

Petitions Committee

Minutes - 11 September 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

Cllr Stephen Simkins

Employees

Nick Broomhall
Andrew Bryant
Alison Dennett
Laura Gilyead
Ian Holliday
Karen Samuels

Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety
Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator
Interim Democratic Support Manager
Graduate Management Trainee
Section Leader, Planning
Head of Community Safety

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Cllr Gakhal.

- 2 **Declarations of interest**
Cllr Warren expressed a non-pecuniary interest in the Pedestrian Crossing on Rushall Road petition as he had signed the petition.

- 3 **Minutes of previous meeting**
Cllrs Rowley and Photay indicated that their apologies for the meeting on 26 June 2015 had not been noted.

Resolved:
 1. That the apologies of Cllrs Rowley and Photay be included in the minutes.
 2. That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2015 be approved as a true record.

- 4 **Matters arising**
There were no matters arising.

- 5 **Schedule of petitions**
Resolved:

That the Woodcross Park Extension of Railings petition be closed.

6 Curzon Street, Blakenhall - parking issues

Mr Singh, lead petitioner, explained that the petition was submitted as the residents were experiencing parking problems in Curzon Street. He noted that the road was very crowded and there were no parking spaces available for households because of shops at the end of the road.

Nick Broomhall, Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, presented the report. He explained that the petition expressed difficulty of residents to park outside their houses because of Blakenhall Shopping Centre, Pure Gym Fitness Centre and a dental surgery located at the corner of Curzon Street and Dudley Road. He explained that, in 2012, 19 streets in Wolverhampton were consulted about resident parking schemes. It was agreed at Cabinet (Resources) Panel that these would need to be cost neutral and so an annual permit would cost residents £40. It was agreed that, after a full consultation process, a minimum of 60% of the residents of the streets directly affected should have responded with 85% of those being in favour of the scheme. The Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, reported that none of the streets consulted met the criteria agreed. Because of the costs implications, it was resolved that no one street alone could implement a residents parking scheme and that no further consultation should take place. The Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, noted that Council employees have recorded that the car park at Pure Gym is well used however the Shopping Centre car park is not well used. It was proposed that shoppers and visitors to the Blakenhall Shopping Centre should be encouraged to use the car park and so more signage to the park should be implemented at the site.

Cllr Rowley explained that parking issues in Blakenhall had been brought to the Council's attention many times in the past. She explained that when the houses and roads were first designed, there were fewer cars on the roads. She noted that the Council did not want to pave over green spaces as they were vibrantly used. She noted that she had been aware of someone with disability in Goldthorn Park who had a white line painted on the highway in front of their house to reserve a parking space and asked if this was something that could be accommodated.

The Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, explained that this was possible for residents who were blue badge holders and met certain criteria. He noted that this would provide an on street disabled bay which could be used by any blue badge holder. He explained that there was a cost implication for the blue badge holder.

Resolved:

That a review of signage to the shoppers' car parks in the Blakenhall area be endorsed.

7 Malins Road, Parkfield - parking issues

Mr Mehmi, lead petitioner, explained that Malins Road was a very narrow cul-de-sac and that residents believed that non-residents should not use the road. He noted that parking should have been included in the original plans of St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy so that it did not interfere with residents. He explained that residents were told that Malins Road would have been a temporary entrance to the school and that access in the future would be to the rear of the school. He informed

the committee that he had been advised that the value of properties in the road had been reduced by a minimum of 10%. He explained that there was no signage to the school at the end of the road. He noted that emergency vehicles could not gain access to buildings in the road if necessary. He explained that there was unused ground to the rear of the school which could be converted to a car park. He noted that staff at the school park in the road as there was insufficient parking spaces on the school's site. He explained that parking restrictions in the road would only move the issues into the surrounding roads which would make crossing for pedestrians difficult and dangerous. The petitioner explained that cars parked in Malins Road meant that cars drive slowly reducing potential accidents.

