

Management of Footway Parking

A report by the Head of Network Management to the Highways Advisory Board on 8th May 2008

Introduction

1. The 12 Kent District/Borough and City Councils are responsible for the practical application of parking policy within a framework set by the County Council. This report summarises the current situation with regard to the management of footway parking.

Background Information

2. There is a general concern that cars parked on pavements are a problem in many parts of the County. The main concerns are:
 - Parked cars cause serious obstruction on the footway which causes a safety issue to pedestrians.
 - Cars cause damage to the structure of the pavement.
 - Uneven pavements result in trip hazards for pedestrians and create an unsightly environment.
3. Without the implementation of a Traffic Regulation Order, the responsibility for the enforcement of footway parking remains with the Police. However, this is not a high priority for them and the Police may only choose to enforce if the parked vehicle is causing an obstruction to other road users. There is a public perception that all parking issues are now dealt with by the Local Authority and it is expected by the public that Civil Enforcement Officers will deal with the issue of vehicles parked on a footway. The Police will support the implementation of a Traffic Regulation Order allowing both the introduction of signs which will act as a visual deterrent to the motorist and the enforcement of footway parking by Civil Enforcement Officers as part of their day to day functions.
4. This report updates a previous HAB report of September 2004 concerning problems caused by vehicles parking on footways and the proposals to introduce a pilot scheme in Canterbury, with a view to investigating whether such prohibitions could, in future, be applied more widely.
5. In March 2007, Canterbury Council introduced a footway parking enforcement pilot scheme, by means of a Traffic Regulation Order, in 4 areas in the City's enforcement area which were identified following verbal and written complaints from the general public. For the first month written warning notices were issued and formal enforcement commenced on 1 April 2007. Each of the areas in the trial was covered by the normal enforcement beats and the frequency of enforcement was not changed for the specific purpose of dealing with footway prohibition.

Financial Implications

6. The costs incurred by Canterbury Council for the signs, erection of signs and advertisements for the trial totalled £3500. During the first 9 months of the trial up to 24 January 2008 a total of 31 Penalty Charge Notices were issued, of which 29 were paid and 2 were cancelled due to inaccurate enforcement. The income generated through the issue of fixed penalty notices totalled £960. However no extra staff resources were required and 'set up' costs were a one off expenditure. The trial indicates that footway

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prohibition is not a substantial income generator and unlikely as a specific enforcement activity to become self-financing. However, as part of other routine enforcement, the trial has elicited an income of £960 that would not otherwise have been collected.

7. Based on the figures from this pilot scheme it would take 3 -4 years to recoup the initial set up costs required to enforce footway parking, however other trial areas may incur less initial costs, dependent upon the size of the location and the amount of signs and advertising that is required.

Benefits and Conclusions of the Pilot Scheme

8. There is anecdotal evidence that the enforcement of footway parking in the pilot areas has been successful in reducing the problem and the general public have been generally supportive of the concept. The issue of Penalty Charge Notices to offenders appears to have raised awareness and has increased compliance with the regulations which is shown by the relatively small number of Penalty Charge Notices issued and the high acceptance of liability for this contravention.
9. The instances of parked cars causing obstruction to pedestrians in the pilot area have dramatically decreased leading to an increased safe environment for footway users.
10. Damage to the structure of the pavement has also reduced, resulting in fewer trip hazards, an improved environment and a future saving on repairs carried out by the Highway Authority.

Future Proposals

11. Canterbury Council have reported to Members of their Joint Transportation Board with proposals to extend footway enforcement into 3 further areas that have objective evidence of a problem, have the support of local residents, are within existing enforcement areas and where problems cannot be resolved through cost effective physical measures such as bollards.
12. Maidstone Council along with Gravesham Council will also be reporting to Members of their Joint Transportation Boards to request Members approval to commence the enforcement of footway parking at specified locations within their areas.

Recommendations

13. Members are asked to recommend that District/Borough and City Councils continue to introduce and increase the enforcement of footway parking. This can be carried out on a gradual approach, in areas which have objective evidence of a problem, have the support of local residents, are within existing enforcement areas and where problems cannot be resolved through cost effective physical measures.

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