
PETITION – HERIOT’S ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY WORSENERD BY THE RAILWAY AND SUBSEQUENT UNDERPASS

Briefing Note by the Depute Chief Executive - Place PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS COMMITTEE

1 March 2016

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This briefing note advises the Petitions and Deputations Committee of the background to a petition received in relation to Heriot’s access to public transport being worsened by the railway and subsequent underpass. Officers recommend no further action is taken at this time.**
- 1.2 It is acknowledged that the return of the railway line at Heriot after many years required a new crossing of the line to be made, albeit Transport Scotland consulted on two alternatives and the resulting underpass has changed the local environment.
- 1.3 During and following the construction phase of the underpass, Officers have continued to have discussions with BAM in order to resolve outstanding issues, in particular, matters concerning the lighting and drainage. Our understanding is that BAM have made progress with works to ensure that a satisfactory outcome has been reached in terms of water issues and resolving the glare from the lighting which includes a timing switch.
- 1.4 An audit process is still underway in relation the adoption of roads, bridges and other infrastructure along the length of the Borders railway line which the Council will adopt in future. Whilst the underpass will remain the ownership of Network Rail, an audit was undertaken and no outstanding works were identified, the ramps have been installed to meet DDA requirements.
- 1.5 Officers have previously commented on the provision of additional lighting near the bus stop and have indicated that the provision of lighting at the new junction into Heriot and along the approaches of the A7 would lead to pedestrians being able to clearly see any approaching vehicles in the lit section of the road or vehicle headlights on the unlit section of the road to allow them to make judgement on whether it is safe to cross the road. The Council does not light crossing points at rural bus stop sites as a matter of course and therefore we do not intend to proceed with any further works at this time.
- 1.6 With regards to the provision of winter service, the Council accepts that Heriot sits at an elevated position and can on occasions receive the ‘blunt end of severe weather’.

- 1.7 Officers have reviewed the policy around treatment of rural areas ensuring that when assessing Heriot fairness and consistency has been applied in this case. Similarly Officers have reviewed the available resources in relation to the level of service that can be provided in treating the underpass and can confirm that there are not sufficient resources available to provide primary treatment in the vicinity of the new underpass. The Council remains committed to supporting Heriot through the Resilient Community banner, to provide additional resources in the form of training, equipment and materials to assist the community.
- 1.8 In providing salt bins at the underpass, Scottish Borders Council is not relinquishing its responsibility to provide a winter service to the community at Heriot. The Council currently provides over 1,000 salt bins across the region in areas where it does not provide primary treatment. The additional salt bin provision at the underpass will now increase the total number of salt bins in Heriot to four and these additional salt bins will provide a further self-help facility for the community during times of winter weather when the Council's resources are being deployed in higher priority areas.
- 1.9 The Council monitors complaints and service requests through its Complaints procedures and Customer Relations Management System (CRM). In analysing this over the winter period, November to mid February, there has been only one service request in relation to winter treatment in and around the Heriot underpass area – 'empty grit bin'. One assumes therefore that the Community has managed the process within the resources available to them.

2 CONCLUSION

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Committee acknowledges the Petition for Heriot's access to public transport being worsened by the railway and subsequent underpass but takes no further action at this time.**

Approved by

Depute Chief Executive - PLACE

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers: Petitions Procedure

Previous Minute Reference: None

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