

CRIME AND DISORDER SELECT COMMITTEE

COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION: OBSTRUCTIVE AND ILLEGAL PARKING AROUND WHITEHOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's investigation of the Councillor Call for Action regarding Obstructive and Illegal Parking around Whitehouse Primary School.
- 1.2 A Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) provides Councillors with the opportunity to ask for a discussion to take place at scrutiny committees on issues where local problems have arisen, and where all other methods of resolving the issue have been exhausted. The CCfA process is designed to be a last resort and may not provide an immediate solution.
- 1.3 A CCfA was submitted by Cllr Julia Cherrett and Cllr David Minchella in July 2019 regarding Obstructive and Illegal Parking around Whitehouse Primary School. This request was considered by the Council's Executive Scrutiny Committee on the 23rd July 2019, where it was resolved that the CCfA be approved and referred to the Crime and Disorder Select Committee for further detailed exploration of the issues raised at its meeting in October 2019.
- 1.4 The desired outcomes of the CCfA were outlined as follows:
 - more action to be taken against illegal parking, in particular more positive enforcement action with penalty notices issued
 - the consideration of measures such as
 - possible walk-to-school routes
 - a Resident's Parking Zone
 - a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) which can be used to ban or regulate any activity in public spaces which the Local Authority believes has a 'detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality' (Havering Council have introduced school parking PSPOs and Gateshead Council are in the process of implementing a pilot PSPO project)
 - no dispersal of the problem to neighbouring roads, which are already experiencing parking issues
- 1.5 In considering the desired outcomes that were outlined as part of this CCfA, the Committee reflected on the fact that school parking issues were prevalent around most schools across the Borough, often exacerbated by the general proliferation of cars over the years. Pertinent to the problems associated with Whitehouse Primary School was the increase in pupils from beyond the designated admission zone and the geographical nuances of the school, factors which are extremely difficult to influence. Whilst greater enforcement of illegal parking would be welcomed (at all schools), restrictions around current enforcement resources hinders the Council's ability to penalise such activity as much as many would like. It would also be unfair to single out one school above others for increased enforcement patrols.
- 1.6 After careful consideration of the evidence provided, the Committee concluded that the introduction of a PSPO in the vicinity of Whitehouse

Primary School would not be appropriate due to a number of factors including:

- it is not a 'forever' measure (has to be removed if problems cease, which could lead to issues reoccurring)
- it would simply disperse the problem to nearby roads
- it may lead to other schools / Councillors in the Borough making requests for a similar deterrent (thereby creating a cost pressure)
- it could 'criminalise' parents for doing the 'school run'

An overriding issue was that the current extensive restrictions around the school were not able to be enforced enough, so adding further 'engineering' would not solve this, yet would require significant installation costs.

- 1.7 The Committee's view on the introduction of a PSPO was also influenced by the experiences of Havering Council who have indicated their desire to remove their existing PSPOs on the basis that they are not backed by the Department for Transport (DfT), they do not exempt disabled drivers, and the low number of penalty charges subsequently issued has not helped cover the significant implementation costs incurred by the Council as originally anticipated. Instead, the Committee agreed a number of alternative measures which both supplemented previous work on this issue, and provided further means of promoting more responsible parking around the school itself.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) The commitment of Whitehouse Primary School's Chair of Governors to send termly correspondence to parents / carers regarding parking issues / updates is endorsed.**
- 2) Whitehouse Primary School distribute a 'walkzone' map (e.g. Appendix 1) with the Chair of Governors' termly communication to parents / carers regarding parking.**
- 3) Whitehouse Primary School ensure they maximise access to the school car park for all staff and official school visitors so they do not need to park in neighbouring roads (albeit legally).**
- 4) Whitehouse Primary School maximise access to the school car park for parents / carers collecting pupils from after-school activities.**
- 5) The Council consider supporting the school's travel plan meetings as a pilot to establish a format to potentially handover to the SBC Junior Road Safety Officer in the school to deliver as part of their duties, and for any good practice identified via this pilot to be circulated to other schools across the Borough.**
- 6) Regarding the Barlborough Avenue side, the Council consider introducing a 20mph speed limit near to the Whitehouse Primary School.**
- 7) Regarding the Barlborough Avenue side, respective Ward Councillors consider using part of their CPB funding allocation towards the installation of bollards to deter pavement / grass verge parking.**

Recommendations (continued)

The Committee recommend that:

- 8) Regarding the Dunelm Road side, the Council work with Whitehouse Primary School to better facilitate access to the school car park for those transporting pupils with SEN, as well as explore the possibility of using the green 'island' within the current ring road zone to create a small number of disabled parking bays.**
- 9) The Council conduct further research with the Department for Transport around the 'School Streets' concept.**
- 10) The actions undertaken following the previous Scrutiny Review of School Parking continue to be reinforced with all schools across the Borough, and the production of a safe parking video using local schools is endorsed.**