

PE1595/II

“Shared Spaces”

Lodged by Alex Cook

Community Councillor
Luncarty, Redgorton and Moneydie Community Council

Reference PE 1595. shared space

Our Community Council is constantly supporting citizens who have disabilities and we strive to ensure that policies and practice of Central and Local Government are tailored and implemented to support their needs.

Many have varying degrees of hearing and visual impairment.

I am of the opinion that shared space schemes could under certain circumstances pose danger for deaf/blind people as they can neither fully see nor hear traffic or cyclists or other motorized vehicles approaching.

They rely very much on familiar controlled crossings some with rotating cones and tactile markings to alert them and allow safe road crossing.

Since the shared space scheme proposes to remove traffic lights, crossings and safety barriers from the high street I believe that this is an unnecessary objective danger to the safety of deaf/blind people. It is important to realise that they are unable to have “eye contact” with drivers and cyclist which underpins the shared space scheme.

The shared space scheme will also eliminate many of the kerbs which are extremely important to deafblind and blind people if they use a stick for navigation.

Guide dogs are also trained to navigate by kerbs and respond to the “beeps” at controlled crossings.

The success of this scheme depends largely on drivers to drive with due care and attention at a slower speed and give way to pedestrians. Experience informs us that this is an unachievable success criterion which will, not maybe, endanger lives.

The shared space scheme will have a negative impact on not only deafblind people but on many other groups in society including:

- Blind and partially sighted
- Physically disabled
- Elderly including those with dementia
- Children or adults with social challenges
- Adults or children with learning difficulties
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- Cultural norms that perceive eye contact as being unacceptable

I believe that lives will be put at risk and safety severely compromised if this controversial shared space scheme is allowed to go ahead.

I give consent to this submission being posted on the Parliament website.

Alex Cook
Community Councillor
Luncarty and Redgorton Community Council