

Minutes of a meeting of the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 1 September 2016 at City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.05 pm
Concluded 6.00 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR
A Ahmed
Bacon
Greenwood
T Hussain
Nazir

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Susan Crowe	Strategic Disability Partnership
G Sam Samociuk	Former Mental Health Nursing Lecturer
Trevor Ramsay	Strategic Disability Partnership
Jenny Scott	Older People's Partnership

Observers:

Councillor Martin Love
Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport)
Councillor Fozia Shaheen (Executive Assistant for Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor Val Slater (Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor Dale Smith

Apologies: Councillor Mike Gibbons

Councillor Greenwood in the Chair

22. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interest of transparency Susan Crowe and Trevor Ramsay disclosed that they were members of the Strategic Disability Partnership.

ACTION: *City Solicitor*



23. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

24. PETITIONS IN SUPPORT OF 'A' BOARDS IN SALTAIRE AND ILKLEY

At its meeting of 6 February 2014 the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report into the Council's current arrangements for dealing with obstructions on the highway under Section 137 of the Highways Act 1980. The Committee resolved to refer this matter to Executive for consideration of the suitability of existing Council Policies. At its meetings of 16 October 2014 and 13 October 2015, Executive considered various options for dealing with the issues caused by advertising boards before resolving that a 12 month trial of a zero tolerance approach would be adopted in 4 areas of the District – Bradford City Centre, Saltaire, Ilkley and Leeds Road corridor. The trial of the ban commenced on 4 January 2016 and will conclude in early December when a report on the findings of the trial will be considered by the Committee.

The report will consider:

- Impact of the ban on issues raised by disabled users
- Compliance of the ban
- Cost of enforcement to ensure compliance
- Impact of the ban on trading of local businesses

Businesses affected by the ban that had raised concerns had been invited to take part in the preparation of information for this last bullet point.

Two petitions had been received by the Council objecting to the trial and requesting that the trial be abandoned. At the meeting of Full Council on 12 July 2016, the petitions were referred to this Committee.

The Scrutiny Lead officer stated that the Committee could hear the views of interested parties but did not have the powers to take Executive decisions but could, if it wished, make resolutions recommending action by the Council or other bodies.

The Transportation Development Manager gave a summary of the decision making process leading to the trial ban, as outlined above.

All those who had requested to speak at the meeting were given a maximum five minutes to put their points to the Committee, commencing with the lead petitioners.

The lead petitioner of the petition against the ban on A-boards in Ilkley addressed the Committee. She stated she was the Secretary of the Ilkley Business Forum and owner of an independent café in Ilkley. She spoke of the effect the ban was having on small businesses away from the main areas of town and the economic benefit that small businesses brought to their local area. She stressed that these



businesses provided the majority of donations and advertising revenue for local charity events in Ilkley. She tabled photographs showing areas where A-boards had been removed and vehicles had since been seen obstructing the pavement and parking on the kerb, causing risk to pedestrians. She urged for the total ban to be reconsidered and put forward alternative proposals to reduce the area of the ban, re-issue current/new rules about the use of A-boards and potentially implement a licence requirement for A-boards.

The lead petitioner of the petition against the ban on A-boards in Saltaire addressed the Committee and spoke of the drop in custom from passing trade since the removal of the A-board for her sandwich shop on Victoria Road. She was also unable to display a board against the wall as she had done prior to the trial ban. She spoke of the restrictions for her business to display advertising due to it being within a world heritage site. Loss of earnings applied to other businesses in the area. Without the A-board outside her business, the building looked, from the top of Victoria Road, as though it was part of a row of houses. She urged officers to visit the area to see for themselves rather than implement a draconian ban.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Transportation Development Manager stated that the problem with displaying boards against the wall related to the difficulties they caused to visually impaired pedestrians if they were sometimes there and sometimes not which caused a distraction to those pedestrians navigating the streets. The Saltaire lead petitioner responded that the board had permanently been displayed prior to the ban and had not been protruding on to the pavement.

A member of the Ilkley Insight Group addressed the Committee. He stated that, when A-boards had previously been displayed in Ilkley it had made him not want to go there as they were obstructions to accessing the shops and that there were other ways a business could advertise itself, including suspended signage (not grounded) which some Ilkley businesses did have. He believed if the ban was lifted it would cause a lot of chaos and confusion for visually impaired people. He considered A-boards were not essential to a business and supported the ban.

