

**Full Council
14 October 2021**

Questions and Statements submitted for the Public Participation Period

Question 1 – submitted by Holt Parish Council

Holt Parish Council has seen in recent months a significant increase in breaches of planning law. The criteria on the Dorset Council website are vague and undefined to anyone looking for guidance.

This vagueness means that as a Parish Council we are unsupported when making reports to the Enforcement Team for investigation and in fulfilling our own duty to represent our electors.

We want Dorset Council to explain why it has set its own very vague criteria by which to investigate breaches making it unclear it is fulfilling its obligations for enforcement?

Response by Cllr David Walsh

Holt Parish Council state that they have seen a significant increase in breaches of planning law in recent months. The Council has also seen an increase in the number of enforcement cases across Dorset as a whole.

The planning enforcement page on the Council's website currently provides a brief overview of the range of possible unauthorised development types. It sets out how to report concerns, and what we will do when we receive information about an alleged breach of planning control. The page includes a link to the Council's Planning Enforcement Plan which sets out more detail as to how the Council will deal with notifications of alleged breaches and the steps taken during enforcement investigations. A link is also provided to the National Planning Practice Guidance on Enforcement.

The Council is currently reviewing its Planning Enforcement Plan, and as part of the review, we are aiming to include more detail on the options which are available to the Council to tackle breaches of planning control, and how decisions are taken as to whether or not it is expedient to take action in each case. This review of the Enforcement Plan will hopefully address the concerns raised by Holt Parish Council in regards to the level of information currently provided on the Council's website.

Question 2 – submitted by Hannah Kearns

I am writing to you as the head of the Public Committee for next Thursday 14th October 2021 public committee to ask if this question could be raised and discussed. Last week Wessex water was granted an emergency licence to dig up Portland Beach Road to attend a water leak. Traffic lights were put up causing considerable delays to traffic both on and off the island. Complaints were made and then Wessex Water manned the lights to improve traffic flow. One week later Wessex water start more works this time on Portland Road near the convenience store with 4 way traffic lights. The traffic lights this morning have yet again not been manned. I have spoken to Dorset county highways and my reference with them is 1179723 and have spoken in length the Wessex water to try and understand why we have had these issues again.

Wessex waters response;

“we did ask our subcontractors sun traffic signals ltd to man the lights between 7am and 7pm they have not fulfilled there side of the contract and they are looking into the situation. “ I asked why Wessex water were not more proactive in dealing with this earlier as the same problem happened only one week ago. “Wessex water couldn't answer that”

My question to Dorset Council is:

What protocols are placed on the utility companies when granted a licence to do dig up major roads, with limited access. What they need to do to mitigate traffic flow issues, and if protocols are in place what actions are taken by Dorset council if the utility companies do not comply? Do the utility companies get fined, and if they do how is the money distributed afterwards.

It has taken my daughter 3 hours to get to school this morning. Due to last week we knew there would be disruption's caused and allowed extra time for it, but 3 hours is ridiculous. We also run a local restaurant on the island and this traffic issues has caused staff to be late getting home and to work. The other side it has majorly impacted our business, which with the pandemic already has suffered. Will business be compensated for the failures of Wessex water?

Response by Cllr Ray Bryan

I am sorry for inconvenience that was caused to the residents of Portland and Weymouth due the works undertaken by Wessex Water recently on the A354.

In January 2020 Dorset Council established the [Dorset Council Permit Scheme](#) under Part 3 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) and the Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) Regulations 2007 (the Permit Regulations). The scheme gives Dorset Council the ability to manage and coordinate works and events on Dorset's highway network. When a permit is issued to allow works to take place a number of conditions will be attached to it. These conditions relate to what activities the works promotor looking to perform and where on the network they are proposed

to take place. In the case of the permit issued to Wessex Water for the emergency repair of a water leak at Ferry Bridge, A354, Weymouth, the following conditions were applied:

1. Manual control between 0700 and 1900
2. Remove signals once works complete

As part of the application process the works promotor will need to submit traffic management proposals to Dorset Council for consideration. Depending on the likely impact of the work this may also be accompanied by a joint site visit with the works promotor, this took place in August with members of the Dorset Council Traffic team. Once the work is underway, the impact of the traffic management can be monitored through remote sensing, traffic flow telemetry and site inspections from our Highway Inspectors. If a works promotor is found to be in breach of any of the condition of the permit, the Dorset Council Permit Scheme sets out a number of penalty actions which can be taken, including the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's). In this instance 2 FPN's will be issued to Wessex Water.

The revenue generated as a result of issuing FPN's are initially used to cover the cost of running the Dorset Council Permit Scheme, with any surplus generated being reinvested back into Dorset's Highway network in the form of maintenance activities. The scheme is primarily funded through the leveeing of permit fees which are set at a level to allow the scheme to operate in a cost neutral manner to Dorset Council.

Question 3 – submitted by Sandra Reeve

I noticed that last week (Oct 27) there were only 2 days between the posting of the Agenda for the Cabinet Committee and the cut-off time for public questions. This seemed very short. Please could you clarify whether at Dorset Council there is an agreed minimum time between the posting of a committee's agenda online and the deadline given for questions from the public? If so, how many days is it? Thank you.

Response by Cllr Spencer Flower

Thank you for asking a question on public participation, we welcome members of the public to ask questions at our Cabinet, committee and Full Council meetings. Dorset Council is required to publish agenda papers 5 working days prior to the meeting, so in the case of the last Cabinet meeting the agenda was published on Monday 27 October to meet this statutory deadline. Members of the public can submit questions or statements, either relating to specific items on the agenda or on items that relate to the business of the particular meeting, the deadline for submission is 3 working days prior to the meeting, providing 2 full days for the submission of questions.

Question 4 – submitted by Sandra Reeve

In Somerset all garden waste is composted within the county and turned into Revive – a high quality recycled compost through a contractor called BIFFA. They produce two grades of high-quality organic compost /soil conditioner (0-15mm & 0-30mm) that are suitable for commercial and domestic use. Does Dorset Council plan to initiate a similar scheme in Dorset, so that local people can have access to bags of organic compost at their local recycling centres or bulk quantities directly from the contractor?

Response by Cllr Jill Haynes

Thank you for your question. Dorset Council's garden waste is recycled by our contractor, Eco Sustainable Solution. They produce a range of compost products made from the garden waste, which is available for home delivery, commercial collection or via a wide range of local garden centres. Full details of these can be viewed via the links below.

https://www.thisiseco.co.uk/Eco_Landscaping.html

[Country Care Products](#) (*scroll down for list of locations*)

In the past this service had been provided at household recycling centres. However, with the need to increase waste separation for improved reuse and recycling opportunities within the centres, which required us to provide additional containers on the sites meant that the sale of compost from the sites was stopped. This separation, reuse and recycling of so many different items is one of the reasons that Dorset Council has one of the highest recycling rates in the country.

Question 5 – submitted by Rosemary Lunt

Dorset's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan were adopted on 15 July 2021 at a meeting of the full council. Three months after having been adopted, the up to date Ecological and Emergency Strategy and Action Plan are still not available on the Dorset Council website. As I write, on 8 October, the website still has the original draft Strategy which is dated 15 July 2020 and the accompanying Action Plan. When will the updated and official versions of the Strategy and Action Plans be made available and, given that they are supposed to be living documents, what is the forward schedule for further updates?

Response by Cllr Ray Bryan

At the time the strategy and action plans were adopted we were in the middle of changing website software and migrating website content. This work has now been completed, and [The latest version of the strategy is now available](#) online at the climate emergency webpages www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/climate-strategy. Related

changes to the webpages, action plans and technical papers are coming very soon, but those who can access the strategy PDF file will have everything they need.

As noted the strategy and action plans will be living documents that will be updated as progress is made. We have committed to produce a bi-annual progress report, the first of which will be reported to the council's Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 16th November. It is envisaged that future published updates to the strategy and action plans will align with these reports.

Question 6 – submitted by Helen Sumbler

Referencing Agenda item 8, the Dorset Council Plan, the Economic Growth priority section states Dorset Council will “Improve rail services, public transport and reliability of journey times by working with providers, lobbying Government and focussing on schemes to ease congestion “. In light of this, and bearing in mind the lack of a current Implementation Plan for LTP3, could I ask what the progress is with the development of the revised, joint with BCP, Local Transport Plan? At the Cabinet Meeting on 2nd March 2021, the draft timetable showed this Plan would be consulted on in Autumn 2021, ahead of formal adoption in Winter 21/22.

Response by Cllr Ray Bryan

Due to further alignment of Local Plan timescales between the two authorities, conflicting demands on resource and changing guidance, including the recently published transport decarbonisation plan, the work on the revised Local Transport Plan has been delayed. Officers at both authorities have drawn up a revised timeline which moves through various stages of scoping, consultation and development during 2022 before being adopted in Spring / Summer 2023 to align with both Local Plans. In the meantime officers and members continue to seek the enhancements referred to through local schemes, the Bus Service Improvement Plan and subsequent Enhanced Partnership, Network Rail line review processes and other channels such as the Sub National Transport Body.

Question 7 – submitted by Joe Doak

The Draft Local Plan is currently missing a number of important reports and studies which are necessary for the proper planning of the Council area. These are listed on the Local Plan Web page, although the Dorchester Civic Society is of the view that the Plan also lacks an effective transport strategy and up-to-date Strategic Market Housing Assessment and (strategic) Sustainability Appraisal. Without these documents it can be argued that the current draft is unsound and that the Local Plan process should be restarted. The hurry to proceed with the draft local plan before an adequate and up-to-date evidence base has been established undermines the credibility of the whole Plan.

The Dorchester Civic Society would like to know the detailed timings for the publication of these missing reports (and any other Local Plan research reports

currently underway) bearing in mind that their findings will require sufficient time to be properly evaluated.

Response by Cllr David Walsh

A number of evidence studies are currently in progress and officers will send details of the studies and their anticipated completion dates to the questioner directly. The sustainability appraisal is an iterative document that helps inform the local plan throughout its preparation: the next published version will be produced alongside the local plan but it will be amended again as the plan makes its way through the examination process.