of trees at this location will assist in absorbing more CO2 whilst providing an alternative means of travel to vehicle journeys will reduce vehicle emissions and improve Air Quality. Having considered representations made by the head petitioner at the previous meeting, the Committee requested that further details be provided on the consultation process undertaken by officers be submitted to the Committee. Details of the consultation are attached at Appendix A.
(Received 17/02/2021)

6 Source Documents

Copies of petitions from various groups of residents (exempt information).



Appendix A

Consultation – Tollhouse Way/Smethwick High Street Scheme

With regards to specific local consultation on this scheme, in addition to the scheme being discussed at various Local Towns Fund Boards and Local Members Board meetings, there was a press release from Sandwell MBC on the general Accelerated Towns Fund scheme on the 15th January 2021. In addition, a scheme specific press release was published on the 8th January 2021. Prior to this, a press release in November 2020 around the removal of the temporary pop-up cycle lane along Tollhouse Way, introduced as part of the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF), stated that it would be replaced by a permanent off-road cycle lane in the grassed area off the main highway. In addition to this there were various engagement surveys undertaken as part of the Towns Fund project where further information was available. This can be accessed on the Town Deal website. Letters were also distributed in January to some households and businesses where the cycle route would pass nearby to ensure they were made aware of proposals. However, as the scheme is not directly affecting any residential or business frontages, wider targeted consultation for wider residents/businesses in the area wasn't considered a statutory requirement over and above what has already taken place. As the local highway authority, Sandwell can undertake infrastructure improvements on their network within their statutory duty without the need for a planning application or planning approval. At this point, it may be prudent to add that whilst there is usually scope to undertake extensive consultation for highway and transport schemes generally, Government funding recently which has tended to have the words 'Emergency' (as with the EATF) and 'Accelerated' as with this source of funding, has meant the authority has been given tight deadlines to complete on site works, with consequences of funding being reclaimed if not completed on time. This would result in potential significant costs to the authority and the possibility of missing out of the ability to install these infrastructure improvements. Therefore, whilst we always endeavour to undertake as an extensive amount of consultation as we can, the length and period of consultation for schemes such as this, has had to reflect the specific circumstances.



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