



Proposed Verge Parking Policy

13 November 2002

KEY ISSUE:

To agree a policy for tackling the problem of vehicles parking on verges, and to agree proposals for two specific sites, Nos. 172-184 Goldsworth Road, Woking and Greenvale Road, Knaphill.

SUMMARY:

The report outlines the problems caused by the parking of vehicles on verges and the measures available to tackle this. It sets out a site-specific strategy for dealing with the issue, based on the nature and scale of the problem.

CONSULTATIONS:

No consultations have taken place as a result of compiling this report.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to agree

- (i) that the verge parking policy set out in paragraph 11 be approved;**
- (ii) that the strategy to combat the problem of verge parking, as set out in paragraph 12, be adopted;**
- (iii) that the scheme to protect the verge outside Nos. 172-184 Goldsworth Road be agreed; and**
- (iv) that a scheme to provide additional on-street parking in Greenvale Road be priced and drawn up, and presented to a future meeting of the Committee.**

Introduction and Background

- 1 Woking's verges and grassed areas are notable assets, contributing significantly to the overall environmental character of the Borough. However, verge parking is a widespread problem. Verge parking problems generally fall into the following headings:
 - Road safety
 - Obstruction of footway/verge
 - Damage to the verge
 - Visual intrusion
- 2 The Council regularly receives complaints from residents and road users about such parking, which occurs on a regular basis at a number of locations throughout the Borough. Two of these are dealt with specifically in this report.
- 3 The Council does not have a specific policy relating to verge parking. Although parking is prohibited on the verges of certain roads by virtue of a bye-law which the Council made in 1954, in practice this is largely ignored and is difficult to enforce. In the past, specific problems have been successfully tackled by introducing posts, trees or other street furniture, or by the construction of lay-bys to provide additional on-street parking.

Legal Position

- 4 It is an offence to park heavy commercial vehicles on footways and verges.
- 5 For cars and light vans, the position is not so simple; driving on (as opposed to "onto") the footway is illegal under the Highways Act of 1835 and the Road Traffic Act 1988 but it has proved difficult to use this legislation to combat footway and verge parking. The bye-law mentioned above applies to many roads, but is difficult to enforce; it would be necessary to demonstrate that any driver seen parking on the verge was actually responsible for damaging it. Additionally, Council officers do not have powers to require a driver to give his name and address.

Police and Traffic Warden Enforcement

- 6 Any incident of parking on the verge can be enforced by the Police, where such parking is either creating a road safety hazard or an obstruction to either pedestrians or other highway users. However, in most cases where complaints are received by the Council they fall into the last two categories of damage to the verge or visual intrusion. In this situation the police are not normally involved as the maintenance of the verge is the responsibility of the Highway Authority.
- 7 Where a waiting restriction is in existence the restriction normally applies to the whole width of the highway, including the verge. In these instances the Police can ticket the car as if it were parked on the yellow line. However, the Police would not support the introduction of waiting restrictions simply to

address verge parking problems, and their introduction may in any case simply displace the problem further along the road.

Physical Protection

- 8 Councils have used various different measures to protect the verge. These include:
- the use of posts or bollards
 - the use of railings
 - tree planting
 - the use of high-sided kerbs
- 9 Due to the cost of installing railings and/or new kerbs, the use of posts or tree planting has been the most popular. However, even the use of posts can be expensive over a large area. In order to avoid cars gaining access to the verge, posts need to be positioned approximately 1.5 metres apart and need to run alongside all vehicle access crossovers to prevent vehicles gaining access to the verge behind the posts. The costs involved in any scheme are dependent on the size of the area affected and care needs to be taken not to simply displace the problem either further along the road or into adjacent roads. Tree planting is not always a feasible alternative as vandalism may be a problem.

Analysis and Commentary

- 10 With the continuing increase in car ownership the problems associated with parking and specifically verge parking have continued to increase. It is not considered financially feasible to adopt a policy of bye-law enforcement due to the problems of meeting the necessary evidential criteria and the considerable staff resources required. Furthermore, in many cases reported to the Council it is important to note that the parking is by residents rather than commuters or visitors. Prohibition of such parking therefore can be particularly difficult. Accordingly, in areas which require protection, physical measures should be considered appropriate to the area and the problem.

Policy

- 11 It is suggested that the policy should be:

“To preserve the grass verges as a notable environmental asset within the Borough and to restore those verges which have been extensively damaged

This is similar to the policy adopted by Woking Borough Council as former agents for the County Council.

Strategy

- 12 It is suggested that the problem should be tackled in one of three ways, depending on the nature of the parking and extent of verge damage.

- 1) **Minor isolated verge damage.** Where minor damage has been caused in the past, but regular parking is not occurring, the verge should be repaired in order to restore the pleasant visual aspect of the verge.
 - 2) **Regular damage – alternative parking available.** Where damage is occurring due to regular parking, and officers are satisfied that such parking could safely take place elsewhere, then the verge should be repaired and measures taken to physically protect the verge from further damage by one or more of the measures described above, as appropriate. Where such parking is being practised by residents, they would be informed before any physical protection markings are introduced.
 - 3) **Regular damage – no alternative parking.** Where damage is occurring due to regular parking, but there is nowhere else for such parking to take place safely, consideration should be given to the construction of parking bays within the verge. Such schemes are often perceived by residents as improving substantially their quality of life.
- 12 The Committee is asked to consider appropriate measures for two specific sites:

Nos. 172-184 Goldsworth Road

The wide grass verge at this location has been extensively damaged by vehicles being driven onto it and building materials being deposited on it. The residential properties behind the verge all have off-street parking, and therefore this problem falls into category 2 as described above. This area is on one of the approach roads to Woking town centre, and is unsightly for residents and visitors to the town alike. A possible scheme to protect the verge, by means of posts, is shown on Drawing No.11382 attached at Annex 1. Once the posts have been erected, the verge can be reinstated.

Greenvale Road, Knaphill

Greenvale Road is a narrow residential cul-de-sac with limited off-street parking. (See location plan attached at Annex 2). A petition, bearing 19 signatures, and requesting additional parking provision within the grass verge, was received by Woking Borough Council in June 2002. This problem falls into category 3 as described above. Therefore a scheme to provide additional on-street parking places would be the appropriate solution to the problem. It is suggested that officers draw up and cost a suitable scheme for presentation to a future Committee meeting.

Financial Implications

- 13 Clearly the cost of tackling verge parking problems will vary from site to site, and may range from a few pounds for the repair of minor damage up to thousands of pounds for the construction of additional on-street parking areas.
- 14 It is suggested that the cost of verge repairs and physical protection

measures could be funded from existing maintenance budgets. However, specific funding would need to be identified for any future schemes to construct additional parking areas. Thus schemes would need to be prioritised and programmed, with consideration being given to a financial contribution from the residents who stand to benefit.

- 15 The cost of providing posts outside Nos. 172-184 Goldsworth Road is estimated to be £4,600. This would be funded from the appropriate maintenance budget.
- 16 The cost of providing additional parking areas in Greenvale Road will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

Sustainable Development Implications

- 17 There are no sustainable development implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications

- 18 Vehicles parked in isolated locations may be more vulnerable to vehicle crime. Residents with no off-road parking generally prefer to park their cars within close proximity of their property, so that they can be seen. These points need to be borne in mind whenever a verge protection or parking lay-by scheme is being considered.

Equalities Implications

- 19 There are no equalities implications.

Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendations

- 20 Parking on verges is a widespread problem, generating a substantial number of complaints from residents and road users. The measures described above should be effective in tackling the problem, and improve the quality of life for many residents.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Letter and petition from residents of Greenvale Road
