



To:
Councillor Andrew Stevens
Cabinet Member for Environment
and Infrastructure

Please ask for: Overview & Scrutiny
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Date 4 January 2023
Dyddiad:

Summary: This is a letter from the Road Safety Working Group to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure. The letter concerns the meeting held on 7 December 2022 on the issue of road safety in Swansea.

Dear Councillor Stevens,

On the 7 December, a Scrutiny Working Group was held to look at the issue of Road Safety. The Panel are grateful to the officers Mark Wade, Stuart Davies, Matthew Bowyer and Alan Ferris for attending.

The officers presented their report and explained the various sources of funding that are available to the highways department and the role of each one. We were informed the Welsh Government Road Safety Grant has been held back for the second year in a row due to the roll out of their 20mph speed restriction initiative. Officers told us that this initiative is using considerable Council resources for implementation. We were told that the highways team are currently mapping the exemptions to the 20mph limit and these will be brought to Cabinet by the end of the year with plans to share more widely with ward members thereafter.

The partnership between the police and Go Safe was explained to us and that the Council does not always have the power to act on received complaints if the responsibility for the cause for complaint lies with one of the other partners.

We then went on to ask the officers a number of questions and the following main issues were discussed.

We said that we encourage the use of countdown crossings and would like to see more of these. We were told that current guidance is to install these when crossings require refurbishment or as money becomes available.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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We understand that speed bumps and cushions are an effective way of moderating drivers' speed however some members felt they do not see these working efficiently in their wards. Officers informed us that speed cushions won't slow down the speed of buses and wider wheel based vehicles as they will straddle the cushion and if vehicles are parked on the side of the road, wide based vehicles are forced to go over the cushion which can be dangerous if they do not slow down. This is a particular issue for buses.

We were concerned that adding speed calming measures like speed cushions can have an adverse effect on roads causing additional maintenance and with this in mind, wondered if roads with speed cushions will get additional funding for road maintenance to balance out the concentrated wear and tear that speed cushions can cause. We were told that all road maintenance is assigned by need and all roads are prioritised by their state of disrepair.

Officers informed us that speed limits on Gower commons were extensively reviewed in 2018 and in places this was reduced to 40mph from the national speed limit. We were concerned about the number of injured animals and the level of monitoring and presence on the Commons to discourage speeders. We were informed that it sits with the police and Go Safe to enforce the speed limits.

Officers told us that speed cameras are a highly effective way of managing driver behaviour and that Go Safe are responsible for the functioning and administration of the cameras with the Council are responsible for the posts and markings around camera sites.

We asked what consultation is done with disabled groups and officers told us that consultation is carried out for traffic regulation orders. Footway obstructions like tables and chairs should be authorised by the Council but if they are causing a problem this can be reported to the highways department to investigate.

We know that shared use paths are designed in accordance with the active travel guidance and they rely on the consideration of the users. A number of members reported issues with these in their wards, in particular with collisions between pedestrians and cyclists and the speed of cyclists. The officers were not aware of many reported cases of this but members pointed out that there is no specific system for reporting this type of accident similar to the system in place for reporting road traffic accidents to the police.

We discussed the benefits and challenges of volunteer run community speed watch schemes and are interested to know how successful these schemes are and what impact they have. Unfortunately no information on these is gathered by the Council therefore their success is difficult to capture and they are mainly reliant on the number of volunteers.

Traffic around schools is a known issue, and a concern for many members. Officers updated us on the trial occurring in Pontarddulais where a section of street near to a school is being restricted at school times. We would be interested to hear how

successful this is. We were informed that over 4000 parking tickets were issued at school pick up times last year and also that feedback is welcomed from Councillors regarding specific issues around schools in their wards. Officers also told us that school buses can be reported to the highways department if they are parking for long periods in locations causing a nuisance to local residents and this can be fed back to bus companies.

We were keen to find out more about education and awareness around road safety for children and encouraging walking to school. Your officers told us that they continue to look at safe walking routes to schools and there is an ongoing programme alongside kerb craft and cycle training in schools. Active travel routes will also support safe walking/cycling to schools. We were pleased to hear that Kerb craft will train around 1200 pupils this year and officers are looking to increase that number next year.

We were concerned that with regards to new developments, roads seem to be prioritised over walking or cycling but we were pleased to hear about the new street design guide which will focus more on place than street and highway development. We look forward to hearing further about the guides implementation.

Outstanding questions

We received your apologies for the meeting and held back a number of questions which we felt were better directed to you rather than to the officers attending. We have listed the questions below and seek your views –

1. Are there plans to prevent anti-social camping and parking adjacent to the commons?
2. Monmouth has withdrawn its pilot in Caldicot increasing speed limits back to 30mph from 20mph. What are the Councils plans regarding 20mph/30mph limit reduction as there is some debate on whether this is successful?
3. Motorists are parking on the pavements right next to double yellow lines, are you aware of issue and do you have a forward plan to counteract that bad choice of parking?
4. In reference to paragraph 2.6.5 *“Disabled or older occupants of vehicles, particularly those with pre-existing back conditions, can find measures, specifically, but not exclusively, vertical deflections, more uncomfortable and more difficult to negotiate than more able bodied persons do”* What are your long term goals to help older and disabled occupants of cars to alleviate this pain and discomfort?
5. As you are aware of the discomfort cushions cause to elderly and disabled residents would you say that you are treating this demographic differently and are disregarding their specific needs?

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the briefing received and questions asked to attending officers we held a discussion on progress and made the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. We are disappointed that the Welsh Government Road Safety Grant has been held back for the 2nd year in a row due to the 20mph speed reduction scheme

and the potential impact this will have, plus the additional work load to highways staff.

2. We request that you consider the need for speed bumps in areas where there will be a 20 mph restriction on the speed of traffic.
3. We request that the Cabinet Member who is a member of the Go Safe Partnership appeal to the Partnership to be more proactive in the area of Gower Commons.
4. We feel there is a need to develop a program of work on encouraging walking to school, this could be added into current schemes like kerb craft.
5. We would like the Council to consider designing an education program looking at Kerb craft and encouraging walking/cycling to school that could be uploaded to Hwb the digital platform for learning in Wales, for children to look at with parents and guardians at home.
6. We would like more information on cycle training carried out in schools including how often and in how many schools this takes place.
7. We feel more information, signage and guidance needs to be available to educate and encourage tolerant behaviour between walkers and cyclists on shared use paths. We would also like to see a specific system in place for reporting accidents on shared use paths, similar to the system in place for reporting road traffic accidents to the police.
8. We feel Head teachers should encourage their own school staff not to park on roads near schools.
9. We would like to see an increase in the signage and banners outside schools as a deterrent to remind drivers to drive and park safely around schools.
10. We would like improved consultation with ward members on road safety with a particular focus on schools. Ward members are sometimes unaware of consultations taking place. Also more engagement with Councillors is needed when consultations are taking place in their wards so they can help to communicate this to their ward members.

Your Response

We are interested in hearing your thoughts about the issues raised in this letter and would ask that you respond to the outstanding questions and the points in our conclusions by 25 January.

Yours sincerely,



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Convener, Scrutiny Working Group – Road Safety

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