



WELWYN HATFIELD

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”

Tuesday 30 April 2019 at 7pm
Walnut Room, Campus East

MINUTES

Present: M.Cowan (C), H.Bromley, 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 (M.Lowe)

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J.Broach.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment of the final paragraph of Minute number 3 to read as follows.

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 look 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. SCRUTINY ON VERGE PROTECTION ORDERS – REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES)

The Parking and Cemetery Services Manager presented the draft report, which summarised the findings of research undertaken by Officers and set out

the proposed recommendations of the Sub-Committee prior to submission to Cabinet in the new Municipal Year.

The minutes of the two meetings of the Sub-Committee had been attached to the report for reference.

Officers met with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) in the intervening weeks and reported back on the details of the discussion to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

A discussion followed regarding the contents of the report and proposed recommendations, with Members and Officers putting forward the following views.

The Chairman reported that he had contacted Officers at Stevenage Borough Council with a view to obtaining information on how they implemented their verge protection schemes as he felt that this extra information would be useful.

A Member raised concerns regarding the Chairman taking individual action without the agreement or knowledge of the Sub-Committee, which was unconstitutional and there were clear procedural rules with regards to how Scrutiny reviews were carried out. This action was also considered to be unfair to Officers.

The Chairman reported that Stevenage had created parking capacity on the roads by building half width laybys to create space.

The Sub-Committee noted that half width laybys had been introduced in Hatfield.

Members further discussed the best methods of protecting verges and noted that wooden posts were the preferred and most robust methods. The County Council preferred not to put in posts or replace any which needed replacing, in fact some had been taken away and not replaced. County Council had withdrawn £100k from funding stating that this work did not need to be carried out and there were a number of issues with the replacement wooden posts such as health and safety or potential accidents.

Members were of the view that an increase in enforcement would be one solution as parking on verges took place during the night when enforcement did not take place. A number of Officers advised that plans were in place to change the way in which enforcement was carried out, with an increase on Sundays.

Officers explained that the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) acted as a great deterrent to parking on the verges. There were issues with the drive over Members felt that residents across the Borough should be discouraged from parking on verges throughout the year but particularly during the winter months. It was noted that the worse damage occurred to the verges during very wet winters.

The reasons for discouraging parking on verges and the purpose of enforcement should be made clear to residents. That it was not to generate income for the Council but to maintain the appearances of the Borough.

Residents should be encouraged to do the 'right thing' and to adopt the community spirit and be willing to take remedial action on verges immediately when the damage occurs or is noticed. This would reduce the overall impact on the verge. It should be made clear to residents that this action could be taken without fear of retribution from the authorities.

The points made during the discussion which took place at the last meeting of the Sub-Committee regarding the various ways that damage to the verges in the Borough could be limited, with the options Members and Officers put forward and consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of such schemes be included in the report for Cabinet.

Communications be further strengthened to remind residents of the visual impact of parking on verges has on the Borough and the cost of implementing the Verge Protection Orders or a double yellow line scheme.

Agreed:

- (1) That the following amendments be made to the report and circulated without delay for agreement by the Sub-Committee by email.

Paragraph 3.5

The following information was advised to **Members and** officers. Each elected County Councillor has a Highways Locality Budget each year for all types of works which can include Traffic Regulations Orders and other parking improvement schemes such as removing verges and green areas to create additional parking and erecting bollards in locations the prevent parking.

- (2) That Officers continue consulting residents on Verge Protection Orders at the same time as other parking proposals on the approved work programme.
- (3) That the salient points contained in the minutes of the last meeting be incorporated in the report to be submitted to Cabinet.
- (4) That, as outlined in paragraph 3.6 of the report, the Borough wide communication plan to reach as many residents as possible on the concerns of grass verge parking to help discourage parking on verges be agreed.

5. DATE/TIME FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that a further meeting would not be required as the final report would be agreed by email before going to Cabinet in the new municipal year.

Meeting ended 7.40pm
ML