

## **Winnersh Parish Council –Response to the Pavement consultation**

Winnersh Parish Council would like to thank the department for giving us the opportunity to provide feedback on this consultation.

The questionnaire in the consultation consists of 44 questions, but a large part of this is for the views of Highway Authorities or focuses on individuals and as a Parish Council we felt it was more appropriate to respond in a letter format.

Historically, many streets were built decades ago or evolved through the centuries before the high levels of vehicles arrived that currently use our road network. The department have said that any measures will need to ensure the free flow of traffic and access for the emergency services. This is in agreement with the Traffic Management Act which was brought in to give powers to reduce traffic congestion in towns and cities.

It is acknowledged that there are issues with pavement parking for residents in some locations as they are obstructed from using the footway or need to squeeze past parked vehicles. More recently there have been difficulties with social distancing where vehicles are partially parked on the pavement.

However, there are also issues for residents where there are dwellings in areas where there is insufficient off street parking and they have used the footway to park or partially park on for decades with residents using the road to walk on quiet safely as the road is a cul-de-sac or quiet street.

Examples of these can be found in the older parts of the our parish and the wider Wokingham borough area as well as the more recent developments (generally constructed this millennium) where the standards to build them reduced the space for parking in an attempt to reduce the car ownership per household, the reliance on the car and to tackle Climate Change.

However, from a Highway Authority perspective parking on the footway can become an engineering issue as it can cause damage to the pavement and potentially shallow utility apparatus.

The department has suggested 3 options to possibly tackle pavement parking in England. In summary they are:

- Option 1. improving the traffic regulation order process to make it easier for councils to prohibit pavement parking in their areas.
- Option 2. giving councils powers to fine drivers who park on paths
- Option 3. London-style nationwide ban on pavement parking.

This group feel that there are problems as well as opportunities with these options.

**Option 1** allows the Highways Authority to tackle the issue areas with a simplified traffic regulation order process.

Whilst a simplification of the process is welcome, there are no details contained within the consultation of what that would be and what impact those changes would have on costs. This group would welcome the traffic regulation order process to be made as simple as possible with a significant reduction in costs.

Any amendments to the system must also ensure that funding is retained and 'ring-fenced' for transport improvements in a similar way to 'yellow line' enforcement.

**Option 2** has a major issue giving the power to Highway Authorities to fine drivers who cause an obstruction in parking on the pavement. This will raise expectations with some residents who will be expecting immediate action from the authority by constantly reporting vehicles parked or partially parked on footways. This will be extremely resource hungry and difficult to manage. The other serious problem will be the definition of defining what is an obstruction and is likely to be fraught with legal challenges. Another issue is the displacement of vehicles to inappropriate locations (described further in option 3). This option will also displace vehicles where it has not been an issue parking on the footway.

**Option 3** is a blanket ban on all pavement parking except for where orders can be made to allow parking where it is deemed to be acceptable.

Whilst the area administered by Transport for London (TfL) has enjoyed this legislation for a number of years, the TfL area has several other suitable alternatives to the private car such as significantly higher levels of public transport (bus, rail (overground and underground), and tram), a good standard cycle network, and a sufficient car club coverage. Therefore, the ownership of the private car is considerably lower when compared to Wokingham Borough.

Extending this model to the Wokingham area could cause some new issues. Firstly, areas where people can park would need to be identified and as highlighted earlier many new developments suffer from quite extensive partial pavement parking but in many of these the vehicle does not obstruct for example the passage of a wheelchair or pram. The partial parking on the footway does allow for the free passage of vehicles on that street. If parking is banned, then traffic flow could be obstructed with the likelihood of vehicles passing parked vehicles by way of driving over the opposite footway, creating another issue.

There are also the 'older' street areas where pavement parking has taken place for decades where residents use the road safely as the area is a quiet street.

Many newer developments, away from the 'spine' road do not have footways and the street is shared. This eliminates the issue of pavement parking and in theory keeps traffic speeds low.

However, where pavement parking is deemed to be acceptable this would be identified on site with signs and lines creating street clutter and additional maintenance liabilities for the authority. This street clutter in many locations will become an 'eyesore' and potentially damaging to the street scene and the environment.

In areas of where pavement parking is deemed to be acceptable, but car ownership is of a greater capacity than spaces available there could be neighbourhood conflict, with residents being forced to park in unsuitable locations.

In areas where there is currently pavement parking, but not included within the designated 'parking areas' allowed for by this option, the consequences of this will be that those vehicles are displaced on to nearby streets that are likely to be not suitable for on carriageway parking and create a new issue of congestion and increased air pollution.

Taking into consideration the comments above on each option, Winnersh Parish Council cannot support any of the options put forward by the department at this stage. However, we hope that our feedback will help to develop a potential solution in the future, and we would be happy to be consulted again.