

Report to Cabinet Petitions Committee

13 October 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 19 – Residents near Price Road junction (Friar Park)	Request for traffic calming measures on William Green Road, Wednesbury.	This matter is being investigated by officers and an update will be submitted to a future meeting. (Received 27/09/2021)

5.2 Progress on outstanding petitions

Signatories	Subject	Action Taken/Proposed
5.2.1 128 – Residents of Lightwoods Hill, Smethwick (Abbey)	Request for traffic calming measures	Following representations from the head petitioner at the previous meeting, the Committee requested that Highways undertake a traffic survey. A proposal to implement a traffic calming scheme along Lightwoods Hill was to be made. A full consultation would be undertaken with local residents and ward members during October 2021. An update will be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee. (Received 19/07/2021)



5.2.2 63 – Residents of West Park Road (St Paul's)

Concerns regarding the new entrance and exit for West Smethwick Park

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. 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



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 Cabinet Petitions Committee. (Received 29/04/2021)

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. The traffic survey had been conducted and officers were awaiting the results.



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.

An update will be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.

(Received 17/4/2019)

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.

(Received 5/3/2019)



5.3 Petitions requiring final approval

Signatories	Subject	Action Taken/Proposed
5.3.1 151 – Residents of Steven Drive, Bilston (Princes End)	Request for traffic calming measures	<p>Following discussions at the previous meeting, the Committee requested that Highways officers undertook an assessment of the traffic at the location and consider police accident statistics to determine whether traffic calming measures could be implemented at the site. Officers confirmed that the funding made available for traffic calming measures was targeted in areas where injury collisions were occurring in accordance with Sandwell's Strategic Road Safety Plan. A three year injury collision analysis had been undertaken for Steven Drive and it showed there hadn't been any recorded injury collisions during this period. The most recent incidents were not yet showing on the reports but they may appear on a future report if injuries had been sustained. Steven Drive did not currently meet the criteria for a vertical traffic calming scheme, however, the recent incidents where vehicles have collided with a property have been addressed with the installation of bollards on the footway alongside the property. The head petitioner had been informed.</p> <p>(Received 16/8/2021)</p>



5.3.2 24 – Residents of Essex Avenue, Wednesbury (Friar Park)

Concerns regarding insufficient parking and request for removal/maintenance of trees

Following representations from the head petitioner and local ward member, officers had undertaken an investigation into the removal or maintenance of the trees and grass. Parking bays were in place adjacent to the highway along Essex Avenue which accommodated around 12 vehicles. To increase the number of parking bays, the layout would need to be changed so that parking runs perpendicular to the highway. To achieve this, part of the grass verge would need to be removed (approximately 2metres), along with 4 mature trees. If the trees were 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 giving a total of 24 spaces. The presence of utility mains and cables is currently being investigated. Officers confirmed that the cost of any required diversion work would established and the total scheme costs reported to housing services to confirm that a budget is available. Housing have advised the cost of the scheme is deemed to be disproportionate to the benefits that would be gained. In addition, town funding is not available to support parking issues as it is not one of the priorities set for estate and



housing improvements. There is also concern the scheme would not support the Council's commitment to encourage sustainable methods of travel. The additional parking bays can also only be achieved by removing several trees which would not support the council's commitment to protect and expand the borough's green and open spaces, which includes trees. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 29/06/2021)

5.3.3 26 - Residents of Church Road (Soho and Victoria) Request for permit holder parking on Church Road

Officers have confirmed that the grass verge along Church Road is Council owned and maintained by housing management. The grass verge opposite property numbers 51-63 accommodates three utility boxes and also has apparatus present beneath the verge. It would not be possible to construct parking bays along this section in its current state. The utility boxes and apparatus would have to be moved by the utility company incurring substantial costs to the Council. In addition, alternative locations to accommodate the utility boxes would need to be identified. There are also level differences between the grass verge and the footpath that would need to be addressed before parking bays could be constructed. This would require



retaining walls to support the land incurring further substantial costs. The grass verge opposite property numbers 1-49 also accommodated a utility box that would need to be removed and relocated. This section was also lined with mature trees, 6 of which would need to be removed before parking bays could be constructed. The removal of trees and green spaces was usually met with objection, although if this was agreed, they would need to be replaced with 12 new trees in the local vicinity in accordance with Council policy.

Approximately 40 additional parking spaces could be achieved at this location, although the costs to undertake the work will be substantial as outlined above. It was estimated the work would be in excess of £230,000 for which housing would need to identify a budget. Housing have confirmed that removing grass verges to create parking bays would not support the Council's commitment to encourage sustainable methods of travel. Furthermore, the implementation of parking bays would result in a number of healthy trees being removed which would not support the Council's commitment to protect and expand the borough's trees and green spaces.



Housing do not have available funding for the implementation of additional parking bays as alleviating parking issues is not one of the priorities set for estate and housing improvements. The head petitioner had been informed. (Received 10/06/21)

5.3.4 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 was requested to be undertaken in spring/summer to compare to the survey results from the winter. A seven day traffic survey has therefore been undertaken between the 4th August and the 10th August and shows 85% of motorists are travelling at 34.2mph or less. Although this is slightly higher than the 30mph speed limit, it is less than the parameters set by the Police for enforcement, which is over 35mph. A further 3-year injury collision analysis has been undertaken for Queens Road and it shows there has been two recorded injury collisions during this period. This is very low when compared to some other areas in Sandwell where funding must be prioritised to reduce the injury collisions in accordance with Sandwell's Strategic Road Safety Plan. It is for this reason there are currently no plans to implement a traffic calming scheme along Queens Road during this financial year. The head petitioner has been informed.
(Received 24/8/2019)

6 Source Documents

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

