

Report to Cabinet Petitions Committee

22 June 2022

Subject:	Petitions Progress Report
Contact Officer:	Matt Powis Matt_Powis@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 54 – Residents of Batmans Hill Road, Princes End, Tipton	Requesting average speed cameras.	Referred to West Midlands Police for response.
5.2 71 – Boscobel Estate – Tipton Green	Requesting a warden and an issue with ASB	Officers investigated the concerns and provided the follow response:

Supporting People

The council no longer offer:
Supporting People Service

There is a Floating Support Service, provided by the council but this service was designed to support certain vulnerable groups.

Provided to the Committee is a referral form to access the Floating Support Service should any resident 'meet the criteria' – (attached as appendix 1).

It should be noted that The Floating Support Service does



not provide care support, however they may be able to offer some advice & limited assistance.

One of the concerns raised in the petition, was that of isolation of residents from help and support.

The TMO do have a community focussed service and the officers at the TMO are in constant contact with residents, to provide support and help where possible.

The TMO have encouraged the residents to wear the piper alarm pendants through the Community Alarms Service, which many have done. The type of wrap around care that is being requested, can be purchased privately but it can be quite expensive. Individual residents or groups of residents may have to seek access private funding to purchase this wrap around care, but at this time it is not a service provided by the council.

Warden Service

In the matters relating to a patrolling service to either remove or move on certain behaviours and activities officers confirmed that



there is a Warden Patrol Service, that the council operate on the Boscobel Estate, but this is focussed

- Fly tipping
- General Anti-Social Behaviour

The TMO have a strong relationship with the local police team (Tipton Green), and there is a dedicated Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) who patrols the estate. There is CCTV in the area and residents have been advised on how to reports incidents that will then be reviewed on the CCTV. The PCSO had been host police surgeries in the Boscobel office prior to the COVID lockdown, and this will a forum to report concerns, but this service was suspended during the pandemic.

The expectation is that there will be a resumption of this surgeries to provide residents with the opportunity to discuss their concerns.

The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team have been contacted regarding how potential criminal activities that may be undertaken by members of the public whom do not live on the Boscobel Estate. The ASB team have given advice to the TMO as well as engaged with some of the



residents, but the ASB team cannot make any interventions without the appropriate evidence.

As it stands, neither the ASB Team nor the Police can lawfully stop groups congregating in the area.

5.3 16 - Grafton Road Residents

Establishing residential permit parking on both sides of the road

Officers in response to the petition had distributed questionnaires to residents in Grafton Road to ask if they would be in favour of a residents permit parking scheme.

Graham Road and Sandwell Road North have also been included in this process to prevent any displacement of parking in these roads should a scheme be implemented. The majority of residents in all roads will need to be in favour for a residents parking permit scheme to be considered. The deadline date for questionnaires to be returned was the 10 June 2022.

5.2 Progress on outstanding petitions

Signatories	Subject	Action Taken/Proposed
5.2.1 92 – Various local residents (Friar Park)	Request for the installation of a crossing on Oxford Street near No.93	Officers have reported that a number of attempts have been made to appoint a new School Crossing Patrol at Oxford Street in the vicinity of Mesty Croft



School, however, so far there hasn't been any applicants.

Arrangements will be made for pedestrian counts and traffic surveys to be undertaken to check if the location meets the national criteria for the implementation of a formal crossing facility.

If this location meets the national criteria, then funding will need to be identified for the implementation of a crossing facility.

Officers confirmed that arrangements had been made for a traffic survey and a pedestrian count to be undertaken along Oxford Road. Once the results have been received these will be used to check if the location meets the criteria for a crossing facility.

Traffic Surveys and pedestrian surveys had been undertaken along Oxford Street. The results from the surveys have now been received and are currently being analysed by Highways.

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



5.2.2 128 – 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 Road Safety Improvement Scheme has been designed for Lightwoods Hill and a consultation is underway with local residents.

Letters have been sent out to local residents for comments on Thursday 11th November 2021. An update will be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.

Officers confirmed that the consultation has been undertaken with local residents regarding the implementation of a road safety scheme along Lightwoods Hill. A number of objections have been raised regarding the proposed scheme, which is now currently being reviewed. Suggestions and comments from the consultation process are being considered to see if any adjustments can be made to the scheme proposal within the available budget.



Officers submitted an update noting that a number of objections had been received from residents regarding the original proposed road safety scheme for Lightwoods Hill.

Consequently, options are being explored if alternative measures are appropriate and any changes will be presented to the Cabinet Members for Environment and Community Safety, for their consideration.

The proposed road safety scheme for Lightwoods Hill had been altered in accordance with objections that were received to the initial proposal. The new proposal would be taken to the Cabinet Member for Highways in the next two weeks.

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

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 the Cabinet Petitions Committee.

The Car Park was scheduled to open in April/May, highways



would then be able to undertake an inspection.

Updated in June that the car park should be opened next month to fully undertake the inspection.

5.2.4 413 – 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. A seven day traffic survey had been undertaken around the junction of Park Lane / Manor House Road. It shows that 85% of motorists are travelling at 29.7mph or less (figure includes both directions).

