

**Norwich Highways Agency committee**

**21 March 2019**

**Public Questions**

**Further questions from members of the public – who are not attending the committee meeting regarding item 5, ‘Welsh Streets’ area permit parking consultation**

**Responses will be sent following the meeting**

**Question 1 - Ms Jane Miller, Wellington Road:**

“The current proposal by Norwich City Council to make some streets permit parking and exclude others seems to me likely to create more problems for residents of the excluded streets.

The problems potentially are:

- (1) Increased traffic ( cars, vans, small lorries) looking for free parking on the excluded streets...Wellington Road, Swansea Road, Caernarvon Road, Milford Road, parts of Earlham Road and Denbigh Road.....leading to increased danger for pedestrians including very young children, people with disabilities and older people.
  
- (2) It will potentially immediately become more difficult for residents to park close to their homes with consequences for people with disabilities, children, older people and shift workers.

My question is: as a resident of Wellington Road, is it possible to include specifically Wellington Road in the permit parking zone for the above reasons?”

**Response**

“It is very clear in the consultation material that street adjacent to permit parking areas can suffer from increased parking congestion because this is a known effect that residents need to consider when responding to the consultation.

The council has undertaken all the necessary statutory processes to enable permit parking to be extended into Wellington Road, so in principle it is possible to proceed with this if that is what the committee determine to do. However, the recommendation to the committee is based on the responses that were received from local residents in accordance with our normal practice of giving substantial weight to the views expressed.”

## **Question 2 - Ms Sarah Tomlinson, Earlham Road:**

The Norwich City Communications Style Guide says in Section four: making sure our communications are understandable and accessible say that *'It's important to make sure we consider our audience before we start any communication. As a local authority, our audience is often very broad and made up of a diverse spectrum of people from very different backgrounds, varying education levels and includes those whose first language is not English. In the vast majority of case (with the possible exceptions of things like reports for a small, niche and specialised audience), we would want to make sure we use plain English to get our message across in the most clear and concise way possible. Our aim is to get our message across first time, without the reader having to come back with queries'*.

With reference to the communications that were sent out as part of your consultation process, I do not believe the council's own guidelines were met. I am referring to the sentence "The council will adjust the extent of any proposed permit scheme dependant on the results of the consultation". If this followed the council's own communications guidelines, it should have clearly stated that the council would implement parking restrictions only in the streets that vote in favour of the proposal. I have spoken to various neighbours, residents, friends and many people who thought that it was an all or nothing vote, not street by street. The communications were simply not plain English as your policy states.

So if people did not understand what was proposed, are the recommendations valid? Should we be asked again with clear communications and with the council getting their message across 'without the reader having to come back with queries' as your policy states? Or, if there was misunderstanding, should the all or nothing total vote count?

I look forward to hearing the feedback from the committee. "

## **Response**

"All information sent out as part of this consultation was reviewed by specialist communications officers and altered where necessary, to ensure that the information is clear. This is a requirement of all correspondence that the Council sends out in bulk and this particular phrase has been used in numerous consultations in the past and has never caused confusion before

Whilst in hindsight it might appear that the recommendation was on a street by street basis that was not necessarily going to be the case as changes to the extent of any permit parking area are considered in the light of responses received, so it would not have been true to suggest it in any correspondence."

### **Question 3 - Mr Mark Winterburn, Earlham Road:**

“I believe that now we know what the proposal is, all households in the consultation area should have another vote and we should have a minimum of 50% of households per street in favour of the proposal.

I would also ask that if the deal goes ahead as proposed that we would still be able to apply for a permit to mitigate the challenges we will face once implemented, as we will be on the edge of the CPZ.

My view is still that you need to make the whole consultation area permit parking or not to propagate further than what is currently the CPZ.

I would choose to leave things as they are now and not to change what is currently the situation regarding permit parking. This consultation area I would suggest works OK and does not need further CPZ streets.”

### **Response**

“A 50% response rate for a consultation is actually a very high threshold and it is, of course, completely wrong to assume that anyone who doesn't take part in a consultation is opposed to a particular proposal. I note that in questions from residents in other concerns have been expressed that that our current threshold is too high as they have a high proportion of transient households.

We do not issue parking permits to residents who are outside permit parking areas. If an area expresses a preference not to be in a permit zone, then it is wholly inappropriate to offer residents there the benefits of being in one.

We regularly receive requests from residents to extend permit parking areas and only consult in locations where we believe a significant number of residents support the idea. It is clear from the consultation that a significant number of residents do support and extension to permit parking and to not provide it for them on the basis that other locations less affected by parking issues were less supportive would seem unreasonable.”