A Senior Habilitation Officer who worked in Sensory Services addressed the Committee. She stated that her role involved working with young people and teenagers to help them move around shops and use transport. She spoke of the difficulties a visually impaired person using a cane would face in navigating an area like Saltaire with A-boards on display. Since the ban she had received feedback from a student who travelled to Shipley College that it took him half the time to get there without the A-board obstructions. She stated there may need to be a compromise between the needs of disabled people and businesses and some guidelines in place to consider whether A-boards were an appropriate way of advertising businesses.

The Chair of Holme Wood Visually Impaired Persons group addressed the Committee. He stated that the group had campaigned for many years against A-board obstructions and welcomed the improvements on Ivgate in Bradford city centre since the ban as it had made the area much more accessible. He



considered businesses should not expect to advertise for free via A-boards.

A member of the Bradford Association of Visually Impaired People addressed the Committee. He strongly supported the ban as someone who had recently started to use a cane. He spoke of the difficulties for a visually impaired person to navigate with A-boards in their way.

A member of the public who was a wheelchair user addressed the Committee and spoke of the difficulties he had experienced when travelling on his own and coming across A-boards. He stated that he had a right to move freely around Bradford and considered A-boards to be discriminatory against wheelchair users.

The Chair of Bradford and District Disabled People's Forum addressed the Committee and stated that disabled people had a right to travel and go about their daily business without being hindered by A-boards.

A Ward Councillor for Shipley addressed the Committee. He questioned why A-boards that were flat against the wall were included in the blanket ban and stated that the policy which was in place prior to the ban was not enforced, despite complaints being made to the Council about specific A-boards that were causing a hindrance; consideration needed to be given to how the ban would be enforced if it was going to be expanded across the District.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing addressed the Committee and stated that the decision to have a trial ban was not taken lightly by Executive and that all options had been considered. In response to the previous Member's comments, she stated that the resources had not been available to properly enforce the previous long-standing policy. As part of the new policy, Council Wardens had been trained to look at issues and bring them forward. They had also been tasked with speaking to businesses to make them aware of the ban. She referred to the photographs circulated by the Ilkley lead petitioner showing vehicle obstructions on pavements and stated that they were police matters. She stated that a licensing scheme had been considered by the Executive but rejected as it would have put an additional burden on businesses to pay a licence fee. She referred to a letter received from the Bradford and District Chamber of Trade which stated that they were against a complete ban and favoured the previous policy. She stated that there were other ways for businesses to advertise, particularly given that Bradford was one of the youngest cities in the country and the increasing use of digital marketing. She stated that consideration needed to be given to the financial impact of the trial ban to fully assess its impact.

A Councillor who was also the Co-Chair of the Strategic Disability Partnership (SDP) addressed the Committee and stated following five years of campaigning by the SDP, the trial had been approved. A-boards affected everybody, not just disabled people. He stated that the trial should run to its conclusion and then the impact should be fully assessed.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport addressed the Committee. He stated that following the trial officers would discuss all information/evidence with him. He spoke of the need to balance the needs of



businesses and rights of pedestrians. He urged businesses being financially affected by the trial ban to provide evidence to officers so that this could be considered; no factual evidence had been provided as yet.

The Chair thanked all speakers for attending the meeting and urged anyone with further information relating to the impact of the trial ban to contact officers. She stated that this Committee would consider a report on the impact assessment of the trial ban on 8 December 2016.

The Transportation Development Manager clarified that any extension of the trial ban would need to be approved by Executive and that any financial information provided by traders would be anonymised and published in line with the Data Protection Act. All information received by 6 December 2016 would be presented in the impact assessment report to this Committee on 8 December 2016.

Resolved –

- (1) That the petitioners and other members of the public who have given their views be thanked for attending the meeting.**
- (2) That the points raised by the petitioners and other members of the public be noted and be taken into account during the preparation of the report on the trial that will be considered by the Committee at its meeting of 8 December 2016.**

ACTION: Strategic Director, Regeneration

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

