

Petitions Committee

Minutes - 6 November 2015

Attendance

Members of the Petitions Committee

Cllr Greg Brackenridge (Chair)
Cllr Val Evans (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Arun Photay
Cllr Judith Rowley
Cllr Daniel Warren

Councillors in attendance

Employees

Stephen Alexander	Head of Planning
Nick Broomhall	Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety
Adam Hadley	Group Manager - Democracy
Sangita Kular	Housing Strategy/Development Officer
Jane Trethewey	Section Leader
Abby Vella	Graduate Management Trainee

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Cllr Gakhal and Cllr Samuels, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing.
- 2 Declarations of interest**
Cllr Warren declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7, Wobaston Road Corridor Improvements – Safety Barrier Request, as he had signed the original petition.
- 3 Minutes of previous meeting**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the deletion of 'had gone wrong' from minute item nine, paragraph 14, and the substitution therefore of 'may have gone wrong'.
- 4 Matters arising**
Cllr Rowley requested information regarding the emphasis of 'walk to school' and 'park and walk' campaigns which were endorsed at the last meeting. She also requested further information regarding resolution three in minute item seven which referred to the feasibility of restricting the proposed parking restrictions to term time only or excluding bank holidays.

Nick Broomhall, Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, reported that he was looking into the potential for term time only restrictions because school time restrictions would not be feasible. He advised that there had been Traffic Regulation Orders to try and implement these but would be progressed subject to resources and the outcome of a pending investigation.

Resolved:

That a report be presented to the Petitions Committee in six months' time.

5 Schedule of petitions

Resolved:

That the following petitions be closed:

1. Prohibit Parking of Caravans and Large Vans on Broome Road and Hawksford Crescent (Petition no. 121 – 13)
2. Opposing Increase in Standard Number at Manor Primary School (Petition no. 135 – 14)
3. Pedestrian Crossing on Rushall Road (Petition no. 136 – 14)
4. Lollipop Person on Ettingshall Road (Petition no. E14 – 14-15A)
5. Curzon Street Parking Issues (Petition no. 144 – 15)

6 Stanley Road, Bushbury - Parking Issues

The report was heard in the petitioner's absence.

Nick Broomhall, Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, presented the report regarding parking and access issues in Stanley Road, Busbury, in particular to Heantun Group Children's Resource Centre and Children's Nursery. He reported that both had been under the Heantun House umbrella and had six available off-street parking spaces, two disabled bays and six on-street parking bays. Due to increased parking demand, the Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety explained that it had become custom and practice to park across the bays so more cars could be accommodated. He advised that Waste Services had been contacted to ensure that this would not impede the movement of large vehicles. There had been no problems with this to date.

The Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety reported that his team had undertaken observations in this area. The findings of tracking software showed that an additional parking restriction on the north side of the roundabout was achievable. He proposed that a scheme be implemented to maximise available parking, using short term traffic regulation orders so larger vehicles could move.

Resolved:

That the proposed action to proceed to formal advertising of parking restrictions and amended parking arrangements in Stanley Road be endorsed.

7 Wobaston Road Corridor Improvements - Safety Barrier Request

Further to Cllr Warren's declaration of interest, he withdrew from the committee and sat with and represented the lead petitioners Mrs Jenks and Ms Williams.

Cllr Warren outlined the petition from residents of Winchester Road and Redhurst Drive regarding the request for a barrier to protect their properties from possible

damage due to a vehicle collision. He reported that the widening scheme for i54 and Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) expansion meant that increased traffic noise, road safety and privacy concerns were affecting residents in Wobaston Road. He advised that the bedrooms of residents faced Wobaston Road and there was a fear among residents of road traffic accidents occurring close to residents' properties.

Cllr Warren welcomed the 30 mph reduced speed limit but advised that there were cars which were exceeding this limit in this area. He asked that the committee look at other options in addition to the reduced speed limit. Cllr Warren advised that although natural barriers such as trees and bushes were an option, the bungalows struggled with light and the fear of crime would remain. He commented on the option to work with Wolverhampton Homes as the land in question has been transferred back to Wolverhampton Homes from the Highways Department.

Mrs Jenks reiterated that this petition concerned the safety of residents in Redhurst Drive and Wobaston Road. She commented that there was no safe pathway past the bungalows and pedestrians were walking past residents' windows.

Nick Broomhall, Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, reported that this was an on-going issue. He advised that with regards to crash barriers, this option was found to be low priority when formal assessment had been carried out.

The Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety advised that a similar exercise had been carried out in relation to a bund. The opinion of consultants was that the gradients that would have to be implemented would not be safe for the maintenance to cut the grass. He advised that a further difficulty was that the distance from the bungalows to the highway was not sufficient.

The Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety reported that strategically planted trees may be able to provide physical protection and noise protection without having an adverse effect on lighting in the bungalows. He commented that the 30 mph speed reduction would not be isolated to Wobaston Road and would be extended north and south of Vine Island.

