

REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

27 January 2014

34 PARKING ON PAVEMENTS AND GRASS VERGES – UPDATE REPORT

The Head of Environment and Regulation presented an update report upon progress related to pavement and grass verge parking, since the last report to the Sustainable Communities O&S Committee on 21 November 2012 (minute 33 refers). He commented that the issue was particularly sensitive for the public and Members and was the subject of many enquiries to Streetscene, with parking on pavements outside schools at peak times a major problem. He indicated that many areas, particularly those with narrow streets were designed when car ownership was not high. The same was also true in other areas that had a significant number of amenity areas and large verges with narrow access roads, where it would be costly to introduce a widescale programme to provide parking bays. However, officers had estimated that even if such a programme was undertaken, demand for parking would still be likely to outstrip provision.

He reported that, unless there was a specific signed Traffic Regulation Order in place, enforcement of was only generally possible through the Police. Individual instances of parking on footways or verges could be considered by police officers to be obstructive or dangerous and whilst those offences appeared to clearly indicate that parking on footways and verges was not permitted, officers within the police had pointed out that unless there was evidence that a footway or carriageway was fully 'obstructed', there were no other definitions of what constitutes 'obstruction', 'wilful obstruction' or 'unnecessary obstruction' and in such cases they were less likely to secure a successful prosecution. Additionally, as Members were aware, the recent economic downturn had resulted in limitations in police resources, with such offences being seen as a lower priority than burglary, violence and other crime.

There had been 9 'pilot' verge and pavement TRO schemes introduced to date at a variety of locations, which were reasonably well respected by motorists with good compliance in most areas and few prosecutions having been undertaken. An initiative to issue leaflets to warn 'offending' drivers was also in its early stages but was having some positive effect.

Members referred to particular problems of vehicles parking on pavements and grass verges and obstructing driveways in a number of areas across Wirral. The offences being committed were in relation to both residential and commercial properties and Members also highlighted a trend for drivers of certain heavy utility vehicles to routinely park across pavements. Members noted that in terms of reactive maintenance/repairs, the cost to the Council was thought to be in excess of £40k per annum with the majority of the cost related to damage done to flagged footways. Consideration was given to progress that had been made by other local authorities to address the issue and a range of measures were discussed including the introduction of by-laws and billing offenders for damage caused by their vehicles.

Members noted however that a blanket ban on pavement parking could have a detrimental effect in some areas, particularly with regard to access by emergency vehicles in neighbourhoods with narrow streets and high levels of car ownership. In view of there being no budget to address the problem and the extent being varied across Wirral, a Member proposed that the matter would be better addressed and prioritised for funding by the Constituency Committees, who could develop different solutions as required for specific areas.

Resolved –

- (1) That the progress being made in continuing to address pavement and verge parking issues be noted.**
- (2) That the report be referred to each of the Constituency Committees for their consideration.**