

Regulatory Committee

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 28 January 2016.

Present:

Councillors

David Jones (Chairman)

Pauline Batstone (Vice-Chairman)

Steve Butler, Barrie Cooper, Beryl Ezzard, Mike Lovell, David Mannings, Margaret Phipps,
Peter Richardson, Daryl Turner and David Walsh.

Spencer Flower, County Councillor for Verwood and Three Legged Cross attended for minutes 9 to 11.

Officers attending:

Martin Farnham (Senior Technician), Jon Lake (Senior Technician), Sarah Meggs (Senior Solicitor), Vanessa Penny (Manager (Wider Team) – Dorset Highways) and David Northover (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Regulatory Committee to be held on **18 February 2016**).

Public Speakers

Douglas Every, Martin Osborne and Malcolm Stroudley, local residents, minutes 6 to 8.

Apologies for Absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Ian Gardner, Mervyn Jeffery, Mark Tewkesbury and Kate Wheller.

Code of Conduct

2. There were no declarations by members of disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Minutes

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2015 were confirmed and signed.

Public Participation

Public Speaking

4.1 There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

Public Statements

4.2 There were no public statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(2).

Petitions

5. There were no petitions received in accordance with the County Council's Petition Scheme.

Traffic Matters

Proposed Dorchester Parking Review

6.1 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Highways on proposals to implement changes to parking provision on Queens Avenue/Treves Road/Clarence Road; South Court Avenue; and Alfred Road/Cromwell Road, Dorchester. Following objections being received to the advertisement of these proposed changes, the Committee was now being asked to give consideration to those objections and decide whether to ask Cabinet to approve the proposals for implementation, as advertised. Notwithstanding this, in discussion with the Town Council the advertised proposals for Coburg Road/Edward Road were to be withdrawn at this time and re-evaluated following objections to their advertisement.

6.2 With the aid of a visual presentation, officers explained the reasoning behind the need to impose the waiting restrictions and the basis of the objections received. Photographs and plans were shown to the Committee by way of illustration. This showed where the proposals would be situated, the character of the roads and their setting within the townscape. Officers also described the relationship between the roads and residential properties and the effect that parking was having on residential streets. Objections received considered that the proposed arrangements would not necessarily solve the issues being experienced and would only serve to compound matters by parking being displaced. However officers considered that the proposals were, on balance, the best means of meeting competing needs and addressing the issues being experienced. Councillors were informed that the two Dorchester County Councillors, Trevor Jones and Richard Biggs, West Dorset District Council, Dorchester Town Council and Dorset Police had all supported the proposals now being recommended for implementation.

6.3 Officers described the particular necessity for each set of waiting restrictions within the context of their respective roads and how each were designed to address a particular set of circumstances. The part that the Brewery Square development, the hospital and the senior and middle schools played in exacerbating the parking situation in those areas was acknowledged. Members noted that the parking issues were predominately caused by those commuters working in town and parking all day on street. The proposals were designed to address congestion, visibility, access, obstruction and road safety issues and maintain the flow of traffic.

6.4 The Committee heard from Douglas Every who was concerned that displaced parking as a result of the proposals would lead to similar issues being experienced in those adjoining roads which were unregulated, namely Monmouth Road. He explained that this road was already heavily congested and saturated with parking, as properties in that part of town invariably had little, or no, off street parking. He considered that the proposals for South Court Avenue should, as an alternative, be implemented on the northern side of the road as parking there impeded sight lines. His preferred solution would be for alternating waiting restrictions on alternate sides of the road as this would also help to reduce traffic speeds.

6.5 Martin Osborne was of the view that the Cromwell Road/Alfred Road proposals should be reviewed to be more beneficial to access arrangements. He felt there was a need for waiting restrictions on both sides of South Court Avenue and that Monmouth Road would be adversely affected by the loss of parking in Alfred and Cromwell Roads. He expressed concern that this area was already very congested, being compounded by access to the convenience store.

