



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 6TH OCTOBER 2022 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Hussey (Vice-Chair Presiding)

Councillors:

R. Chapman, C.J. Cuss, D.T. Davies MBE, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, M. Evans, A. Gair, S. Kent, D.W.R. Preece, H. Pritchard, J.E. Roberts, S. Williams, C. Wright

Cabinet Members:

Councillors J. Simmonds (Highways and Transportation)

Together with:

M.S. Williams (Corporate Director for Economy and Environment, M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), C. Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager), D. Smith (Principal Engineer - Traffic Management), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer), J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer)

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Committee were advised that in view of a prior request from Councillor D.T. Davies MBE, Councillor A. Hussey (Vice-Chair) would preside as Scrutiny Chair for the duration of the meeting.

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live-streamed and recorded and would be made available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#) Members were advised that voting on decisions would be taken via Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M.A. Adams and A. Leonard, together with Cabinet Members Councillor C. Morgan (Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces) and Councillor P. Leonard (Planning and Public Protection)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 28TH JUNE 2022

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th June 2022 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 14 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee held on 28th June 2022 (minute nos. 1 – 9) be approved as a correct record.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

5. ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager) presented the report, which outlined details of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the period October 2022 to March 2023.

Members were asked to consider the FWP alongside the Cabinet work programme and suggest any changes prior to publication on the Council's website. The Scrutiny Committee noted the details of the reports scheduled for forthcoming meetings.

It was moved and seconded that the report recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 14 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website

6. CABINET REPORTS

It was confirmed that there had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following report.

7. PARKING FOR RESIDENT PERMIT HOLDERS

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation presented the report, which advised the Scrutiny Committee on the key issues associated with changing the existing residents' parking policy and implementing the physical changes to the restrictions on site and suggested steps to take this forward. The Scrutiny Committee were asked to offer their views and comments on the requested changes to the existing policy and consider the next steps if they were supportive of the changes.

Members were advised that the report had been prepared in response to requests received from Councillor D.T. Davies MBE and Councillor A. Hussey and endorsed by the Joint Scrutiny Committee (Environment and Sustainability and Housing and Regeneration) on 15th December 2020, for amendments to be considered to the parking restrictions in residential areas.

The report outlined the key issues associated with the changing of the existing residents' parking policy and implementing the physical change, changes on the restrictions on site and suggested steps in taking this forward. Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report which listed the main elements of the current policy and the factors that needed to be taken into consideration when considering these changes.

It was noted that the specific changes requested by Councillor Davies and Councillor Hussey related to (a) extending the times of operation of the existing residents' parking scheme, which currently operates Monday to Saturdays 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM as the maximum restriction, and (b) replacing/amending existing limited waiting bays in those streets where resident parking is currently provided to allow resident permit holders to park.

A further recommendation was also endorsed by the Joint Scrutiny Committee that was presented in the report from the Car Parks Task and Finish Group; (c) that the criteria for residential parking permit areas is reviewed to offer a more flexible approach that takes into account areas outside of principal towns where customer parking to access local businesses impacts on residential areas.

It was noted that taking forward the changes under (a) and (c) would require the existing residents' parking policy to be amended, whereas (b) could be implemented through the normal traffic regulation order process, as the requested changes are not linked to any policy.

The Scrutiny Committee were reminded that the existing policy is quite involved and that Members should be mindful of the impact of any changes that are brought forward. Should the Committee wish to pursue the changes to the existing policy, Section 5.14.2 of the report recommended that a Task and Finish Group be established to identify the desired outcomes and enable the complexities and the implications of any proposed changes to a fully to be fully considered.

Members were advised that as part of the Task and Finish Group's remit, it is likely that a consultation exercise would be needed to be carried out with all eligible residents (approximately 1900 properties) within existing schemes to gauge views and inform decisions. It was noted that any policy changes that may be recommended by the Task and Finish Group would need to be reported to Cabinet following consideration by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the report and a Member queried the impact of any parking overspill on nearby streets as a result of resident permit parking being implemented in certain streets, and also referred to larger commercial vehicles which take up additional space on residential streets and asked whether sites could be designated to provide a secure facility for the parking of larger vehicles overnight, to free up parking space for household vehicles. Additionally, the Member also referred to electric charging points and it was confirmed that this item could be placed on the Forward Work Programme for consideration at a future meeting.

Dean Smith (Principal Engineer - Traffic Management) responded to the queries relating to parking overspill and parking of larger commercial vehicles in permit areas. He explained that in cases where consideration is given to the introduction of a new area for resident permit parking, the Council will look at the streets on a zonal basis to assess any likely overspill into adjacent streets, and therefore such schemes are introduced on an area-wide basis incorporating multiple streets. In terms of parking of commercial vehicles on the highway, Mr Smith explained that vehicles over a certain size that have an operator's licence are required to park at specific premises and are not eligible for the residents' permit scheme, and confirmed that he would arrange to provide details of the vehicle size limitations to Members following the meetings. He confirmed that although there is a size restriction within the existing residents' parking policy the Authority have no control over vehicles under this size (such as transit-style vehicles) provided that they are fully taxed and insured to park on the street.

