



# WELWYN HATFIELD

## EOSC Scrutiny Sub Group Meeting

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 6:30pm  
Conference Room, Campus East

### Chairperson

Cllr Malcolm Cowan (elected)

### Present

Cllr Malcolm Cowan  
Cllr Helen Bromley  
Cllr James Broach  
Ka Ng  
Durk Reyner  
Vikki Hatfield

### Apologies

Cllr Rebecca Lass

Subject	Action
<b>1. Election of Chair</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>It was agreed that Cllr Cowan would be the Chair of the scrutiny</li></ul>	
<b>2. Declaration of Interest</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>None</li></ul>	
<b>3. Scope of Scrutiny</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cllr Cowan gave his view to the background to the current position on grass verge protection.</li><li>Member commented that it has been a long term struggle to find a solution to verge parking that would satisfy all stakeholders.</li><li>It was noted that Stevenage Borough Council have implemented a restriction on verge parking. It was discussed that Stevenage has a Verge Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), not a byelaw and does not cover footpaths.</li><li>It was suggested to look at other Authorities best solutions to verge parking. The Group agreed this as a way forward.</li><li>A discussion was held on the resource and significant budget implication to expedite the TRO. Members agreed that resources should be focused on finding solutions, not those that waste money and are not successful. Cllr Cowan asked if we could consult the LGA. Parking Services Manager advised that the best authority to ask would be the British Parking Association (BPA).</li></ul>	Vikki – will ask BPA Ask HCC if they can support WHC

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cllr Cowan asked if it was feasible to plant hedges on the verges. HCC would object to hedges on the verges and they may obstruct utilities.</li></ul>	
<b>4. Next Meeting</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The next meeting will be held on 27<sup>th</sup> February at 6:30pm.</li></ul>	



**EOSC Scrutiny Sub Group**

**“How the Council can move forward with restricting parking on verges and footpaths given the impracticability of the current by-law”**

Wednesday 27 February 2019 at 6.30pm

Conference Room, Campus East

**MINUTES**

Present: M.Cowan (C), H.Bromley, J.Broach, S.Markiewicz

Officials present: Corporate Director, Resources, Environment and Cultural Services (K.Ng)

Head of Environment (D.Reyner)

Parking and Cemetery Services Manager (V.Hatfield)

Governance Services Officer (H.Johnson)

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**1. WELCOME**

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and to Councillor S.Markiewicz who, it was agreed, was to replace Councillor R. Lass.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3. HOW VERGE PARKING IS BEING DEALT WITH BY OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES.**

Members received a verbal update from the Parking and Cemetery Services Manager and noted that:

- As a benchmarking exercise, Officers had sent out an email to authorities nationwide and received a disappointing response of just

seven authorities. The impression was the majority had very little in place to protect verges.

- Officers were meeting with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) in the coming weeks and would bring back details of the discussion to the next meeting of the subcommittee.
- Stevenage Borough Council had been relatively successful in implementing Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). They had started over 10 years ago and had nearly finished rolling out their strategy on a ward by ward basis to avoid shifting the problem of verge parking from street to street.
- It was noted that a balance needed to be struck between resourcing schemes to improve the look of verges without improving parking provision for residents (the latter of which was not within the remit of the subcommittee).

A discussion followed as to the various ways that damage to the verges in the borough could be limited, with Members and Officers putting forward options and looking at the advantages and disadvantages of such schemes:

- **Reprofiling the road** by removing the verge completely was often an appropriate but expensive option. Residents could still park on the highway and footpath but the issue of an unsightly churned up verge would be removed.
- **Creating parking bays** was also often an appropriate but expensive option.
- **Verge Protection Orders (VPOs)** in isolation would more than often just encouraged residents to park somewhere else and so transferred the issue of verge parking to another area.
- **Exemptions to schemes** were possible, such as Honeycroft or Parkway Close, where residents were permitted to park on extended drop curbs since there was nowhere else to park. There could also be exemptions if there was a single carriageway. In addition Blue Badge holders were exempt since they could park in contravention of most restrictions including verges for up to three hours.
- **Strengthening verges with grasscrete** (a cellular grassed paving in concrete or plastic) had its risks. Service providers might have to “drop” their services underneath the grasscrete to prevent potential damage. The process could cost a significant amount, but without which the Council could be liable for any damage created by the grasscrete. It was also questionable whether the Council ought to be spending money enhancing verges owned by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and in some instances the grass failed to grow anyway.
- **Section 106 monies** from new developments could help with parking provision. This was already sought if the development did not provide

enough parking provision as outlined by the Council's Parking Standards.

- **The current byelaw** was deemed unenforceable but not worth rewriting as a blanket ban on parking on verges did not cover parking on footpaths or the pavement.
- **Verge Protection Orders (Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs))** were useful as it could be specified whether it was the verge or path and civil enforcement officers could follow up on any breach of the scheme. Members enquired as to the number of tickets issued in the borough. Officers advised that photographic evidence of the verges before and after the implementation of schemes was a more accurate way of reflecting the scheme success and agreed to do this in the future.
- **Targeting delivery vans** that caused a disproportionate amount of damage would not be possible as they had a legal right to repass and pass.
- **A strategy to target roads where verge damage was high**, such as Heronswood Road or Handside, would likely shift the issue of verge parking to nearby roads, so a holistic approach would be more appropriate such as that taken by Stevenage Borough Council.

Officers confirmed that the British Parking Association (BPA) had affirmed that these were the various options to consider and the subcommittee agreed that a multifaceted approach was the most realistic and reflected the differences of street parking across the borough:

As well as a multifaceted approach to limit damage to the verge, Members suggested a promotional campaign such as "keep the borough beautiful" to encourage residents to after the verges. It was agreed that an article approved by the Executive Member could be published in Life Magazine, ideally in the summer issue. Members were mindful that any promotional material would need to be carefully worded to ensure that it didn't create objection from the public with regards to the lack of parking provision.

#### 4. DATE/TIME FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the next meeting would be in April 2019 where a final report would be agreed before going to Cabinet in the new municipal year.

Meeting ended: 7.20pm

(HJ)