6.6 Malcolm Stroudley expressed concerns that the proposals for Queens Avenue would adversely affect other neighbouring roads by displaced parking and that these roads would then require attention too.

6.7 The Committee asked about the funding for the implementation of the proposals and how these were costed. Officers reported that the cost of this particular review was accounted for in the budget, but appreciated that the associated costs were of some significance given the excessive nature of the works required to implement them and their associated advertising costs. The Chairman confirmed that although he understood that many other towns in Dorset experienced similar circumstances, and that members were mindful of their own needs, consideration should only be given to the merits of these particular proposals and what they were designed to achieve.

6.8 Some members asked what consideration had been given to the equality impact statement in addressing the needs of the vulnerable in society. Officers confirmed that all residents' needs, and any impact on them, had been taken into account in the development of the proposals, with these being balanced against how it was considered best to address the parking issues at hand.

6.9 Whilst the Committee recognised the need for restrictions, not all were convinced of the necessity for them all. Some members felt that the proposals for the Queens Avenue area were unnecessary as they considered that the problem was mainly limited to school arrival/departure times and that the roads were wide enough to cope with the parking otherwise. Others considered that South Court Avenue would be best served by restrictions on its northern side. The response by the Officers was that there was a need for the proposals for Queens Avenue, but were more open to persuasion about which side of South Court Avenue they were needed. However, a change of this nature would be considered substantial and would require re-advertisement, which would add to the overall cost.

6.10 The Committee were mindful of two particular consequences of implementing the proposals: ensuring that the civil parking officers had the capability to enforce the restrictions as necessary; and that the restrictions would invariably present new problems onto those adjoining roads that were still free of restrictions by virtue of the displaced parking.

6.11 Whilst acknowledging that there would be more work for enforcement officers to do, officers assured members that, upon implementation, these new restrictions would be effectively enforced. Officers recognised that there was the potential for indiscriminate parking to be transferred onto other roads as a consequence of the measures being introduced but the Highway Authority had an obligation to address the issues by the best available means so that the unimpeded flow of traffic might be maintained.

6.12 Whilst the Committee recognised that, in imposing the restrictions, displaced parking would invariably be sought elsewhere, having considered the objections received, it was agreed that the proposed Dorchester Parking Review waiting restrictions were necessary to address the issues being experienced and were both reasonable and proportionate in achieving this, on the basis that there would be a commitment to enforcing these effectively. The Committee considered that the proposals were, on balance, the best means of meeting competing needs and addressing the issues being experienced.

6.13 On being put to the vote, the amendment to exclude the proposals for Queens Avenue and to transpose the restrictions on South Court Avenue were lost and, subsequently, Cabinet should be asked to approve the proposals, as advertised, for implementation, apart from those for Coburg Road/Edward Road.

Recommended

7. That having considered the objections received, Cabinet be asked to:-
- approve the proposed waiting restrictions for the Dorchester Parking Review, on Queens Avenue/Treves Road/Clarence Road, on South Court Avenue and on Alfred Road/Cromwell Road, as originally advertised, and that there be a commitment to these being enforced effectively.
 - agree that the advertised proposals for Coburg Road/Edward Road be abandoned; and that parking proposals for Coburg Road/Edward Road be revisited, re-evaluated and a new design drawn up to go out to public consultation early in 2016.

Reasons for Recommendations

8.1 The proposals should improve the movement of vehicles along Queens Avenue/Treves Road/Clarence Road and help prevent indiscriminate parking causing problems to residents and visitors. The proposal in South Court Avenue would also improve the movement of vehicles and stop indiscriminate parking. The proposals in Alfred Road/Cromwell Road were needed to help alleviate the continued problems of the all-day parking by employees in the town centre, people who park and use the train or those visiting the nearby Brewery Square development. This had caused significant problems to the residents and had also prevented the refuse lorry from accessing the area on a number of occasions.