A Member referred to the assessment criteria for residential area permit requests as set out in Section 5.7 of the report, which stated that the expected displacement of parking to adjacent streets must be acceptable, and asked whether the Authority carries out a consultation to determine whether such displacement is acceptable. Mr Smith confirmed that any new scheme would be subject to consultation but emphasised that there are often distinct boundaries across the scheme, which varies across locations and would be subject to engagement with local members to gauge any feedback.

A Member highlighted a pressing issue in his ward where many residents have received parking tickets as a result of exceeding the one-hour limited waiting time in resident permit streets, and queried whether consideration could be given by Cabinet to extending this waiting period to lessen the financial burden for those residents who require extra parking time, particularly residents who have health or limited mobility issues or have to transport young children. Mr Smith confirmed that similar requests have been received elsewhere across the county borough, but that the limited waiting restrictions provided in the majority of streets were introduced many years ago, and although Officers are committed to addressing this issue, the Council only has a finite number of resources to deliver the extensive traffic regulation order programme.

Members were reminded that an update report on Civil Parking Enforcement was brought to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee meeting in October 2019, during which the Committee endorsed the recommendations on how to prioritise requests for changes to parking-related traffic regulation orders, and that Phase 2 of this programme is currently ongoing and intended for completion by the end of the financial year. Phase 3 of the programme will then be addressed, which encompasses changes to residential parking and limited waiting areas. However, it was emphasised that whilst Officers want to progress Phase 3 as quickly as possible, there are issues around recruitment within the Traffic Management team, and realistically it will take some time to implement these changes.

The Member expressed his disappointment regarding the extended length of time needed to complete the work around the traffic regulation order programme and he also outlined

the frustration of residents in this regard. He asked if consideration could be given in the interim period to exploring experimental traffic regulation orders to lessen the financial burden on residents until the work is completed. Mr Smith acknowledged the Member's concern but reiterated that the Council need to be consistent with their enforcement approach and are not able to exercise any concessions in this regard. Mr Smith also emphasised the ongoing resource issues which is dictating the pace at which these schemes can be delivered.

Another Member acknowledged the recruitment issues being faced and asked when Phase 3 was likely to be implemented so that he could provide reassurance to his constituents. Mr Smith explained that it was difficult to provide an accurate timescale but that Phase 3 has been identified and it is intended to complete Phase 2 by the end of the financial year. However, Members were reminded that Phase 3 is a significant piece of work as it includes every residential parking area in the county borough, and the Traffic Management team are also experiencing other workload pressures in terms of delivering the 20mph speed limit initiative whilst facing recruitment difficulties across the team. However, Mr Smith gave assurances that the Traffic Management team would do everything they can to try and deliver these changes as quickly as possible.

A Member referred to the proposed Task and Finish Group to consider the complexities and implications of the changes to the residents' parking policy, and asked how the work of the Group would fit into the delivery of the programme that is due to be rolled out. Mr Smith explained that the impact of any changes will need to feed into the work of Phase 3 and so if the Task and Finish Group were minded, for example, to change the times of operation across the residents' parking scheme, then this would impact on traffic regulation orders and so it would be sensible to withhold any change to such orders until the Group have made their recommendations.

Clive Campbell (Transportation Engineering Manager) added to this response and emphasised that the outcome of any proposed changes may not be suitable for everyone and will involve balancing various demands. He also highlighted the complexity of the matters that Traffic Management have been asked to address, and explained that in some cases, these extend beyond traffic regulation orders and will require changes to the policy elements themselves, which therefore require a wider discussion with both Members and thereafter the general public to understand the constraints around policy and enforcement changes, together with the full implications of what can be achieved and the knock-on effects of any changes in order to inform any future decisions.

A Member queried the reasons behind the recruitment difficulties within the Traffic Management team. Mr Smith explained that earlier in the year, budget approval was granted for two additional full-time staff within the team to assist with the work around the traffic regulation order programme. Although the posts have been advertised three times, the Council have been unsuccessful in filling these posts to date, and alternative options are now being explored to find suitably qualified/ experienced staff.

Having offered their views and comments on the requested changes to the existing policy, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations as set out in the report, and with the inclusion of an additional Recommendation 3.5 (to establish a Task and Finish Group as outlined in Section 5.14.2 of the report), be supported. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 13 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

The Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee therefore **RECOMMENDED** that:-

- (i) a consultation exercise be carried out with all currently eligible residents (1844 properties) within existing schemes to gauge views and help formulate decisions, with the format of this consultation to be discussed and agreed with Members.
- (ii) the proposed change of policy be reported to Cabinet following Member feedback and consultation with residents and consideration by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.

In view of additional Recommendation 3.5, the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee also RESOLVED that a Task and Finish Group be established to fully consider the complexities and implications of any proposed changes to the existing Residents' Parking Policy.

The meeting closed at 6.03 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2022, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR