



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet 17 March 2010

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Councillor Call for Action Improving Resident Parking and Pedestrian Safety on the Howard and Mildenhall Estates, Bury St Edmunds

- (1) Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) came into force from 1 April 2009, a mechanism by which any member of the Council may refer to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee any local government matter or any crime and disorder matter which affects their ward or division.
- (2) On 18 January 2010 Councillor Ereira-Guyer submitted a CCfA as titled above for the consideration of the Committee. Following Councillor Ereira-Guyer's presentation of the issues, the Committee resolved to hold a hearing in respect of this issue, and this was held on 3 March 2010.
- (3) The hearing was run along the lines of a call-in, as set out in the Councillor Call for Action Protocol in the Council's Constitution.
- (4) A number of witnesses were questioned by the Committee, as follows:-
 - (a) Councillor Ereira-Guyer, as the Member who brought the issue to the Committee's attention;
 - (b) Richard Mortlock, Mildenhall Residents' Association;
 - (c) Derrick Hardy, Chairman, Howard Estate Over 60s Club;
 - (d) Tom Murray, Havebury Tenants, Leaseholders and Residents Support Forum;
 - (e) Ernie Broome, Howard Estate;
 - (f) Robbins, Neighbourhood Manager, Havebury Housing Partnership; and
 - (g) Steve Boor, The Engineer, St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
- (5) In addition to the above witnesses, Susanne Game, Acting Chair of the Howard Estate Residents' Association, submitted written evidence to the Committee. Full details of the information provided by each witness will appear in the Committee's minutes, and included:-
 - (a) speeding traffic;
 - (b) parking on grass verges, particularly on bus routes, ruining the verges and making the area muddy;
 - (c) the potential to change some of these verges to laybys, or remove them to widen roads;

- (d) rising car ownership;
 - (e) rising garage rents, and small size of garages meaning they often cannot be used for modern vehicles;
 - (f) numbers of garages un-let, and ratio of garages to homes; and
 - (g) need for marking out of areas of hard standing on estates, and possibly providing security lighting.
- (6) Jez Robbins from Havebury advised the Committee that Havebury would be pleased to be involved in any project the Council would like to run to look into the issues raised, and would consider joint funding, bearing in mind that any contribution to improvements would be funded from Havebury rents. He also stressed that the potential liabilities of owner-occupiers should be investigated.
- (7) Steve Boor, for the Borough Council, advised that the Council's role was, as agent to Suffolk County Council, to protect and maintain the highway, and to take responsibility for traffic orders. It also had responsibilities as Planning Authority and land owner of some of the areas concerned. He advised that the estates concerned were of a type which often saw parking problems, as most of the parking provision was to the rear of properties, and in general people preferred to be able to see where their car was parked. He summarised that on the Howard estate the main complaints were of verge parking and parking in front gardens by driving along the pathways. Some of this had been dealt with by the installation of barriers, but that made grounds maintenance more difficult.
- (8) Verge parking could be dealt with using prohibition byelaws, but these needed the support of the Police, and would also not necessarily solve the problem, but could just relocate it. A study into the parking issues in the area might find that there was sufficient space, but that it was not being used efficiently. Some occupiers might be persuaded to park on their property, or some recreational space could be converted, but that would be a serious step.
- (9) On the Mildenhall Road estate, some verges had been hardened and converted to parking bays. The main area of concern on this estate was Mitchell Avenue, and businesses had been contacted requesting them to ask staff not to park in the road, however this was not an offence and so was difficult to control without a residents' parking order. Turning to the issue of pedestrian safety, Steve Boor advised that over the past 5 years two pedestrian accidents had occurred on these estates. Steve Boor had also been asked about the possibility to locate a pedestrian crossing outside Tollgate Primary School on Beetons Way, and advised that the County Council had confirmed that its strategic programme for the next year included a crossing less than 100m from this location, and that prior to that an investigation would be carried out showing where most people cross.
- (10) Finally, Steve Boor advised that a bid for £25,000 to fund investigations in these areas had been made to Suffolk County Council. Additionally, Members mentioned that County Councillors for the division could be approached to provide funding from their locality budgets for such works.
- (11) Having questioned all witnesses the Committee debated the issue in depth. The Committee felt that a study needed to be carried out in the area, but did not wish to see it added to the bottom of the list of areas awaiting investigation, as it could take years before this area was reached. They, therefore, wanted to see it moved higher up the list, and acknowledged that should the County Council bid be

successful, the investigation could commence much more quickly. The Committee also felt that some issues may be able to be resolved prior to any investigation being carried out, and would like to see Havebury and the Council work together on that. They would also like to see Havebury and the Borough Council establish ownership of the various pieces of land on these estates, as this information could prove useful for ward members when issues arose. Finally, they were concerned with staff from West Suffolk House parking on these estates, and asked for that to be investigated.

12. Recommendations

The Committee recommends to Cabinet that:-

- (1) the Howard and Mildenhall Road estates be added to the previously agreed list of areas awaiting investigation into residents' parking issues, as set out in Annex A to Appendix B to Report A527, but as item 7, immediately following Spring Lane/Springfield Road, and that any investigation include consultation with residents on Mitchell Avenue regarding whether they would like to see a residents' parking scheme on the road;**
- (2) the Borough Council and Havebury Housing Partnership investigate together whether any of the solutions discussed at the meeting might be taken forward prior to the investigation taking place;**
- (3) the Borough Council and Havebury Housing Partnership investigate ownership of areas of land on these two estates;**
- (4) communication be made to staff working at West Suffolk House reminding them that they should travel to work in accordance with the Council's Green Travel Plan, and encouraging them to park in the Olding Road Car Park and not on nearby estates; and**
- (5) an investigation be undertaken as to whether any action can be taken to prevent non-residents from parking in the rear car parks on the Howard and Mildenhall Road estates.**

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