

Report to COUNCIL

Who put that there?: A street charter for Oldham

Portfolio Holder:

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Reason for Decision

At Full Council on 16 December 2015, a motion was proposed that the Council should create a Street Charter to support those who live in, work in or visit the borough who are visually impaired or blind. The issue was referred to Overview and Scrutiny and, following a period of research and engagement, a suggested Charter has been developed and approved by Overview and Scrutiny to return to Council for a decision.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Street Charter is approved by Full Council.

Who put that there? A street charter for Oldham

1 Background information

1.1 At Council on 16 December 2015, it was proposed that the Council endorse the call to local authorities from the Royal National Institute for the Blind to engage with blind and partially sighted people in their area to develop a Street Charter to remove obstacles and hazards from the public realm. The issue was referred to Overview and Scrutiny and was discussed by the Board in March 2016. The meeting noted that some of these issues are multi-agency and that discussions would need to take place with partners about any proposed Charter. Following a period of research and engagement, this paper presents the suggested charter to Council for approval.

Aims and drivers

- 1.2 The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) is the leading UK national body representing those who are blind or partially sighted. They state that currently there are approximately 6,000 people (2.2% of population) in Oldham with some form of sight loss (either partial or complete). This figure is expected to rise to 9,000 by 2030. The RNIB's aim as an organisation is to end the isolation of sight loss and to help those who are suffering from partial or full sight loss to face the future with confidence.
- 1.3 The RNIB's overall aims are very complementary to our own aims for healthy communities. Our Locality Plan for health and social care is underpinned by a focus on early intervention and prevention, enabling choice, promoting independence, and helping residents to take greater control of their own health and wellbeing. Many of the issues focused on as part of the 'Who put that there' campaign have a limiting and detrimental impact on people's ability to do this.
- 1.4 As a co-operative council, our values include fairness, respect, working together and responsibility. These values are instrumental in ensuring that we are effectively tackling issues faced by those in the borough who are the most vulnerable and need specific support to be able to live independently and with confidence. In addition to our moral duty we also have a legal duty in relation to some of the issues being addressed. A summary of duties and responsibilities is at Appendix 1.
- 1.5 If Elected Members decided to champion the Street Charter we would be the first borough in GM to do so and may encourage other local authorities to develop their own Charter.

2 The campaign

- 2.1 The RNIB's 'Who put that there' campaign is a "call on local authorities to engage with blind and partially sighted people in their area and develop a Street Charter that puts a 'clear highway' policy at the heart of their local decision making". Amongst those councils already signed up are Hull City Council and Stockton Borough Council, with Newcastle, York and Bradford also making implementing changes to policies in some of the areas highlighted in the Charter. Liverpool is also currently in the process of signing up.
- 2.2 The Charter highlights eight of the most common and dangerous obstacles faced by those with sight loss:
- Inaccessible pedestrian crossings
 - Parking on pavements
 - Advertising Boards

- Street and Café furniture
- Wheelie bins and recycling bags
- Overgrown shrubbery and branches
- New developments: Shared space
- Tactile paving

2.3 As well as undertaking research to find out how the Council and partners currently operate in respect of the eight areas, a meeting was organised between the Council, the RNIB and a group of partially-sighted and blind residents from the Henshaws Group. The general findings which take into account the results of the research are attached at Appendix 2, and the specific findings are at Appendix 3.

3 The suggested Charter for Oldham

3.1 The following Charter has been formulated using the suggested Street Charter content from the RNIB, but it also includes Oldham-specific suggestions that have been developed through the findings (see Appendix 2 and 3).

3.2 We will work with blind or partially sighted people to:

- Establish a voluntary database for those with sensory impairments and the main support groups for those with impairments – this will help us to be proactive in communicating key information at a local level to those who are blind or partially-sighted.
- Review the reporting system to ensure that our systems for reporting issues are easily accessible for blind or partially-sighted people, including the introduction of a facility for people to record that they are partially-sighted or blind when reporting an issue. This will enable us to collect specific data on issues within Oldham that are causing a problem for those who are blind or partially-sighted.
- Identify how we can engage those who are blind or partially-sighted more effectively in decision making through greater involvement and consultation when changes are being discussed or planned i.e. involvement in Road Safety audits when planning new schemes
- Identify how we can communicate most effectively and proactively about changes to highways or other issues that affect their ability to live independently and enjoy a good quality of life.
- Identify how blind or partially sighted people may be able to effectively and proactively input into the review of crossings across the borough in conjunction with TfGM and the Community Lighting Partnership.
- Identify any improvements which could be made to improve accessibility when out and about and help to promote these. For example, the focus group mentioned how yellow lines on steps would greatly assist accessibility where no such 'highlighter' exists. Additionally, Unity have suggested they work with the user group to identify works that need doing through sharing the programme of planned works in advance.
- Develop an awareness campaign aimed at:
 - **Residents:** asking them to consider the needs of those who are blind or partially sighted more generally, and particularly in respect of parking, putting bins out, garden maintenance etc.
 - **Businesses:** to raise the awareness of the hazards that A-boards and café furniture can cause and encourage them to adopt a safe alternative.