8.2 Feedback from the Local Members and Dorchester Town Council following the advertisement of the proposals indicated that the proposals for Coburg Road/Edward Road needed to be reconsidered and the revised proposals consulted upon.

Proposed Waiting Restrictions, Chiltern Drive & Pennine Way, Verwood

9.1 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Highways on proposals to implement changes to parking provision on Chiltern Drive and Pennine Way, Verwood. Following objections being received to the advertisement of the proposed changes in Chiltern Drive, the Committee was now being asked to give consideration to those objections and decide whether to ask Cabinet to approve the proposals for implementation, as advertised.

9.2 With the aid of a visual presentation, officers explained the reasoning behind the need to impose the waiting restrictions and the basis of the objections received. Photographs and plans were shown to the Committee by way of illustration. This showed where the proposals would be situated, the character of the roads and their setting within the townscape. Officers also described the relationship between the roads, residential properties and, in particular, the newly constructed Morrison's Superstore and petrol station and the effect that parking in connection with this was having on residential streets. Given the increase in the volume and flow of traffic in the area since the construction of the Superstore, the proposals were designed to maintain the unimpeded flow of traffic into and out of Morrison's.

9.3 Objections received considered that the original proposals would have compromised their ability to park on street given the limited parking opportunities they had near their property. In taking into account the objections received, a relaxation of the original proposals was proposed to now provide for limited waiting over a length of Chiltern Drive, rather than the no waiting at any time. Officers considered that the amended proposals went a long way to addressing the issues the objectors had and were, on balance, the best achievable in meeting competing needs and addressed the issues being experienced.

Councillors were informed that the two Verwood and Three Legged Cross County Councillors, Spencer Flower and Toni Coombs, East Dorset District Council, Verwood Town Council and Dorset Police had all supported the proposals now being recommended for implementation.

9.4 In addressing the Committee, Spencer Flower supported what was now being proposed, considering that it was a pragmatic approach to addressing the issues being experienced and in meeting the needs of both local residents and traffic management for the store.

9.5 Having considered the objections received, the Committee considered that the proposed waiting restrictions, with the recommended amendment, were necessary to address the issues being experienced and were both reasonable and proportionate in achieving this. On being put to the vote, the Committee agreed to ask the Cabinet to approve the proposed waiting restrictions on Chiltern Drive and Pennine Way, with a minor amendment to relax the restrictions to allow limited waiting on a length of Chiltern Drive.

Recommended

10. That, having considered the objections received, Cabinet be asked to approve the proposed waiting restrictions on Chiltern Drive and Pennie Way, Verwood with a minor amendment to relax the restrictions to allow limited waiting on a length of Chiltern Drive.

Reason for Recommendation

11. The proposals should allow the free the movement of vehicles at the new entrance to the super store off of Chiltern Drive.

Planning Matters

Arrangements for Christchurch School planning application

12. The Committee discussed the arrangements for consideration of the planning application in connection with the construction of a new Christchurch School which would be considered on 18 February 2016. This included approval of the need for a site visit in connection with this.

Resolved

13. That a site visit be held on 18 February 2016 in connection with the planning application for a new Christchurch School.

Reason for Decision

14. To provide the Committee with the opportunity to understand at first hand the issues to be considered.

Proposal to establish a Policy Development Panel on School Parking Provision

15. In discussing the provisions of the planning application for the proposed new Christchurch School, Councillor Mike Lovell proposed that there was scope for the issue of school parking provision to benefit from a policy development panel being established to consider this in the context of how future school planning applications should be considered. Accordingly, it was agreed to recommend this to the Environment and Economy Overview Committee for their consideration.

Resolved

16. That the Environment and Economy Overview Committee be recommended to establish a Policy Development Panel on School Parking Provision to assess this in the context of how future school planning applications should be considered.

Reason for Decision

17. To provide the opportunity to assess this particular provision in greater depth.

Questions from County Councillors

18. No questions were asked by members under Standing Order 20(2).

Meeting duration: 10:00 am – 11.40 am