

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	20 NOVEMBER 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	PETITION OBJECTING TO EXTENDING THE EXISTING VEHICLE CROSSING AT 8 ST JOHN'S ROAD, CAVERSHAM		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	STREETCARE	WARDS:	CAVERSHAM
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JOB TITLE:	STREETCARE SERVICES MANAGER	E-MAIL:	highways@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To report to the Committee the findings of the petition requesting that the Council do not extend the size of an existing vehicle crossing at 8 St John's Road, Caversham.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the report.
- 2.2 To report to the Committee the findings of the investigation to approve the application to increase the width of the existing vehicle crossing at 8 St John's Road Caversham, subject to retrospective Planning Consent being obtained for the building extension works application submitted by the applicant for building works that have been completed at this property.
- 2.3 That the lead petitioner be informed accordingly.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of a high quality, best value public service.
- 3.2 To make travel more secure, safe & comfortable for all users of the public highway.

- 3.3 To provide a public highway network as safe as reasonably practical having regards to financial constraints and our statutory duties.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council received a petition with a total of 48 signatures at the time of writing.

- 4.2 The wording of the petition reads: *'We are calling for this permission to be rescinded for the following reasons:*

1. *The existing dropped kerb has been adequate to enable parking to date and no benefit will be added by extending this.*
2. *The extension to the existing dropped kerb will reduce the available space for other residents, family members, other road users i.e. parishioners of St Johns Church and would be detrimental to the amenities of the area.*
3. *The reduction of available parking spaces would be discriminating against other residents.*
4. *If allowed this will create a precedence in the neighbourhood. If others followed suit this would further reduce available space.*
5. *This appears to be the landlord's way to secure parking for his own / tenants use and will be an injustice to the other road users.*

We urge you to consider the above objections and revoke any decision to amend the existing dropped kerb'.

5. PROPOSAL

- 5.1 The Council has an adopted 'Vehicle Crossing' Policy, (Appendix 1 refers), which sets out the criteria for new and / or an extension to existing vehicle crossings, (sometimes referred to as 'a dropped kerb').

- 5.2 The owner of 8 St John's Road Caversham, (applicant), has recently completed building works on their property and applied to Streetcare Highways to extend the existing vehicle crossing.

- 5.3 A subsequent site visit by Council Officers was carried out and a quotation issued to substantially extend the vehicle crossing. It was noted that St John's Road is not a 'classified road' and as such Streetcare would not require the applicant to seek planning consent for the vehicle crossing.

- 5.4 Following receipt of concerns from local residents a reduced size vehicle crossing was re-quoted and paid for by the applicant.

- 5.4 It was noted that the existing vehicle crossing width is 1.7m, which is below the current minimum vehicle crossing criteria set out in the Council's current Policy, being 2.4m width at the property boundary.
- 5.5 Following receipt of the petition objecting to the extension of the vehicle crossing and taking advice from the Council's Planning Department, the Streetcare team placed the proposed works on hold, pending the outcome of a retrospective planning application (191383) for physical works and an application (191385) to change the use to a large HMO, which have been submitted by the applicant and been called in to be determined by Planning Application Committee, by ward Councillors in response to concerns raised by residents. Planning Officers have not been able to confirm yet when the applications will be ready to be presented to PAC.
- 5.6 The Council recognises that any loss of on street parking is highly emotive and disruptive to local residents, particularly in built up urban environments where parking is at a premium. The Council notes that the public have a right to park within their property, subject to the vehicle crossing meeting the Council's vehicle crossing criteria.
- 5.7 The Council also recognises that the applicant is intending to park up to four (4) vehicles within the property thereby reducing the on-street parking demand.
- 5.8 It is proposed to approve the application to increase the width of the existing vehicle crossing at 8 St John's Road Caversham subject to Planning Consent being obtained for the building extension works planning application.
- 5.9 The lead petitioner and applicant will be updated on this recommendation.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 This proposal supports the aims and objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-21 objectives of:
- Securing the economic success of Reading
 - Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
 - Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The lead petitioner and the applicant will be informed of the findings of the Committee.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Reading Borough Council, as Highway Authority, has authority under the Highways Act 1980 (Section 184) to approve and construct Vehicle Crossings on the public highway.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 8.2 There is no overall change to service delivery of the Highway Maintenance responsibility at this time. Should any future updates/amendments be required, which result in service delivery changes, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None arising from this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Petition objecting to the extension of the existing vehicle crossing at 8 St John's Road, Caversham.