3.3 We will also:

- Analyse the number and nature of complaints / reports coming from particular areas to see if targeted activity in any residential area could help to relieve the most

persistent and dangerous hotspots in relation to the eight issues highlighted by the RNIB, in particular badly placed bins and pavement parking.

- Work with elected members, residents and community groups to identify local solutions to some of these issues including volunteers who would be happy to assist other residents in keeping their shrubbery and branches under control, particularly where they may not have the skills or equipment to do so.

4 **Options/Alternatives**

4.1 Option one – To approve the Street Charter – If approval is given, work will start on progressing each of the commitments as set out in the Charter.

4.2 Option two – Not approve the Street Charter – If approval is not given, the process will come to a halt and no work will be undertaken to progress the commitments in the Street Charter.

5 **Preferred Option**

5.1 Option one is the preferred and recommended option.

6 **Consultation**

6.1 Consultation has taken place with:

- Cllr Elaine Garry (nominated representative from the Overview and Scrutiny Board)
- Lead officers for each of the areas covered by the Charter
- Members of the Henshaws Group in Oldham which is a charity which supports people living with sight loss and a range of other disabilities

7 **Financial Implications**

7.1 The costs involved will be mostly staff time, which will be met by existing staffing budgets. Any additional costs of implementing the Street Charter are expected to be less than £2,000. This will be for communication costs such as postage and printing. Costs are expected to be incurred in the financial year 2017/2018 and will be met from the existing revenue budgets of Highways and the Strategy, Partnerships and Policy Team.

7.2 Consultation with the lead officers for each of the eight areas has taken place and they are agreeable to the suggested charter options and their implementation.
(C. Holdaway – Accountant)

8 **Legal Services Comments**

8.1 None (Colin Brittain)

9. **Co-operative Agenda**

9.1 The values of fairness, respect and responsibility are at the heart of the co-operative agenda and adopting this Street Charter complements those values.

10 **Human Resources Comments**

10.1 N/A

11 **Risk Assessments**

11.1	N/A
12	IT Implications
12.1	N/A
13	Property Implications
13.1	N/A
14	Procurement Implications
14.1	N/A
15	Environmental and Health & Safety Implications
15.1	N/A
16	Equality, community cohesion and crime implications
16.1	N/A
17	Equality Impact Assessment Completed?
17.1	N/A
18	Key Decision
18.1	No
19	Key Decision Reference
19.1	N/A
20	Background Papers
20.1	N/A
21	Appendices
21.1	Appendix 1: Legislation List
21.2	Appendix 2: General findings
21.2	Appendix 3: Specific findings

Appendix One: Legislation List

(Text taken from the 'Who put that there?' report by the RNIB)

There is a significant amount of legislation, regulations and guidance which are relevant to blind and partially sighted people's access to the street environment.

Keeping the streets clear

Under the Highways Act 1980 it is the duty of the highway authority to assert and protect the rights of the public to use and enjoy the highway (the term highway in this instance includes pavements). They also have a duty to prevent obstruction to the highway (again this means keeping pavements clear). It is a criminal offence under the Highways Act (and the Town and Police Clauses Act) to wilfully obstruct free passage along the highway, and to deposit anything on the highway which causes an interruption to, or obstruction of, the highway. So streets should be kept clear of obstacles and clutter, enabling people to walk along them without any problems.

The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for public authorities, including highways authorities, to discriminate in the exercise of a public function. They also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments including changing practices, policies and procedures which have the effect of discriminating; and to take reasonable steps to enable disabled people to avoid substantial disadvantages caused by physical features. The Act also requires local authorities to provide information that is accessible for everyone.

