



COUNCIL - 10TH OCTOBER 2017

SUBJECT: ANSWER TO QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(2)

1. BLACKWOOD HIGH STREET

To the Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure and Sustainability from Councillor K. Etheridge

To ask the Cabinet Member how much money has been paid out in claims in Blackwood High Street over the last 2 years to residents; motorists.

To ask the Cabinet Member in view of the obstructive and illegal parking on Blackwood High Street and the many hundreds of paving stones cracked in the interests of best value and pedestrian safety would it not be effective to consider partial railings to stop these constant obstructions, and what is the detailed policy of the Council as I understand the police have not got the resources to deal with these matters.

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR S. MORGAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY

There have been no claims paid out over the last 2 years in relation to Blackwood High Street. However, there are 6 claims currently pending. Of those claims 4 are related to the footway, 1 carriageway and 1 related to a wheelie bin being set on fire. The current estimated value of those pending claims are £28,661. Please note that the pending value is in no way an indication that any payment will be made. The authority has wholly appropriate inspection and maintenance regimes in place and these claims will be defended. The authorities record of defending such claims is very good.

I agree that there has been an increase of vehicles parking on footways, which are causing damage to the paving slabs and could cause a danger to the general public. This has occurred since the removal of the barriers and the discontinuation of Traffic Wardens in approximately 2012. I can also confirm that the Police are either unwilling or under-resourced to take action against drivers that are disregarding the various parking orders.

Officers have looked at various options that could be applied like the installation of bollards or reinstatement of railings, which will obviously restrict the opportunity for vehicles to mount the footway. However, it has been the Councils position for a number of years to remove 'street clutter' and promote the use of a 'shared space', hopefully making the environment more pleasing from an aesthetics point of view. I believe if the enforcement was undertaken the need for bollards and/or railings would not be required.

Unfortunately it is the police who currently hold the powers to deal with illegal parking. I can confirm that discussions are currently ongoing in relation to the authority considering taking on the relevant powers under Civil Parking Enforcement. However, due to the timeframes involved to gain Cabinet and WG approval to transfer the powers once the business case has been finalised, this is well over a year away.

In an effort to reduce damage by the vehicles mounting the kerbs, there are considerations being made to trial imprinting of 6mm tarmac to mimic cobbles, pavements and slabs (various designs and colours available) to improve durability and hopefully reduce maintenance costs. Meetings have been undertaken with various suppliers and Officers are awaiting costs before making a decision on whether this option provides value for money. However, we do appreciate that this is not the answer to the problem and that enforcement is needed to prevent all illegal parking in the town.