Cllr Rowley commented that the surveys had been undertaken some time ago and the ambiance of the road had altered since then with increased volumes of traffic heading towards i54. She requested further consideration into physical barriers but agreed that natural barriers may be a suitable option.

A discussion took place regarding tracking and enforcement of the speed limit. Although there was not a speed camera in the area, the Council was working in partnership with colleagues from the police to monitor speeds of traffic. In addition, a survey would be conducted both prior to implementation of the speed reduction and three months post implementation. If there was no major improvement, further consideration would be given to interventions to reduce speeds of traffic.

The Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety commented that the possibility of implementing a crash barrier could be reviewed during the survey.

Cllr Warren requested clarification over whether the grass land behind Wobaston Road had been transferred to Wolverhampton Homes.

Resolved:

That the proposal for a 30 mph speed limit in Wobaston Road as detailed in the report be endorsed.

8 **Open Ground Rear of 36-62 Inkerman Street, Heath Town**

The lead petitioner presented the petition which opposed the re-development of open ground to the rear of 36-62 Inkerman Street. He reported that the space was being used by a local football club for training purposes and was concerned that any housing development would hinder the health and wellbeing of young people who utilised that area.

The lead petitioner requested that since the open space was not suitable for housing development, it could undergo improvement work for the young people of that area to use recreationally. Suggested improvements included fencing, draining and lighting.

Jane Trethewey, Service Lead, Housing Development, commented that the open space was unsuitable for housing developments due to noise issues. As part of the Heath Town Regeneration project, officers were considering improvements to the existing MUGA (multi-use games area), particularly in relation to the installation of a green gym and new play facilities for young children. The Service Lead, Housing Development advised that the open land in question was under the ownership of the Education Directorate which had an agreement with Wolverhampton Homes to maintain the site. She advised that discussions had been initiated to see whether an asset transfer from the Education Directorate to the Housing Department was possible. If so, Housing Development could work with Wolverhampton Homes regarding improvements to the site.

Councillors agreed that retaining the site as an area of green space to be used recreationally was important. It was agreed that going forward the resolution to this area was to be passed on to employees since the original purpose of the petition had been dealt with.

Resolved:

1. That the Committee endorse the proposal that the open ground rear of 36-62 Inkerman Street is unsuitable for housing development.
2. That the Committee support on-going discussions regarding improvements to the existing Multi-Use Game Area (MUGA) on the Heath Town Estate.
3. That the Committee endorse further discussions to find a solution for the use of the open ground rear of 36-62 Inkerman Street.

9 **Petition seeking the removal of the children's play equipment at Duke's Park**

The lead petitioner was invited to comment on the report. Referring to 2.5.2 of the report, the lead petitioner questioned the lengthy discussions that had taken place as he had no knowledge of this. He also alleged that a letter drop by Barratt Homes to residents had not been completed and he had verified this with neighbours. The lead petitioner disagreed with the description of the play area as an attractive landscape feature as noted in 2.5.4.

The lead petitioner commented that the report did not address the issue that the height of the play area was on the same level as residents' bedrooms and this height was a hindrance for police when targeting youth activity. He commented the report failed to mention the close proximity of a purpose built sports centre.

Stephen Alexander, Head of Planning, advised that the letter drop from Barratt Homes did not form part of the statutory planning process and was not a legal requirement.

The Head of Planning explained that the update report set out considerable efforts from many partners and suggested three options:

1. to remove the play area in its entirety
2. to retain the equipment in its current state
3. to remove large equipment and replace it with equipment suitable for pre-school aged children.

The Head of Planning advised that Council policy advocated the provision of outdoor play areas and the removal of such would prohibit future residents from benefitting from this outdoor play area. His recommendation was option three, the removal of larger play equipment, making it less appealing for youths to gather.

Cllr Rowley explained to the lead petitioner that planning decisions must accord with the 'secure by design principle'. This principle looked into the implications of planning on personal security and how the proposal would fit into the environment. She also advised that due to statutory requirements, the community would have been consulted during the consultation period, through a notice on site and in the press.

The Head of Planning added the site did accord with this principle and there was no reason in design terms to refuse it. The national planning guidelines required that play areas be located 21 metres from residents' house. The park in question exceeded this and was located 30 metres from residents' houses. This also exceeded the 20 metre distance requirement to mitigate noise disturbance.

A discussion took place regarding the location of the park in relation to the original plan. The Head of Planning was confident that the location of the park matched its original planning. A map of the original plan was distributed among Councillors and it was agreed that if residents believed that they had been mis-sold their property, this was a private, not a Council, matter.

Resolved:

1. That the Committee endorse the proposal that the Council ask the owners of the play area, Barratt Homes, to remove the large play equipment and replace it with equipment suitable for pre-school children.
2. That an update on work be presented to the Petitions Committee in six months' time.

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

The Chair thanked Laura Gilyead, Graduate Management Trainee, for her work with the Petitions Committee.