

PE1595/CCC

Perth and Kinross Council Letter of 15 February 2016

Dear Mr Hynd

Consideration of Petition PE1595 (Moratorium on Shared Space Schemes)

I have been asked by the Depute Chief Executive, Environment to respond to your letter dated 27 January 2016 with regards the above.

Perth and Kinross Council is aware of the on-going debate surrounding “Shared Space” and indeed, the argument of what areas constitute a shared space. There are numerous examples in rural and historic areas, where streets have no formal footways and are arguably historic “shared space”.

Shared Space is predominantly intended for new developments which are delivered through the private sector and managed to Engineering specifications by the local Road Authority. These developments are taken through the Road Construction Consent process and further detailed guidance is now available through the National Roads Development Guide. These layouts consist mostly of rear access streets within a block layout which can provide a wide range of functions.

However, the Shared Surface concept can be adapted to existing streets as a balanced compromise, where a formal pedestrianisation scheme cannot be achieved due to maintaining access requirements, such as, entrances to car parks, businesses and properties, to name a few. Shared Space can continue to provide a streets function regards movement, but balance that with an enhanced place function.

The Council, in deciding where to undertake and then design a shared space, consider a range of evidential supported requirements. These are:-

- Alternative traffic routes are available to reduce traffic through volumes
- Traffic speeds are reduced through introducing gateways to the areas and narrow trafficked sections are employed to restrict flows
- Traffic types are considered important in gaining advanced acceptance of shared surface schemes
- The design incorporates pedestrian “safe zones “which require being wide and demarked through vegetation and street furniture
- Traffic routes are narrow to permit easier pedestrian crossing
- Clearly visible pedestrian crossings should be considered where the volume or speed of traffic suggests a need for a crossing
- Good street lighting is provided

Along with reference to Local Transport Note 1/11 “Shared Space”, all of these evidenced criteria were adopted in the final design of Kinross High Street. As required with all alterations to existing road layouts, a Traffic Safety Audit was undertaken, both during the design and following completion of the works, to mitigate traffic hazards overlooked in the design. A notable feature of the road network in Kinross is that the through traffic volume is now reduced. This was achieved by the provision of a new relief road by the Council in 2012. This new road was a pre-requisite to the High Street improvements.

The Council takes its responsibilities regards The Equalities Act 2010 seriously when designing improvements to streets. However, due to acknowledged conflicting disability needs and preferences, particularly surrounding kerb use, it is not possible to deliver a street design to meet the specific desires of all disability groups. By adopting the use of a generous “Safe Space” as per the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association’s publication, adjacent to buildings, this does meet many disabled group needs and was employed in this design.

Ongoing consultation throughout the Kinross High Street contract with disability groups, through the “Centre for Inclusive Living”, resulted in agreed design alterations and the inclusion of a range of street furniture and surface paving’s to better address disabled group needs.

It is acknowledged where any traffic layout changes, and more so when using shared surface areas, users are required to adopt extended periods of conscious awareness throughout, rather than sub-conscious activity which is normally dominant in walking, cycling and driving. Although this may be uncomfortable for users out with the “Safe Space” zones, the environmental benefits in both placemaking and in reducing both the occurrences and severity of traffic accidents are acknowledged.

The Council acknowledges that the shared space concept is not applicable to all situations and each situation should be considered on its own merits. However the Council believes that, if the design is considered properly and include sufficient consultation with the local community and access groups, then the shared space concept is a viable option for improvements to streets to positively satisfy the needs of the local community while also achieving a preference for place over movement as required in the national streets design policy.

Yours sincerely

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