

Draft Street Charter

The Councils are committed to engaging positively with all vulnerable road users, and values their input on how we plan, develop and manage our built environment.

This charter has been developed in partnership with a number of stakeholders including RNIB and Warwickshire Vision Support. In order to inform the charter we have sought to engage widely and this included working with the following groups:

- Individual blind and partially sighted residents
- RNIB
- Warwickshire Vision Support
- Guide Dogs

This charter is intended to be a 'living' document that will be under constant review, and we welcome the opportunity to engage further with vulnerable road users both as individuals and representatives of stakeholder groups. This will ensure that this charter remains relevant and focused moving forward.

The charter sets out a list of actions / commitments, which the Council will seek to undertake. These have been formed under different headings, which represent the main issues that have been previously raised with us around how people and particularly blind and partially sighted people negotiate the built environment within Solihull, and the difficulty that this can present.

Reporting

We agree to develop and promote easy and accessible ways for vulnerable road users to report issues such as temporary street obstructions, overgrown branches and crossings where audible beeps or cones are not working. This may be via e-mail, website, phone or through Neighbourhood Coordinators.

Engagement

In accordance with our Public Sector Equality Duty, we agree to involve and consult with vulnerable road users in an accessible way when new developments such as shared space schemes are put forward. We will where reasonable and possible, seek to make any necessary changes to the scheme to facilitate this.

Advertising Boards and street and café furniture

We agree to:

- Carry out regular audits of street and cafe furniture and advertising boards in town centres, in conjunction with vulnerable road users.
- Take a more robust approach to the enforcement of the current policies and guidelines regarding advertising boards and café furniture.
- To regularly update policies and guidance in accordance with local need and to have clear policies available to the public.
- Set up accessible ways for blind and partially sighted people to report collisions and injuries they experience because of A-boards and/or street furniture.
- In conjunction with our partners, monitor how many blind and partially sighted people are being injured due to collisions with obstacles
- Work with vulnerable road users to monitor and mitigate the impact of any temporary obstructions that appear on the highway, including creating an accessible reporting process.
- Work with local business owners to improve knowledge and understanding around how advertising-boards cause difficulties for blind and partially sighted people and to consider using alternative forms of advertising.
- When urban centres are redeveloped, proactively engage with vulnerable road users around the design and implementation of street furniture.

Parking on Pavements

We agree to:

- Work with the police and PCSOs to use their existing powers under the Highways Act and other legislation to keep the pavement clear of obstructions caused by parked cars.
- Work with the police and PCSOs to engage with vulnerable road users and the wider community to improve awareness of the dangers of parking on pavements.

New Developments/ Shared Space

We agree to:

- We agree to continue to work with and consult the established vulnerable road user groups in relation to new major developments within the County.
- We will promote the services offered by the Authorities to engage with and inform vulnerable road users directly in their preferred format of any consultations on new developments in the County.

- We agree to work with the relevant organisations to ensure that any future consultations about new developments are accessible to blind and partially sighted people.
- We agree to work with the relevant organisations to develop ways of promoting these consultations through existing networks.

Crossings

We agree to:

- Work with blind and partially sighted people to review and audit pedestrian crossings.
- Continue to enforce national guidance when it comes to the use of audible beeps, rotating cones and tactile paving.
- Where there are plans to change or remove existing crossings, actively consult with vulnerable road users prior to any decision being made.

Wheelie bins and recycling bags

We agree to:

- Make sure that all bin crews are aware of why it is important to store bins as safely as possible.
- Work to encourage residents to be considerate in how they place their bins and the importance of storing their bin safely.

Overhanging shrubbery and branches

We agree to:

- Promote new and accessible ways vulnerable road users to report overgrown shrubbery and branches to their local Neighbourhood Coordinator.
- Act swiftly upon these reports by alerting the residents or taking action as appropriate.
- Improve awareness and encourage residents to be considerate in managing their shrubbery and trees