Nick Broomhall, Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, presented the report. He explained that he would only be able to answer questions relating to Transportation but had consulted with colleagues in Education in drawing together the report. He explained that the school had become an academy and so decisions regarding the school were out of the Council's control. He noted that the proposal to close the school would not be welcomed as there were limited school places in the City. He explained that the suggested revised access to the rear of St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy would be through the playground of the former Parkfield High School site, which has recently been leased to a newly established Free School, and so would not be welcomed.

The petitioner noted that residents had been told that access through Malins Road would not be permanent and asked what alternative plans had been discussed.

The Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, noted that he was not able to give advice on this matter but noted that St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy had been open for a long time.

The petitioner noted that there were a lot of vulnerable people living in Malins Road who receive abuse from parents parking in the road. He explained that there was unused Council space available to the rear of the school which would be a simple solution to the problem. He understood that there would be cost implications to the proposal but noted that this would be a one-off cost.

The Chair explained that land to the rear of the school had been leased. He noted that the cost to transform the area to a car park would be a significant amount.

Cllr Rowley noted that this was a road safety issue. She explained that the head teacher at St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy was also concerned. She noted that when the school was built, access would have been deemed suitable as there were fewer cars taking children to school.

Cllr Warren noted that some form of parking restrictions were needed and that the Council and Police should take action in stopping people parking there.

The petitioner noted that problems occurred at the beginning and end of school day. Parking restrictions are not required during the day, overnight, at weekends and during school holidays.

The Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, noted that proposed restrictions of single yellow lines would be in force during school travel times (8:00-9:30am and 2:30-4:30pm). He explained that it may be possible to restrict these to either term time only or to exclude bank holidays.

Cllr Photay asked if property prices are anticipated to be affected by parking restrictions.

The Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, explained that the effect of parking restrictions on house prices is subjective as some buyers would welcome restrictions whereas others would not. He noted that all properties in Malins Road have off-street parking.

Cllr Rowley suggested that St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy be encouraged to emphasise 'walk to school' and 'park and walk' campaigns.

Resolved:

1. That St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy be encouraged to emphasise 'walk to school' campaigns.
2. That the proposed action to proceed to formal advertising of parking restrictions in Malins Road be endorsed.
3. That the feasibility of the restricting the proposed parking restrictions to term time only or excluding Bank Holidays, be investigated.
4. That the proposed parking restrictions be enforced as a priority.
5. That the proposed action to review the access arrangements for St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy if and when the former Parkfield High School site becomes available for disposal.
6. That a further report be presented to the Petitions Committee in six months' time.

8 **Composite update report of various petitions**

Andrew Bryant, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team Leader, presented the update on the Prohibit Parking of Caravans and Large Vans on Broome Road and Hawksford Crescent petition and reported that the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) was in place. He noted that the ASB team, Environmental Health and Police were working together to enforce the PSPO.

Mrs Kenny, lead petitioner, thanked all of the agencies for the work they have done to put the PSPO in place.

Laura Gilyead, Graduate Management Trainee, presented the updates on the Opposing Increase in Standard Number at Manor Primary School petition and the Lollipop Person on Ettingshall Road petition. The Committee noted the action taken regarding these petitions.

Nick Broomhall, Service Lead, Traffic and Road Safety, presented the update on the Pedestrian Crossing on Rushall Road petition. He noted that the results of the traffic and pedestrian surveys have fallen significantly short (by a factor of ten) of the Department for Transport's requirements to install a zebra or puffin crossing. He explained that the Council would investigate other options to assist residents in crossing Rushall Road.

Mrs Redmond, lead petitioner, explained that vans parked on the road block the view of pedestrians.

Cllr Warren explained that this had been a long running issue. He expressed his gratitude to the Transportation team for their work in the area.

Resolved:

That the actions taken regarding the following petitions be noted and any proposals be endorsed.

