

GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 7
15 MARCH 2017	Public Report

Report of the Corporate Director for Growth and Regeneration		
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REPORT OF THE VERGE PARKING WORKING GROUP

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on progress made by the Verge Parking Working Group (VPWG) following a request to re-establish this group at Full Council following a motion from Councillor Murphy on 13 July 2016.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and comment on the findings of the Verge Parking Working Group and;
2. To endorse the Verge and Pavement Parking Policy as attached at Appendix A for approval to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital.

3. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND RELEVANT CABINET PORTFOLIO

- 3.1 This report directly contributes to the objectives and outcomes contained in the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 3.2 The report falls within the Cabinet portfolio of Communities and Environment Capital.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Verge Parking Working Group (VPWG) is led by Andy Tatt, Head of Peterborough Highway Services and supported by the Prevention and Enforcement Service and Legal officers.

- 4.2 This working group has been re-established following a motion from Councillor Murphy at Full Council on 13 July 2016 where it was agreed that:

*Council notes difficulties, obstruction, inconvenience and cases of damage because of vehicles parked on pavements and verges;
Council believes that inconvenience caused to residents and pedestrians and damage being caused to verges can be mitigated by introducing regulations to prohibit parking on pavements and by protecting verges; and, building on the work already instigated by Councillor Peach.*

- 4.3 Council agreed to reconvene the Verge Parking Action Group to review the areas affected by damage from verge parking. The working group will report its findings into the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee. As such, the work undertaken by the group builds on that led by Graeme Clark, Prevention and Enforcement Service Manager in 2015 which resulted in a paper being submitted to the Safer Peterborough Partnership Delivery Board.

- 4.4 Parking on grass verges is a persistent problem as it can reduce the verge to an unsightly state, and can also obstruct the highway preventing pedestrians and wheel chair users from accessing roads and footways if there is no other pathway. Verge parking can also cause a hazard to other motorists especially if the vehicle is parked on a bend, narrow road or junction and could prevent emergency vehicles from attending an incident.
- 4.5 As car ownership has increased so has the problem of parking on grass verges. Priority is given to dealing with verge parking near to junctions where sightlines are being obstructed, or where the damage caused could be a hazard. Parking on grass verges not only damages the grass it may damage cables and pipes beneath the surface. It is not an offence to park a motor vehicle, with the exception of a HGV, on a grass verge unless it causes an obstruction or a Traffic Regulation Order or byelaw is in force prohibiting it.
- 4.6 Verge parking is not unique to Peterborough; it is a UK-wide challenge and exists mainly due to a lack of available parking. Some of the factors which contribute to the verge parking issue include ageing housing stock, population density and the increasing level of vehicle ownership. Much of Peterborough's housing stock was built at a time when there were no or few cars on the road. This means that many houses do not have off-street parking provision yet these households now own one or more vehicles. The 2011 Census shows that in Peterborough the average number of cars per household is 1 to 1.12.
- 4.6 The VPWG has researched actions taken by other local authorities in an attempt to combat verge parking. In general this research shows that even where considerable investment has been made it has not been possible to eradicate the problem over a period of time.
- 4.7 The verge parking challenge in Peterborough has existed for many years, yet despite various interventions, some more successful than others, it remains a problem. The issue has been subject to discussion at Council, the former Neighbourhood Committee's and Scrutiny Committee none of which have identified the 'silver bullet' to eradicate verge parking. As such the VPWG have concluded that it will never be possible to eradicate verge parking in Peterborough, yet it is felt that some interventions may be possible which are likely to see a positive impact in some areas. It should be noted however that all interventions face a number of constraints primarily in relation to budget availability.
- 4.8 Based on the work undertaken by the VPWG a draft Verge and Pavement Parking Policy Document has been produced (appendix A). It is proposed to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order which prohibits verge parking across the entire city, but to only activate it in instances covered by the policy. It will only be practically invoked if there is suitable and sufficient support from the community directly affected. The policy sets out a process whereby, should certain conditions be met, members of a locally effected community can gather evidence that the prohibition of verge and pavement parking TRO is desired. It then outlines the process that the Council will undertake to evaluate this request and should it be accepted the measures that will be put in place to address the issue, subject to budget being available.
- 4.9 Should the approach outlined in this report be deemed desirable it should be noted that there will be financial implications for the Council both in terms of enforcement and associated highway works both short and long term. This work would be undertaken if finance is made available.

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 Within the scope of this Committee's responsibilities, Members are asked to note the content of this report.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct implications associated with this report. However, should the Committee recommend that the Verge and Pavement Parking Policy Document (appendix A) progress further there will be financial implications incurred at the implementation stage which will need

to be considered as part of the budget setting process.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 This report has been developed as a direct result of the VPWG. If it is recommended that a formal policy should be considered for adoption a consultation exercise with key stakeholders would be undertaken.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 The views of the Committee will be presented back to the VPWG and action taken as appropriate.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1 N/A.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix A – Verge and Pavement Parking Policy Document – Localised Activation of the Unitary Wide Prohibition of Verge and Pavement Parking (Traffic Regulation Order)TRO

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