

## **REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**21 OCTOBER 2008**

### **VERGE PARKING BAN PILOT SCHEMES**

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

Author: Martin Morris, Traffic Manager

#### **Summary**

The report reviews the parking, verge maintenance and parking enforcement position relative to the recently introduced Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting parking on grass verges within a number of streets. It also provides recommendations on the way forward on this important parking issue.

#### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

- 1.1 This is a matter for Cabinet, as there are ramifications either way for extending the current verge parking pilot scheme or not.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1 Following lengthy considerations and consultations with local residents, the Council determined that Traffic Regulation Orders prohibiting parking on grass verges should be introduced as a pilot strategy on three streets - Albatross Avenue, Parkfields and Beechings Way. The Orders for Albatross Avenue and Parkfields were introduced on 25 July 2007, with that for Beechings Way being introduced on the 24 September 2007.
- 2.2 Similarly, as with other Traffic Regulation Orders, residents were consulted on the proposals. Also, all residents received a letter advising of the introduction of the Orders, the penalty for verge parking and when and how they should park.
- 2.3 At the time of their approval, it was recognised that the Traffic Order Regulations were effectively on trial. That depending on the ongoing level of compliance with the Orders and the verge maintenance position a decision would be required, firstly, on the retention of the Orders and if this was agreed

secondly, the 'rolling out' of verge parking orders across Medway on a phased basis.

- 2.4 Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) were also issued for the three streets; a breakdown of the PCN's issued is shown below.

<b>STREET</b>	<b>PCN's ISSUED</b>	<b>REASON FOR PCN's</b>
Albatross Avenue	5	None for verge parking
Parkfields	2	None for verge parking
Beechings Way	142	132 for verge parking

- 2.5 Detailed examination of the PCN's for Beechings Way showed of the 132 issued for verge parking, 104 were issued in the first four months of operation of the traffic order; October 2007 to February 2008. Generally, in the following months the PCN's issued have ranged from one to six per month with two 'spikes' of ten', in each of two months. No PCN's were issued in September 2008. This indicates that residents and their visitors have now accepted and worked to the new restrictions. However, it is inevitable as with any Traffic Regulation Order there will be some ongoing abuse of it.
- 2.6 Recent examination has found the verges to be in excellent condition with all previously damaged areas being repaired and showing good grass coverage. The overall 'street scene' and environment of the streets has therefore been considerably enhanced to the benefit of the area. This is particularly of the case with Beechings Way.
- 2.7 In respect of Beechings Way, the success of the Traffic Order could permit the removal of the anti-verge parking measures and railings introduced some years ago. This would further benefit the overall 'street scene' effectively returning it to its original form.
- 2.8 Such action would also have the benefit of improving grass-cutting operations and could also reduce their costs.

### **3.0 Proposals**

- 3.1 The verge parking pilot schemes seem to have been a success, however, these pilot sites were carefully chosen from numerous locations in Medway and this may have been a factor in their success.
- 3.2 It is recommended that any further verge parking restrictions are introduced across Medway on a phased basis. However it must be recognised that this is not a "one size fits all" scenario, and each potential verge parking location needs to be considered individually for its suitability.

3.3 It is considered that the criteria for the introduction of further Verge Parking Orders throughout the Medway should be based on the following:

- a) The ability of the off-street and on-street parking provision to accommodate the parking generated by residents and their visitors, and:
- b) In respect of on-street parking, the streets being of sufficient width to accommodate parking alongside the through vehicular movement on the streets, and the effect of this in terms of safety and network capacity;
- c) The condition of the verges and the general aesthetic environment of the area;
- d) The likely displacement effects of introducing verge parking controls in the surrounding streets or areas;
- e) That the verge parking order is the best solution to the parking problem.

#### **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 The cost of introducing a verge parking prohibition scheme, costs in the order of £3,000. This cost is generalised with a large proportion of the cost associated with the signs needed and this will vary depending on the length of the street concerned. However, as with all parking schemes this does not include officer associated time, which is considerable. These costs cannot be met from existing traffic management budgets. Additionally current commitments and resource levels will not support increases to this programme.
- 4.2 There is a slight cost benefit in the area of reduced verge maintenance in some instances.

#### **5.0 Legal implications**

- 5.1 The order can be made under sections 1(1), 2(1) to (3), 4(1) and (2) and 124 of and part III of schedule 9 to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The procedure for making the order is governed by the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. These require the intention to make an order to be advertised, certain affected persons and emergency services to be formally consulted, objections received to be properly considered and, if the order is to be made, a further advertisement placed that this has been done.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

6.1 The Committee recommends to Cabinet:

- i) the retention of the current verge parking ban orders;
- ii) the 'rolling out' of verge parking orders, in principle, throughout Medway on a phased basis, subject to budgets being made available and the site appraisal criteria being met, as outlined in paragraph 3.3 above;
- iii) that any future requests are ranked and scored in terms of priority, proceeding with the highest ranked sites being introduced first.

### **Background papers**

None

### **Lead officer contact:**

Martin Morris, Traffic Manager

Telephone: 01634 331148. E-mail: [martin.morris@medway.gov.uk](mailto:martin.morris@medway.gov.uk)