Inclusive mobility

In November 2005 the Department of Transport published "Inclusive mobility – a guide to best practice on access to the pedestrian and transport infrastructure". The aim of this guidance was to provide advice on best practice to assist professionals working in this field, and enable them to meet their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) (now the Equality Act). There is much in it for Highways Authorities to note. For example: "Apart from roadworks and scaffolding, there are many other, sometimes temporary, obstructions that can cause problems for disabled people, particularly those with visual impairments. **A-frame advertisement boards placed outside shops**, ladders, overhanging tree branches, **dustbins, vehicles and bicycles parked on pavements** are all potential hazards.

Wherever feasible, obstructions of this kind **should be kept to a minimum** and should not encroach on the clear space (horizontal and vertical) needed to provide safe passage for pedestrians."

Under the Equality Act Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), public authorities, including highways authorities, are also required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination under the Equality Act and, in order to advance the equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people. This means anyone responsible for looking after the street environment has a responsibility to eliminate and tackle problems that make a highway inaccessible for those with a disability. It is simply not an option to leave things as they are.

Appendix Two: General Findings

General findings

The general findings and proposed solutions are in Table 1. Table 2 shows a summary of the suggested overarching proposals to be included in the Street Charter as well as a matrix showing which of the issues will be mitigated by each proposal:

Table 1: General findings and proposed solutions

General finding	Proposed solution
<p>Whilst we have from the RNIB an approximate number of people registered blind and partially sighted, we do not know who they are or whereabouts in the borough they are located. If we did know we could not only ensure that communication was improved but also we could alert the local elected members and district teams in order for a more proactive stance to be taken to ensure that we are better able to meet the standard set out in the Street Charter. Additionally, it is proposed that we also garner information about the support groups for those with sensory impairments, such as Henshaw's and the Talking Newspaper so that we can ensure that they are also up to date and able to circulate information to their members.</p>	<p><i>It is proposed to establish a voluntary database for those with an impairment to enable us to be more proactive. For example, if the district team or local elected member is aware that a visually impaired resident lives on a particular street they can keep a proactive lookout for issues in that area with overhanging branches or misplaced bins, accessible crossings etc. It will also help us to better engage with those who are blind or partially sighted (or who have other impairments) to ensure they are kept up to date with changes such as to highways. A voluntary database would also help with tackling some of the other general findings below.</i></p>
<p>There is a lack of data as to how many complaints or service requests received in relation to the areas mentioned above, were made or received from residents in relation to their sight loss or the sight loss of family or friends. It is therefore difficult to evaluate the extent to which proactive, targeted activity or support might be needed / would help.</p>	<p><i>It is proposed to address this by committing as part of the Street Charter to ensuring that we capture this information when residents report issues. This will mean that we will be better able to assess the impact of issues and the problems it may be causing when responding to the request. The work that is taking place (as part-implementation of the Health and Social Care Act) to establish an Accessible Information Standard in Oldham will help significantly in addressing this issue. Nationally health and social care organisations implemented this standard from the end of July 2016.</i></p>
<p>The reporting system for any of these issues seemed to be inconsistent in relation to accessibility and then in terms of follow up and feedback after the issue.</p>	<p><i>We need to work with those who are blind and partially-sighted to review and improve our reporting systems to ensure that reporting is quick and accessible, and that there is an agreed channel for feedback on the issues.</i></p>
<p>By being more aware of the issues faced by those who are blind or partially sighted, the general public (e.g. residents and businesses) could make a significant difference to many of the issues highlighted in this campaign (e.g. giving consideration</p>	<p><i>It is proposed to address this by committing in the Street Charter to developing an awareness campaign with residents and businesses about the dangers faced by those who are blind or partially-sighted when navigating the street. The campaign</i></p>

