

## **Cllr Shaun Stephenson-McGall – Pavement parking**

It's time for action on pavement parking! It has been three years since the Department for Transport's consulted on pavement parking in England.

Last week representatives from Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking, delivered an Anniversary Card to 10 Downing Street signed by thousands of people, including me, calling for a response.

In Scotland, a nationwide ban is being rolled out next month on the 11th December.

The Government consultation in the summer of 2020 proposed three options:

1. Improving the Traffic Regulation Order process, under which local authorities can already prohibit pavement parking.
2. A legislative change to allow local authorities with civil parking enforcement powers to enforce against 'unnecessary obstruction of the pavement'.
3. A legislative change to introduce a London-style pavement parking prohibition throughout England.

Parking on the pavement is illegal in London but elsewhere it is covered by criminal and civil law, with different rules in different parts of the country and vastly different experiences of enforcement. Theoretically the Police can act if a vehicle causes a hazard or an obstruction and causes pedestrians to enter the road but enforcement from the constabulary is rare.

This Council like many others has an adopted hierarchy of transport options which puts pedestrians first, and I shouldn't need to remind Councillors about our public sector equality duty under the Equality Act.

Pavement parking is dangerous and affects us all whether you're in a rural village like Timsbury or in sub-urban Bath. It makes streets inaccessible for older people, those with visual and physical disabilities, wheelchair users and those who use mobility aids, and forces families with pushchairs and young children into the road.

It's not only pavement parking which is an issue for pedestrians; street clutter and electric car charging leads are also a concern. Therefore, it is good to note that this Council is currently running a trial of on-street cable channels to enable residents to charge electric vehicles safely from their homes.

It's not just me who is concerned about pavement parking. YouGov polling commissioned by Living Streets found that 62% of adults over 65 in England were worried about obstructions on the pavement. 87% of parents have had to walk into the road because of pavement parking and that 80% would be more likely to walk their child to school if there wasn't pavement parking.

So ending pavement parking would be great for our children's health and fitness, help reduce 'school run' congestion and pollution, and also help tackle the climate emergency. Moreover, a Living Streets FOI request found that 93% of Councils in England have received complaints from members of the public about pavement

parking. I'm sure this is a topic that has filled the casework inbox of many councillors over the years.

The consultation was a welcome step, but three years is too long for a response. We need to know now how the Government intends to tackle pavement parking across England. It's not just Living Street who are campaigns for a nationwide ban but organisations and charities as diverse as Guide Dogs, RNIB, Disabled Motoring UK, Sustrans, Spinal Injuries Association, and the British Parking Association.

Pavement parking combined with far too many speeding vehicles through our communities is a very hazardous combination. Forcing the most vulnerable in our communities into the road and into oncoming traffic is dangerous, scary and needs to be stopped!

Clear pavements need clear laws. We need a nationwide default ban, with the option to allow pavement parking in certain circumstances, as is currently available in London. This would be much easier for everyone to understand.

There I would request that the Leader of the Council together with the Cabinet Member for Highways write to:

1. The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP, Secretary of State for Transport, pressing him to publish the results of the consultation without further delay and move ahead with the preferred option of "a legislative change to introduce a London-style pavement parking prohibition throughout England".
2. Our Local MPs in North East Somerset and Bath, asking them to raise this issue in Parliament.