

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**16:35 to 18:45****25 February 2016**

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Maxwell (vice chair), Bogelein, Coleshill, Carlo (substitute for Haynes) Grahame, Manning, Peek, Packer, Raby, Ryan, Sands (M) (substitute for Sands (S)) and Schmierer

Apologies: Councillors Haynes and Sands (S)

Also present: Councillor Bremner

1. Public questions / petitions

A public question was asked by Mr Jolyon Gough:

“A local resident has discovered an outdoor plaque which would have been positioned on verges within the area it reads

“City of Norwich’ It is an offence against the bylaws to drive or place a vehicle on this grass verge in a manner liable to cause injury to the turf or trees”

Will the scrutiny committee, as part of its review, ask cabinet if this byelaw is enforceable?”

The head of city development services said:-

“The byelaw would not be enforceable as it is a historic anachronism. A byelaw was in place to prevent verge parking but disappeared when parking was decriminalised. Other powers were relied upon going forward, which will be discussed later in the meeting.”

The chair thanked Mr Gough for his question.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2016

4. Scrutiny committee work programme 2015 -2016

The chair reminded members that the pedalways scheme would be the focus of the next meeting of the scrutiny committee on Thursday 17 March and that the public would be encouraged to email their comments to pedalways@norwich.gov.uk

Members discussed items to add to the next scrutiny work programme and it was agreed that the topics of academies and the grounds maintenance contract would be considered for the next work programme in the new civic year. The chair said that he had also received a request from a member of the public and in the new civic year, this request should be tested against the TOPIC criteria for possible inclusion onto the work programme.

RESOLVED to note the scrutiny committee work programme 2015-2016

5. Update from the NHOSC representative

The representative gave a verbal update to the committee. She said that the topic of consultations and stakeholders had been discussed in relation to changes made to healthcare services. The strategy manager said that he had regular meetings with the chair of the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and could circulate relevant updates to members via the e-councillor website.

The representative said that the issue of continuing healthcare for patients with a need for care beyond a hospital stay had been discussed and that the health service would pay for some social care. She said that it was important that the public were aware that these packages were available and that members played an important role in publicising this.

RESOLVED to

- 1) Note the update from the NHOSC representative; and
- 2) To ask the strategy manager to contact the chair of the CCG to see which consultations on planned changes to commissioning intentions may be able to be made available via e-councillor.

6. Council policies for the control of verge parking and A boards

The chair suggested that the discussions on the control of verge parking and the proposed policy on A boards were taken separately.

The head of city development services presented the report on verge parking. He said that officers would be undertaking a review of verge and pavement parking policies. The Government was currently looking at pavement parking policies so it would be sensible to wait for these conclusions before advancing this element of the policy.

The report to the executive in 2006 (at appendix A to the report) had resolved to use Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to supersede bylaws to stop parking on 'mown verges'. These were enforced by the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) and parking

tickets were issued. A TRO on Earlham Road had been successful. Consultations were run in other areas of the city but there had been no public appetite for them. In some areas, verges had been strengthened for residents to park on where there was little or no off street parking. This was expensive to undertake and there had not been the budget going forward to continue this. Physical barriers on verges were expensive and represented an ongoing maintenance issue. These would only be used in circumstances of people driving over verges.

Discussion ensued in which the head of city development services explained that there was a very limited budget for the introduction of TROs. The requests for new TROs would be subject to a scoring process and the joint highways committee would prioritise the implementation of those within areas with safety concerns or access issues.

The head of city development services said that schools and the way children travelled to school had changed and was a dynamic that the council had to react to. A targeted approach to enforcement around these areas could be considered in the review. It was suggested that it would be helpful to collect some data from schools to understand where the children are travelling from to aid the mapping of parking hotspots.

In response to a member's question, the head of city development services said that parking enforcement was not used to create an income stream but did need to pay for itself. A small surplus was generated but this was handed back to Norfolk County Council. A dialogue had been started with the county council around this surplus and the suggestion had been made that Norwich City Council use this surplus to reinvest in measures such as TROs.

Members discussed the possibility of allowing local residents to put planting on the verges outside their houses to discourage drivers from parking on the verges. The head of city development services said that the legal implications of this would need to be reviewed before being taken forward. It was suggested that a list of approved plants could be made for residents to use.

RESOLVED to ask the head of city development services to:-

- 1) contact all schools in the Norwich City Council area for a copy of their travel plan to collect data on how children travel to school,
- 2) liaise with the communications team and place an article in Citizen magazine to promote best practice around verge parking; and
- 3) consider the following for inclusion in the verge parking review:-
 - a) residents adopting verges to maintain with appropriate planting
 - b) targeted enforcement of verge parking hotspots

The transport planner presented the report on the proposed A board policy. Stakeholders had been consulted and nationwide policies had been researched. He referred members to pages 47 – 48 of the agenda which listed the proposed recommendations for a new policy and said that the enforcement of these would not put pressure on already stretched budgets.

In response to a member's question, the transport planner said that the public liability insurance figure had been taken from research into other council's policies.

Research around licensing A boards had also been undertaken and after struggling to find examples of successes, was concluded to be inappropriate for Norwich. This idea was also heavily opposed by business groups. He agreed to circulate this research around public liability insurance and licensing of A boards to members.

Discussion ensued around the recommendation that the A boards would have to adjoin directly to the premises. The transport planner said that this point had been added after consultation with access groups. The idea was to create uniformity for visually impaired people. Members questioned how this would allow businesses in areas such as the lanes to advertise their shops as many smaller businesses used A boards a distance from their premises to advertise. The transport planner explained that the council wanted to support local businesses but the policy was intended to balance the needs of all using the city. The policy would only apply to the public highway and not private areas such as the Forum or the Royal Arcade. Parts of the market were not on public highway and therefore could operate as usual regarding A boards within the boundaries of the marketplace.

(Councillors Manning and Packer left the meeting at this point.)

The transport planner confirmed that the consultation on the proposed A board policy would begin with stakeholders on Friday 26 February and would be widened to the public the following week.

RESOLVED to note the proposed A board policy.

CHAIR