<p>to pedestrians when parking their car, putting their advertising boards out or maintaining their gardens). This links back to fairness and helping people to consider others. This lack of awareness / consideration was a recurring theme throughout our research and analysis and was raised several times throughout the focus group. More worryingly, there was also anecdotal evidence that some behaviour i.e. running red lights and not stopping to let people cross or give way, had led to near-misses, injuries and, in once case a partially-sighted lady actually being run over.</p>	<p><i>will include awareness of the problems that A-boards, bins, parking on pavements, etc can cause and provide some points as to how residents and businesses can help alleviate some of these problems. It could also raise awareness of other issues with other audiences including bus drivers and pedal cyclists. Additionally, the campaign will give us the opportunity to communicate other related information such as the difference between the different sticks that blind and partially sighted people carry (e.g. white stick, white stick with red band etc). This will enable others to recognise those who have impairments and as a result be more aware of their needs.</i></p> <p><i>We could also link up with the Henshaws Charity at the Link Centre to promote some of their work around Life Hacks and coping with visual impairment.</i></p>
<p>There is a low level of recorded engagement in planning consultations from those who are blind or partially sighted. There is undoubtedly a role for them to play in respect of informing decision making, particularly when it comes to issues in relation to changes to highways and crossings.</p>	<p><i>We consult on new schemes and changes to schemes in line with legislation but there may be more we can do to encourage those with sensory impairments who may be more affected than others to contribute to consultation exercises. We will work with those who are blind or partially-sighted to work out how best to do this. The voluntary database would provide a database of people who we could contact to let them know about consultations.</i></p>
<p>Often a lack of information or communication about these issues can lead to a lack of understanding and knowledge in how to combat them. For example, a number of the residents who took part in the focus group were unaware of the spinning cones on the pedestrian crossings which are an additional safety feature specifically for those with sight loss. This is another recurring theme that was evident throughout the research and analysis.</p>	<p><i>It is proposed that through the Street Charter we commit to work with blind and partially sighted people to identify how best public services can ensure that messages are effectively communicated. An example of the type of communications include temporary roadworks or changes to crossings. The voluntary database would provide a database of people who we could contact to let them know about consultations.</i></p>
<p>There is a wider group affected by these issues including those with other sensory impairments, people who use a wheelchair to get around and families with young children who use pushchairs and prams.</p>	<p><i>Whilst being focused on those who are blind or partially sighted, it is suggested that this Street Charter will also address the needs of other vulnerable groups who are affected by these issues.</i></p>

Table 2: Suggested overarching Street Charter proposals for discussion

Proposal	Inaccessible crossings	Parking on pavements	A-boards	Street and café furniture	Wheele bins and recycling bags	Overgrown shrubbery and branches	Tactile Paving	Shared space
Data collection: Establish a voluntary database for those with sensory impairments and the main support groups for those with impairments.								
Reporting: Work with blind or partially-sighted residents to ensure that the reporting system is easily accessible for blind or partially-sighted people								
Reporting: Provide the facility for people to record that they are partially sighted or blind when reporting an issue								
Raising awareness: Run an awareness campaign aimed at residents asking them to consider the needs of those who are blind or partially sighted when parking on the pavement if absolutely necessary.								
Consultation: Work with blind or partially sighted people to identify how we can engage them more effectively in decision making i.e. involvement in Road Safety audits when planning new schemes								
Communication: Work with blind and partially sighted people to identify how we can communicate more effectively about changes to highways or systems								

Appendix three: Specific findings and recommendations

As well as overarching proposals for the Street Charter, we have also looked at each of the specific issues and the suggestions from the RNIB as to what local authorities could include on the Street Charter. Some of these are already in place in Oldham. In each section there is a summary showing Oldham’s current position against the RNIB suggestions. Additionally, where there has been an additional action identified which we could possibly look to adopt as part of a Street Charter, this is also recorded.

Inaccessible pedestrian crossings

The RNIB state that the “provision, or absence, of accessible crossing points affects blind and partially sighted people’s desire and ability to get around” and this was definitely a priority issue for the focus group. As highlighted above, one of the main issues raised was the lack of a beeping noise on new crossings; an issue which was addressed quickly by explaining that there is now a small cone underneath the yellow box that revolves when it is safe to cross. It did highlight though how important it is to ensure that these improvements and changes are communicated effectively – how this is best done however needs to be informed through further consultation with blind or partially sighted residents (see above point re: communication).

