

Overview & Scrutiny Task Group Meeting Notes



Lichfield District Council

Review Topic	Date of Meeting
Pedestrianisation	16 May 2024

Attendance	Venue
<p>Members: S. Norman (Chair) H. Ashton R. Bragger K. Coe D. Cross</p> <p>Apologies:</p> <p>Officers: Will Stevenson (Governance) Martin Gritt (Projects)</p> <p>Witnesses: Cllr Janice Silvester-Hall</p>	Committee Room

Areas Discussed
<p>The Cabinet member welcomed the work of the task group in providing an additional conduit for consultation with the public. It was confirmed that the ETRO was due to expire in the first week of September 2024.</p> <p>Written answers to the questions in the agenda were provided by the Cabinet member before the meeting.</p> <p>On Question 1 - “Frustration that much of the communication had been conducted online: a lack of physical letters and posters created difficulty in informing certain demographics” – members noted that the physical signage always seems to be lagging the changes to pedestrianisation rules. The Cabinet member highlighted a few other physical printed information methods such as small business card and A5 size leaflets. The cabinet member shared the task groups frustrations with the delays in updating signage but noted this was due to manufacturing, processing by SCC and ensuring legal compliance.</p> <p>The operation of the enforcement officers on the barriers to the pedestrianised area was discussed.</p>

It was confirmed that whilst no targets on vehicular access had been set, the data does show an increased compliance with the rules in the trial.

Taxi compliance was highlighted as an ongoing matter, particularly the use of Bore Street as a de-facto taxi rank by hackney carriage vehicles. The competition between hackney carriage and Uber was discussed by members.

The Cabinet member confirmed the ambition that Bird Street would be subject to pedestrianisation, but compliance with the statutory regulations and pavement licences were areas that were continuing to be addressed.

On question 3 – “Said they had received letters from disabled residents in the surrounding towns/villages, some of whom no longer visited Lichfield City centre due to the difficulties created by the pedestrianisation trial” - the cabinet member agreed it would be helpful to obtain more information on this.

On question 4 – “Lack of responses when contacting officers” – it was noted that having a single officer as the point of contact was not ideal in retrospect.

On question 6 – “Inability to access events at The Hub due to the lack of parking or drop-off points outside” – members noted it is not just the number of disabled spaces available but the location that is crucial to their viability.

The cabinet member stated that the items in the Access Able report that required urgent attention had been completed. The cabinet member would like to see further work on the alleyway from Bird Street car park work completed after the ETRO.

On question 7 – “Why do the restrictions have to last until 9pm” – it was confirmed this was changed due to feedback from businesses.

On question 8 – “Outside seating in Bore Street was not being used and this was taking up valuable space that may be required by disabled residents” – it was confirmed that the spacing of tables and chairs are a statutory requirement.

On further question 1 – “What are the numbers, expressed as weekly totals, if possible, of the number of tickets issued for unauthorised entry into the pedestrianised zone?” – the cabinet member agreed to provide a briefing paper with further information to Overview & Scrutiny. It was noted that the signage and notifications need to be legally compliant to ensure any charging notices are not subject to challenge.

On further question 4 – “What is the cost of the security personnel at the entrance to Tamworth Street and is a tech solution possible?” – it was stated that the new contract represented a financial saving and feedback had been more positive.

The Cabinet member noted that the civil enforcement officers are best placed to identify if visitors to the city have had their blue badges issued locally or potentially may be from outside the district, to better identify the demographics of those affected by the ETRO.

It was stated that the final decision on the future of pedestrianisation at the expiration of the ETRO would need to go through Cabinet. Future changes would require an update via TRO but would not be part of the ETRO.

Outcomes

The Task Group questioned the cabinet member and obtained further detail on the initial rollout and subsequent operation of the ETRO.

Further Work Required/Next Steps:

- The Cabinet member would bring data on the ETRO nearer its completion to the Task Group or O&S.