

Councillor Paul Truswell
Chair, Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure,
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Date: 13 July 2017

Dear Cllr Truswell,

Request for Scrutiny – Annual Pedestrian Crossing Review

I am writing to you to request that your Scrutiny Board undertakes scrutiny of the Council's Annual Pedestrian Crossing Review.

The Council recently published a delegated decision on this subject in which it presented proposals for pedestrian improvements across the city. As ward members for Horsforth, we were disappointed to see that there were no proposals for a scheme to address pedestrian safety issues on Low Lane in Horsforth Ward.

I subsequently met and corresponded with officers in Highways to seek an explanation for this road being excluded, despite it being the site of a number of accidents in recent years. As ward councillors we did consider calling-in the decision, but were ultimately persuaded by the argument that this would lead to unacceptable delays to the delivery of the city-wide programme and the consequential impact on road safety.

Nevertheless, through learning more about the process by which this decision was taken, I do believe that there are significant issues with transparency and the consultation process as well as the methodology used to make the recommendations.

In terms of transparency and consultation, the proposals were developed by officers and presented to an officer-only body for approval, the Highways Board. Ward members were not consulted and so had no opportunity to comment or provide challenge, or present the concerns of local residents. The delegated decision was taken and published, but by this point questioning one scheme would have meant holding up the entire programme. It is my belief that this lack of consultation and member input has led to a number of roads falling through the cracks.

Secondly, on methodology, we discussed why Low Lane had not met the criteria necessary to see it recommended for a scheme. I have to say, whilst I understand the process has been reviewed and improved since 2016, I am not satisfied that the current survey data and methodology used by the department is sufficient to capture all relevant information about roads that require safety improvements. The data on pedestrian crossing frequency on Low Lane, for example, simply does not match what we as ward members and local residents know to be the reality of crossing this road. Furthermore, we were concerned to learn that the fact that match-funding was offered for the Low Lane scheme did not count towards the road's evaluation score, even though this would clearly have been beneficial for the council's finances.

In summary, I am concerned that the current process for bringing schemes forward for pedestrian improvements does not sufficiently involve ward members. The issues outlined above are not specific to Horsforth, but rather reflect a systemic issue with how these proposals are developed. As a result there is a very real possibility that a number of roads across the city are not receiving the attention they need, which raises significant problems for road safety.

I think this would be a fruitful subject for scrutiny as it clearly presents issues and concerns that are relevant for every ward in the city. I hope that you will seriously consider including this matter as part of your work programme this year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Collins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Dawn Collins
Horsforth Ward