In terms of where Oldham is in relation to the options on the RNIB Street Charter:

Street Charter option	Oldham position
Work with blind and partially sighted people to review and audit crossings.	Our signalised crossings are inspected annually by TfGM and the Community Lighting Partnership inspect Zebra Crossing Belisha Beacons in the Borough. This inspection does not involve users of the crossings, including those who are blind or partially sighted.
Enforce national guidance when it comes to the use of audible beeps, rotating cones and tactile paving.	Oldham does ensure compliance with national guidance.
Regularly monitor and maintain the accessibility of crossings and look at increasing crossing times, especially in busy areas.	Faults or issues are received by Unity Traffic Section who forward them to TfGM. Faults or issues are submitted directly to TfGM on their website. There is currently no provision for users to give their status in terms of declaring a sensory impairment.
Ensure that reporting processes for potential new crossing points are accessible for blind and partially sighted people	New / amended crossing points are considered usually either a) As part of a Casualty Reduction Scheme where there is evidence of pedestrian related accidents taking place on the highway; b) As part of a Planning requirement stipulated by the Authority where a new development is likely to increase the demand to cross the highway at a particular point, within an area or put pressure at an existing facility or junction such that an upgrade is required; or c) following a request from the Public or Ward Councillors where there is a user

	demand but not necessarily a significant accident problem. As part of the TMU and ModGov process which forms part of all three of the above, consultation takes place with Emergency Services, Public Transport, Ward Councillors and the Public.
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Oldham recommendations

In addition to the suggested overarching Street Charter points listed at Section 2, it is proposed that we will also:

- *Work with blind and partially sighted people and TfGM and the Community Lighting Partnership to identify how they may be able to effectively and proactively input into the review of crossings in the borough.*

Parking on pavements

The RNIB state that: “Drivers that use the pavement for parking often think they are doing the right thing by keeping the road clear, but fail to realise the consequences of their vehicle now blocking the footpath. The result is that people with sight loss often cannot see the obstruction until it is too late, and collide with the parked vehicle.”

Pavement parking is a growing issue nationally not just for people who are visually impaired or blind, but the wider community (including those in wheelchairs and with prams or pushchairs) and it seems to have become common practice by many motorists, particularly in residential areas. The practice tends to be more prevalent where residents do not have off-street parking and therefore rely on parking within the highway, or where off-street parking facilities cannot accommodate all the vehicles kept at the one address. Additional hazards are caused by cars parking on the roadside near tram tracks, which could cause a blind or partially sighted person to swerve into the tram tracks to avoid the car and also by parking in pedestrianised areas outside of permitted times (including vehicles which belong to those that are carrying out works on the pedestrianised area)

Although local restrictions exist, there is currently no national ban on pavement parking across England and Wales. One was included in the Road Traffic Act 1974, but it was never enacted and was eventually repealed in 1991.

There has been a complete ban on pavement parking in operation in London for the past 40 years. There was a move nationally in 2015 to introduce this to the rest of the country through the passing of a Pavement Parking (Protection of Vulnerable Persons Bill) but this Bill was withdrawn on its first reading.

The RNIB Street Charter options include:

Street Charter option	Oldham position
Ban pavement parking and support national legislation to do this.	An outright ban on pavement parking would be very costly to introduce and almost impossible to enforce in some areas. It is important to recognise that provision of suitable spaces needs addressing when new estates and developments are being planned.
Use existing powers such as Traffic Regulation Orders to introduce bans where practical.	The local authority does have powers to introduce orders which prohibit vehicles from parking on the pavement, and to do this it would have to devise a policy for which areas would be appropriate for

	consideration. Additionally, for such restrictions to be successful there would have to be regular enforcement taking place; this can be difficult within residential areas which are remote from the main route network.
Work with the police to use their existing powers under the Highways Act and other legislation to keep the pavement clear of obstructions caused by parked vehicles.	The Highway Authority experiences problems trying to introduce measures within residential areas which affect parking, due to the disruption it causes for the residents, consequently if there are small areas where a problem of this nature is reported, the help of the Police is usually sought. In Oldham, Traffic PCSO's attend many of the incidents and will act on a complaint by issuing a TOR (Traffic Offence Report) but they do not actively go out ticketing vehicles parked on the pavement. The Police also have the powers to prosecute motorists with the offence of obstruction; the local authority does not have such powers within the footway area.
Work with the police to engage with blind and partially sighted people and the wider community to improve awareness of the dangers of parking on pavements.	This is something that Oldham is keen to pursue. One of the things that would help the situation the most is car drivers being as considerate as possible if having to park on the pavement i.e. ensure there is a good amount of space for pedestrians to get round the vehicle. This could form part of a TFGM campaign to improve the situation across the region.