Officers reported that Council Policy required funding for road safety improvements to be prioritised in areas where treatable injury collisions are occurring. The funding for road safety improvements such as traffic signals must be prioritised in areas where treatable injury collisions are occurring. The junction of Park Lane and Manor House Road does not currently meet the criteria for a road safety improvement scheme, this is because there are other areas in Sandwell with higher numbers of injury collisions which must be prioritised first in accordance with Sandwell's Strategic Road Safety Plan.

Following representations from a ward councillor on behalf of the head petitioner, the Committee decided that a visit with the Cabinet Member and



officers would take place to determine if any low-cost alternatives could be identified. These might be afforded from local community budgets. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.

Officers confirmed that a meeting with local ward members, Cabinet Member for Highways and Highways officers has been scheduled for 14th February at 3pm. An online meeting was attended by Local Ward Members and the Highways Service Manager, however, the cabinet member could not attend and consequently the meeting needs to be re-scheduled.

This matter is to be discussed with local ward members and the new Cabinet Member for highways. Meeting to be arranged.

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



5.3 Petitions requiring final approval

Signatories	Subject	Action Taken/Proposed
5.3.1 10 – Residents of Maple Rise	Faulty security lights, dangerous old TV aerial and guttering that is not fit for purpose.	<p>Under investigation by Officers, response to be provided at future Committee.</p> <p>Officers engaged with the tenants and it was confirmed that tenants were happy with lights when working, the issues were when they are not working. Officers offered to replace the bulb with upgraded LED, reducing the need to call out as much. It was understood that tenants were happy with response.</p> <p>Contractors have attended and re-fixed loose external cables to the aerials, no further work was required.</p> <p>Removing old TV aerials are private so the Council are unable to remove these.</p> <p>Officers had raised a work order to attend to the guttering to all 3 blocks (1-7, 19 – 37 and 2 – 24 Maple) on 4th April 2022.</p> <p>Officers had also placed a work order to replace a gate near number 15 appointed for 12th April 2022.</p>



5.3.2 12 – Residents of Sandwell

National Landlord Register - Asking the Council Leader to show support by writing to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up and Housing, Michael Gove implement the register as part of their upcoming Renters' Reform Bill

Motion brought by Councillor Ahmed and seconded by Councillor Piper at Full Council on 21 April 2022 which was unanimously passed. It was agreed that:

The Leader of the Council would write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities urging him to include a National Landlord Register in the Renters' Reform Bill.

The Leader would also write to local MPs asking them to urge the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to support the below. These letters had been sent on 10 May and the Council awaits a response.

These letters had now been sent.

5.3.3 48 - Bilston Rd (Princes End)

Average Speed Cameras Instillation requested from the residents of Bilston Rd due to speeding.

Following representation from Cllr Williams officers confirmed that while the police are responsible for speed enforcement.

Officers will undertake speed surveys to identify the extent and distribution of the problem on Bilston Road and share with them any data and information around accidents to assist the Police with enforcement.

Officers will communicate with Cllr Williams to determine what date and time to undertake the



speed survey to ensure it reflects the time at which residents have made their concerns.

Officers confirmed that a seven day traffic survey had been ordered for Bilston Road and if any speeding concerns are identified, these will be shared with the Police.

The assessment criteria for the installation of Average Speed Cameras takes into consideration the number and severity of the injury collisions along a given road.

The funding for the installation of average speed cameras is determined at a Black Country level by the Black Country Average Speed Enforcement Board and is targeted at sites where collisions resulting in fatalities and serious injuries are occurring regularly.

After being assessed for the installation of average speed cameras, Bilston Road does not currently meet that criteria.

Officers updated that a seven day traffic survey had been undertaken along Bilston Road and it showed that an average of 11,537 vehicles a day are travelling along it (figure includes both directions).



It also shows 85% of motorists had been travelling at 35mph or less.

This speed was higher than the posted 30mph speed limit for this area and therefore the traffic survey data had been shared with the Police with a request for speed enforcement.

5.3.4 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 underneath the verge.

The utility boxes and apparatus would have to be moved by the utility company which would incur substantial costs to the Council. In addition, alternative locations suitable 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 which



would incur 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. At a previous meeting, officers confirmed the implementation of 40 parking spaces 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.

At the last petitions meeting, the Committee requested for Highways officers to investigate whether the grass verge could be converted to accommodate a maximum of 7 parking spaces, as opposed to 40. It was confirmed that a reduced number of parking bays could be accommodated within the grassed verge along Church Road, the parking bays cost approximately £3,000 to construct and there is likely to be additional costs for utility diversions as there are some utility apparatus present in the verge area.

These costs will need to be obtained from the relevant utility companies. The grassed verge area is housing maintained and funding would therefore need to be identified by them. An update will be provided to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee.



Highways investigated the original request for a parking permit scheme for Church Road.

This wasn't recommended as there isn't enough space on street to accommodate all of the vehicles that are owned by the residents along this stretch. This results in residents paying for parking permits with no guarantee they can park their vehicles, which is never favourable.

It was then asked if the grassed verge area on the opposite side to the properties could be used to construct parking bays. This land is maintained by housing hence the reason housing were asked to look at this.

Housing:

“Our priority is to preserve grassed areas and trees for the benefit of tenants and wider communities. We do not allocate funding for the conversion of grassed areas to parking areas as this runs counter to our commitments to combatting the effects of climate change and to promoting health and wellbeing.”



5.3.5 71 – Boscobel Estate – Tipton Green

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Officers investigated the concerns and provided the follow response:

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6 Source Documents

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