- Prohibit Parking of Caravans and Large Vans on Broome Road and Hawksford Crescent petition
- Opposing Increase in Standard Number at Manor Primary School petition
- Lollipop Person on Ettingshall Road petition
- Pedestrian Crossing on Rushall Road petition

9 **Petition for Removal of Park from Dukes Park Estate - Progress Update**

Cllr Simkins explained that this petition arose due to issues at the park on Dukes Park Estate because of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Karen Samuels, Head of Community Safety, presented the update report. She explained that six young people had been identified as causing issues on the estate and had been issued with warnings. She explained that the Council had been working with the Police and other local partners to divert young people to other activities taking place over the summer period and respond to issues on the site, though this continued level of resource input was not sustainable over the medium term. She noted that the wider area (which includes the play area) was under Barratt Homes ownership and so any resolutions would need to be implemented through liaison with Barratt Homes.

Mr Williams, lead petitioner, explained that the play equipment was put in place without consultation with residents. He explained that after contacting Barratt Homes, he was informed that there would be 'springy chickens' not play equipment. He explained that the Council had told residents and police that this was not Council property so the Council could not deal with the issues. He identified that the majority of residents wanted the park to be removed. He noted that as it was not a physical activity park, it would not affect childhood obesity. He indicated that an open space would be more beneficial to reducing childhood obesity as they could run around. The petitioner noted that the Police had logged a further ten incidents at the park since April 2015. He also noted that since the last meeting of the Petitions Committee, the play area's flooring had been ripped up and thrown around by youths. He explained that families on the estate have young children and do not want the park particularly as it is on a mound and so noise can be heard from resident's bedrooms.

The Head of Community Safety explained that she had contacted the lead petitioner to discuss his request for a historic review looking into who had provided him with false information; however, as this fell significantly outside of the scope of the petition, she advised him to pursue through the Council's formal complaints process and provided details of how this could be progressed.

Cllr Rowley explained that planning files were public documents. She enquired as to clarity of the plans presented to the Planning Committee and requested that Planning Officers report to the Petitions Committee on the case.

Mr Coles, a representative from Barratt Homes, explained that the park specification detail would have been provided under a discharge condition. He agreed to look back over sales reservation sheets to clarify what information was provided to residents about the park's construction.

Cllr Rowley requested to see the original set of plans for the site.

The petitioner explained that residents had been told that no plans were available when they had bought their house and were then told that it was not known what equipment would be put in place. They explained that they had been told that plans would be sent through post to residents.

Cllr Warren noted that there was a clear indication that residents want complete removal of the park. He noted that the Committee would need to look at planning issues before making any further decisions. He also requested to see crime statistics for the area.

Cllr Photay expressed a need to not spend too long in making any decisions.

The Chair explained that the Committee want to deal with this matter as soon as possible but in full view of all information on the issue.

The petitioner noted that there were criminal offences taking place in the area not just ASB.

Ian Holliday, Section Leader, Planning, explained that permission was given to Barratt Homes, at the site, several years ago and so was not available at the time of the Petitions Committee meeting but could be presented for a further report. He indicated that he was unaware whether finer detail of the plans had been submitted from Barratt Homes. He noted that it would not be usual practice for the Planning Committee to consider the detail of play equipment.

Cllr Simkins noted that Planning Committee protocols should be scrutinised as the finer detail should be agreed.

Cllr Rowley confirmed that Planning Committee would not normally consider the detail of play equipment. However, she considered that something had gone wrong in Planning and requested that the matter be deferred until a full investigation had been undertaken.

The petitioner explained that a bench on the raised ground looked into her children's bedroom window. She explained that upon consultation with a youth worker, they were shocked that park was raised so high. She noted that offenders are able to see the Police approaching the park and could get away easily.

Resolved:

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

1. That the decisions be deferred until an investigation of the planning processes has taken place.
2. That a report be presented at the next meeting of the Petitions Committee.