Oldham recommendations

In addition to the suggested overarching Street Charter points listed at Section 2, it is proposed that we:

- *Analyse the number and nature of complaints / reports coming from particular areas to see if targeted activity in any residential area could help to relieve the most persistent and dangerous hotspots.*

Advertising Boards

The RNIB state that: "Nearly half of all blind and partially sighted people who participated in our research stated that they had collided with an A-board in the last three months, often resulting in cuts and grazes. The temporary and mobile nature of these boards means that blind and partially sighted people cannot learn where they are, so struggle to avoid walking into them."

Street Charter option	Oldham position
Have a zero tolerance of A-boards on pavements and have clear policies available to the public.	We do not licence 'A' boards or insist they are removed. The Council does receive complaints about 'A' boards obstructing the highway which Officers do pick up; however in terms of enforcement or

	inspection, the Council currently has neither the capability nor capacity to monitor this issue and enforce.
Work with local blind and partially sighted people to monitor and mitigate the impact of any temporary obstructions that appear on pavements.	We do not currently liaise directly with blind and partially sighted people to do this, but is something that we are keen to address in future. (See consultation and engagement on suggested general approach above).
Work with local business owners to make them realise how A-boards cause real difficulties for blind and partially sighted people and to consider alternative forms of advertising.	We do follow up on reports of badly-placed or obstructive A-boards. This would definitely be part of the awareness campaign with the public suggested in the general approach above.

Oldham recommendations

In addition to the suggested overarching Street Charter points listed at Section 2, it is proposed that we:

- *Work with businesses to raise the awareness of the hazards that A-boards can cause and encourage them to adopt a safe alternative.*

Street and café furniture

The RNIB state that: “Permanent street furniture which is sensibly placed, like railings and benches, can be useful navigation aids for people with sight loss. However, problems are caused when they are poorly placed and managed, overused, or when the obstacle itself is hard to see or detect properly with a white cane. Over half of blind and partially sighted people who participated in our research have collided with both permanent and temporary street furniture.”

Street Charter option	Oldham position
All cafe furniture must be licensed, with care being taken to ensure that the tables and chairs are adequately cordoned off and do not constitute a hazard. Licensing requirements must be enforced.	Oldham Council currently allow street furniture in a small number of premises in the town centre which are either cafes or seating outside pubs. The number of complaints is very low and any issues are investigated by officers.
Set up accessible ways for blind and partially sighted people to report collisions and injuries they experience.	The collection of data and information in regard to these issues is going to be critical if any of the issues are going to be rectified effectively. One of the general recommendations in Section 2 relates to identifying any improvements that can be made to the current system in terms of accessibility and logging that the issue is being reports by people who are blind or partially sighted in relation to their safety.
Monitor how many blind and partially sighted people are being injured due to collisions with obstacles.	
In accordance with section 175A and the PSED, undertake a street furniture audit with blind and partially sighted people to ensure that it is as safe as it can be.	Oldham will work with local groups and the RNIB to see how best we can undertake proactive engagement of blind and partially sighted people in the design and placing of street furniture (see general recommendations in section 2).
In accordance with section 175A and the PSED, when town centres and neighbourhoods are redeveloped, proactively engage with blind and partially sighted people around design of the	

development and implementation of street furniture.	
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Oldham recommendations

In addition to the suggested overarching Street Charter points listed at Section 2, it is proposed that we:

- *Work with businesses to raise the awareness of the hazards that café furniture can cause and encourage them to adopt a safe alternative.*

Wheelie bins and recycling bags

The RNIB state that: “Our survey results showed that just over half of the blind and partially sighted people who participated have collided with wheelie bins and recycling sacks. Some people even told us they avoid going out on bin days because it was just safer to stay indoors, despite this often being inconvenient for them.”

As in the case of pavement parking this is an issue which affects those in wheelchairs and those with prams and pushchairs.

Street Charter option	Oldham position
All bin crews to be trained in why it is so important to store bins as safely as possible.	Bin crews are trained in placement of bins following collection with particular attention on the need to consider partially sighted or blind residents. Additionally, all crew members have at least two recorded inspections a month with quality of work and placing bins back neatly being recorded within the inspection. This area of performance is also linked to the individual's appraisal.
Run awareness campaigns to encourage residents to be considerate in how they place their bins.	Due to the variants in collection points we do not stipulate to residents the way in which they place bins for collection, although we do state the collection point (i.e. front of property, collection point etc). However including thoughtful placement of waste bins (both for residents and bin crews) in a wider campaign around raising awareness of those issues faced by blind and partially sighted people would be a valuable.
Give consideration to the requirements of the Equality Act in relation to their waste collection policies	The current waste collection policies have undergone EIA and adjustments have been made for a number of the protected groups.
When negotiating contracts with waste management companies, build in 'clear highway' policies as part of the contract.	All Oldham's waste collections are carried out in house and so no contracts with management companies is necessary.
Where residents can leave bins in an accessible area off pavements and footpaths, this should be required and bin crews should return bins back to this safe place as well.	Due to the variants in collection points we do not stipulate to residents the way in which they place bins for collection, although we do state the collection point (i.e. front of property, collection point etc). Bin crews are trained in placement of bins.

