

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

7 JULY 2022

QUESTION NO. 1

Caroline Langdon to ask the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee:

The Rising Sun

I would like to ask why the Council is allowing the Rising Sun pub to remain in the shocking state it is broken windows, doors (see pictures below), and what on earth could it be like inside. Why not tackle the owners of the building and force them to take action immediately and the same with other pubs.

REPLY by the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

I invite Councillor Leng, the Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets (Councillor Leng):

I thank Ms Langdon for her question.

The Rising Sun public House dates from 1877 and was added to the Council's List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures in 2017.

The first floor in particular has decorative brickwork, tilework and tile-hanging which is a common feature of Reading's Victorian architecture. The building is by Albury & Brown, a noted architectural practice in Reading.

The Rising Sun is a building with townscape value and occupies a corner site opposite the statutory listed park of Forbury Gardens.

The status of being a Locally Listed building (a non-designated heritage asset) means that the Council does not have the same powers to enforce the owner to protect and preserve the building, inside and outside, which would have been the case if the building was Listed by Historic England.

However, Officers agree with your concerns and have been exploring using other powers available to the Council. I am advised that the Planning Enforcement team and that Conservation and Urban Design Officer Officers have, as a first step, sent a letter to the owner to arrange a meeting on site to determine what needs to be done to conserve the exteriors of the building. The letter makes the owner aware that Officers are considering serving a Section 215 notice to require that the site is tidied up if it is not possible to encourage the owner to take action voluntarily.





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COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 1 in accordance with Standing Order No.36

Councillor McElroy to ask the Chair of Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

Parking on Green Verges

It is my understanding that the Council has no formal policy or process for preventing or removing vehicles from parking on green verges. This means that instances of this behaviour are difficult to resolve. Officers believe there to be a number of tools that we could use. What is the Council doing to rectify the fact that an absence of policy in this matter means that these green spaces are vulnerable to being turned in to mud baths?

REPLY by the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport (Councillor Page):

I thank Councillor McElroy for his question.

Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) can issue Penalty Charge Notices for verge parking if there is a relevant Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on the carriageway, such as double or single yellow/red lines or a loading ban (this does not necessarily apply to a clearway marking, i.e. bus stops, school zig zags etc) and the verge is adopted highway land.

For highway verges, with a relevant TRO and where a waiting restriction is not appropriate on the carriageway, we would need a specific 'no waiting on the verge' TRO and signage to enable enforcement. This is not without its challenges, particularly in areas where there are driveway accesses across verges. Restrictions on verge parking would only be appropriate in places with significant evidenced problems and where other physical measures are not appropriate deterrents.

All of the above is contained within nationally recognised legislation and does not require a specific local policy.

Members of the public can report a vehicle believed to be parked in contravention of restrictions via our website:
https://self.reading.gov.uk/en/service/Report_an_illegally_parked_vehicle

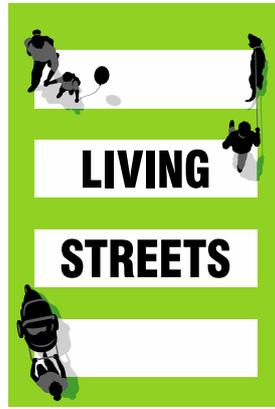
Reading Borough Council has established processes for considering requests for changes to waiting restrictions on the highway, such as the Waiting Restriction Review programme that is reported on a regular scheduled basis to Traffic Management Sub-Committee.

The Council has been trialling some alternative methods of discouraging verge parking, such as re-wilding and tree planting. These methods will enhance the street scene for residents as well as being green and encouraging pollinating insects. In terms of aesthetics, accessibility, maintenance costs, risks and the Council's climate change ambitions, these methods are all preferable.

Finally, it is also worth referring to the continuing and protracted review by the Department for Transport on managing pavement parking. Between August and October 2020 the DfT consulted on three options to tackle pavement parking either at a local authority or national level. Since then there has been no response from the DfT, not even a summary of responses to the consultation!

Last November 23rd 2021 Living Streets, supported by the LGA and many other concerned organisations, sent the attached letter to Grant Shapps the contents of which are self-explanatory and welcome. To date the letter remains unanswered with still no indication from the DfT about any proposals.

ENDS



The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Via email: TransportSecretary@dft.gov.uk

23 November 2021

Dear Secretary of State

We were pleased to support the government's consultation in November 2020 on managing pavement parking. The problem of pavement parking is a longstanding issue and action is now long overdue.

We now have an opportunity to make progress on this problem - doing nothing is not an option. A year on from the close of the consultation, we urge you to move forward with introduction of legislation to introduce a London-style pavement parking prohibition throughout England, as in Scotland. Only a default prohibition, with appropriate exemptions, like in London, will send the signal that pavement parking is unacceptable.

Vehicles parking on the pavement causing an obstruction and damaging footway surfaces is an urgent problem and discriminates against pedestrians, especially for those with young children, older people and those with visual or mobility impairments, and is an issue that has attracted attention for over forty years. It will be more difficult for the Government to meet its own targets of half of all journeys walked and cycled by 2030 when pavement parking makes walking so hard for so many.

Every day, parents and children are putting themselves at risk because of pavement parking. New polling commissioned by Living Streets indicates that 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.

Scotland has led the way with the introduction of legislation in 2019 for a nationwide prohibition on pavement parking, and the Welsh Government also plans to regulate pavement parking, through unnecessary obstruction.

America House, 2 America Square, London EC3N 2LU
020 7377 4900 info@livingstreets.org.uk livingstreets.org.uk

Change in England is long overdue, and your department has moved forward positively by consulting on this issue. We urge you now to join with other nations of the UK in making our pavements safer and fit for purpose for all road users.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Edwards, Interim Chief Executive, Living Streets

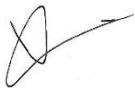


Steve Garidis, Executive Officer, Bicycle Association

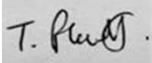


Brian Facer, Chief Executive, British Cycling

Sarah Mitchell, Chief Executive, Cycling UK



Xavier Brice, Chief Executive, Sustrans



Tompion Platt, Director of Operations and Advocacy, Ramblers



Dame Sarah Storey, Active Travel Commissioner, South Yorkshire MCA

Simon O'Brien, Liverpool City Region Cycling & Walking Commissioner



Andrew Pester, Chief Executive, British Parking Association



Tom Wright CBE, Chief Executive, Guide Dogs



Cllr. James Jamieson, Chairman, Local Government Association



Katie Pennick, Campaigns Lead, Transport for All

Please contact Roberta Fusco, Interim Director of Policy and Communications, Living Streets for queries: roberta.fusco@livingstreets.org.uk