

West End News

April 2011 Update

from West End Ward councillor

Fraser Macpherson

www.dundeewestend.com

Blot on the landscape ... : A new large-style utility box in the West End installed by BT Openreach has rightly incurred the wrath of local residents because, not only is it large and unsightly, it did not require planning permission to be installed.

The box - on a prominent site at the roundabout at the west end of Blackness Road at the roundabout with Glamis Road and Glamis Drive - is much larger than adjacent utility boxes and has been installed as part of BT's "super broadband" installations. It is used to convert signals from copper wire cabling to fibre optic cabling. Residents have said they have nothing against the principle of improving broadband but question why cabling could not have been put underground or in smaller box casings.

It is concerning that the box is being placed on a prominent site without any need for planning approval. Having checked with planning officers, I am advised that these boxes will start springing up right across the city but only those in Conservation Areas will require to go through the planning process.

BT Openreach's representatives have been willing to discuss the concerns with me but the bottom line is that the box won't be moved and I can fully understand residents' complaints about this obtrusive box on such a prominent site.



I have asked of BT Openreach :

- a) For an assurance that these boxes be painted with anti-graffiti paint,
- b) and that it reaches agreement with the City Council to ensure proper arrangements are in place for graffiti removal - this already happens in the case of Virgin cable TV boxes across Dundee.

I have also asked of City Council planning officers :

- a) That the West End proposed boxes in Conservation Areas that do require planning permission be referred to committee for a decision (and not delegated to officers). Whilst each of these applications must be decided on their individual merits, it is important that they are democratically determined through the committee process.
- b) That the council investigate 'screening' the box on the Blackness/Glamis roundabout by planting such as clematis or honeysuckle. Anything that could be done to screen the box here on such a prominent site in a residential area should be considered.

Disabled Parking Bays - Union Place car park : Following residents' requests for better disabled parking facilities in the Union Place car park, I took up the matter with the City Council's Head of Transportation.



He has responded positively as follows :

"As per your earlier request we have looked at the Union Place vicinity and are proposing to proceed with four marked Disabled Parking places / spaces within the two DCC managed off street car parks on Union Place (two in each car park). No on street spaces can be provided, however the off street provision should assist local residents' requirements.

I will arrange for the Car Park team to have the markings to be updated, this will be early in financial year 2011/12. I understand that no additional orders are necessary as the off street parking orders allow for this provision."

No 5 bus service : A number of constituents have raised the issue of the service 5 route at its western edge - all Service 5 buses are routed in an anti-clockwise direction around Ninewells Hospital and the Technology Park - and the following comment from a resident is typical :



"... this provides a very unsatisfactory service pattern along the most westerly section of Perth Road (4 per hour inbound and none outbound) and a long winded journey time for passengers travelling to the Tech Park. With four buses per hour, surely two could be routed clockwise, thereby giving a half hourly headway in each direction and perhaps generating some patronage from the Old Folks' Home, the flats and the two Housing Estates."

National Express Dundee's Acting Director has promised to look into this issue and respond soon.

Grit on local pavements : As a result of winter maintenance over the snowy period in December, there is grit on many local pavements and roads and, now the chance of further snow and ice has disappeared, residents are rightly asking when this grit is going to be cleaned away.

The Waste Management Department of the City Council has advised me :

"We have 4 small compact sweepers and 3 medium size mechanical sweepers that are undertaking this task. In the west end there are a number of manual street sweeping beats and mobile beats. The street sweepers on the manual beats are being instructed to sweep all grit into the channel. The mechanical sweepers will then run the channels uplifting the grit. On the mobile routes we will be using a combination of manual sweeping and the mechanical sweeping to uplift the grit. We are currently working on the main thoroughfares across the city. We will then proceed into residential streets.

Additionally are also doing diamonds and islands at junctions between 6am and 7am and at the weekends. A nightshift is being planned in the next few weeks to do Kingsway, Forfar Road, Riverside Drive etc. This allows us to complete central reservations/roundabouts etc. Any areas that we are unable to complete during the day. Any complaints that we receive will also be attended too."

Seymour Avenue : Seymour Avenue is on the City Council's unadopted footways adoption programme for 2010/11, but, as the financial year reached its end, the street's pavements are not yet made up to a good standard.

I asked the City Engineer for clarification and he has replied as follows:

"Due to the severe winter, some footway works have been delayed and require to be carried out in the new financial year.

Seymour Avenue is programmed to be carried out in May 2011."

Pedestrian Safety - Hawkhill : The City Council has erected the agreed six bollards at the footpath edge on Blackness Avenue and immediately to the east on Hawkhill.

These will emphasise to drivers not to drive too close to the pavement along Hawkhill, where pupils are walking to and from school.