Oldham recommendations

In addition to the suggested overarching Street Charter points listed at Section 2, it is proposed that we:

- *Monitor and analyse the number of reports of badly placed bins (by those with sight loss, disability or prams and pushchairs) to see if targeted activity in any residential area could help to relieve the most persistent and dangerous hotspots.*

Overgrown shrubbery and branches

The RNIB highlight the issue of overhanging shrubbery and branches especially during the summer months. This is one particular issue which can be mitigated both by the Council and private landowners / landlords and homeowners.

Street Charter option	Oldham position
Set up accessible ways for blind and partially sighted people to report overgrown shrubbery and branches.	We already have accessible ways for these issues to be reported; however we do need to ensure that these are being adequately communicated. Blind and partially sighted people can currently report issues by contacting Unity for private and environmentalservices@oldham.gov.uk for those owned by the council.
Act swiftly upon these reports by alerting the residents or taking action if it is a council-owned property.	If we receive a report outside the normal pruning programme we will aim to inspect the site and prune the shrubs away from the public highway if they belong to the council. Although it is difficult to give exact timescales due to the potential scale of some of the work, if council-owned we will try to deal with the issue within two weeks. The sooner we are made aware of the problem the better. If the shrubs are privately-owned our colleagues in Unity will write to the landowner and ask them to cut back the shrubs from the adopted highway to their boundary. If they fail to do this within a given time then we will cut them back and charge the landowner for the work. The response time very much depends on the extent of the problem and in cases where there is a significant issue this can take slightly longer.
Run awareness campaigns to encourage residents to be considerate in managing their shrubbery and trees.	This issue could be included in an awareness raising campaign regarding the problems that this issue causes for blind or partially sighted people (as well as everyone else!)

Oldham recommendations

In addition to the suggested overarching Street Charter points listed at Section 2, it is proposed that we:

- *Work with elected members, residents and community groups to identify local solutions to some of these issues including volunteers who would be happy to assist other residents in keeping their shrubbery and branches under control, particularly where they may not have the skills or equipment to do so.*

Shared space

The RNIB state that: “We all want to make our streets safer for pedestrians, but many people do not realise what a devastating impact removing crossings, kerbs and tactile paving has on people with sight loss. Over half of the blind and partially sighted people in our research reported that recent building developments in their area had made it harder for them to get about.”

Street Charter option	Oldham position
Work with blind and partially sighted people to assess existing shared spaces on grounds of safety. Where safety issues are identified, mitigating measures need to be taken including the reintroduction of kerbs and crossings.	Unity Highway Inspectors undertake their duties as part of the Council’s ongoing Highway “Safety Inspection” Policy. They investigate and help mitigate claims against the Council for slips, trips and falls.
In accordance with the PSED, involve and consult with blind and partially sighted people when new shared space schemes are put forward and make any necessary changes to the schemes. Where this is not possible, they should consider whether or not the scheme should still go ahead.	As part of the process for both new and modified schemes, a Non-Motorised User (NMU) Audit is undertaken during the design stage along with similar engagement through the normal public consultation channels.

Oldham recommendations

In addition to the suggested overarching Street Charter points listed at Section 2, it is proposed that we:

- *Work with blind or partially sighted people to identify any improvements which could be made to shared spaces. For example, the focus group mentioned how yellow lines on steps would greatly assist accessibility where no such ‘highlighter’ exists. Additionally, Unity have suggested they work with the user group to identify works that need doing through sharing the programme of planned works in advance.*

Tactile paving

Oldham Council currently operate at the RNIB ideal in terms of tactile paving. The Council is keen though to stress that it welcomes reports of tactile paving being broken or unsafe and so this is included in the general street charter requirement around reporting mechanisms and the need to be able to log if the issue is being made on the grounds of particular danger to someone with sight loss.