

BRIEFING TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Report Title: Council Motions

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1. Keeping Our Villages and Rural Areas HGV Free

1.1 Background:

At the Council meeting on 12th September 2018, the following motion was debated:

“Council notes that:

- HGVs and large vehicles can bring small villages and rural areas to a standstill when these vehicles are too large to navigate smaller roads.
- This has happened most recently on April 26 in Delph when a large articulated lorry blocked the junction of Grains Road and King Street bringing chaos to the village for four hours.
- These situations often occur because drivers of these vehicles chose to ignore displayed weight or width restrictions or fail to use a satnav system specifically designed for lorries.
- The Police do not always have the resources to enforce these restrictions, yet Councils outside London and Wales are currently prevented from doing so because the Government has failed to bring Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 into force for Councils in the rest of England.
- Lorry satnavs are like normal car satnavs, but they include bridge heights, narrow roads, and roads unsuitable for trucks. In addition, they allow the driver to enter the lorry's dimensions – height, width, weight and load – so they are only guided along suitable roads. Their cost is slightly more than that of a standard car sat-nav.

Council further notes that, in several parts of England, Lorry Watch schemes have been established. These are run by local residents who record instances of vehicles flouting weight and width restrictions, and report them to a Parish Council Coordinator, the Police or their Council Trading Standards Department.

This Council:

- Supports the position of the cross-party Local Government Association that the Government bring Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 into force for all relevant English councils with immediate effect and legislate so all HGVs and large vehicles are required to install suitable satnavs designed for lorries and large vehicles.
- Believes that establishing Lorry Watch Schemes in various parts of the Borough is worthy of consideration.”

Full Council resolved to ask the Overview and Scrutiny board to examine the merits and practicalities of establishing a Lorry Watch scheme in various parts of the Borough, in conjunction with the District Executives, the Parish Councils, residents’ associations, and the Police.

1.2 Current Position

A workshop was held on Tuesday, 8th January 2019 to which representatives from residents’ associations in conjunction with the District Executives, parish council representatives and relevant officers from Public Protection and Highways were invited to attend.

The workshop was informed on the operation of schemes in other parts of the country. The scheme would rely on observers from the community to report on issues to a point of contact who would then report the incidents to Trading Standards. The enforcement of weight restriction zones was only enforceable if the signage in place met legal requirements.

Existing signage in weight restriction areas would need to be reviewed.

It was agreed to:

1. Work with residents’ associations, starting with one or two pilot schemes in and are with existing weight restriction in place with six to eight observers who would be trained by Trading Standards. Funding would be an issue for any signage and would need to be addressed.
2. Current weight restriction areas be reviewed with regard to signage.
3. Highways England be approached regarding signage on the M60 to continue through to the M62 and not via Broadway.
4. Diversion signs in the event of any M62 closure be progressed with Highways England.

1.3 Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is requested to endorse the outcomes of the workshop.

2. Improving Public Safety in Oldham's Night Time Economy

2.1 At the Council meeting on 12th December 2018, the following motion was debated:

“Council notes that:

- In Bradford and Manchester local businesses and community groups have joined with local colleges and universities to establish Student Safe Spots/Zones; these are premises self-identifying as havens for students who are being followed, or are feeling vulnerable and unwell.
Staff at these venues offer assistance in booking taxis home; in contacting the emergency services if their assistance is required; or offer a temporary safe haven until a problem has passed. Venues signed up to the scheme receive a sticker to place prominently to advertise their involvement and a list and map of venues is published on line for students to access.
- In Bradford, there also exists an agreement with local taxi businesses that students without money but presenting with a valid student ID badge will be offered carriage and the bill is then sent to the student for payment, via the relevant college and university authorities.
- The ‘Ask for Angela’ scheme is operated nationwide in many pubs and clubs. If a member of the public who feels vulnerable and threatened ‘Asks for Angela’ of the on-premises staff, they know to take that person to a safer location and offer them assistance, such as calling a taxi, contacting friends or in certain circumstances ringing the police. Premises promoting the scheme display posters, which are usually placed in the toilets of those establishments to be discreet.

Council believes that establishing such schemes in our borough would help safeguard vulnerable people in our Borough, especially students and women enjoying our night time economy, and would complement the excellent work being done by the Oldham Street Angels.”

Full Council resolved to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board to examine in conjunction with relevant partners, including the Oldham College, Oldham Sixth Form College, University Campus Oldham, schools with post-16 provision, licensed premises and public and private hire taxi businesses, the practicality of establishing such schemes as soon as possible in our town and district centres.

2.2 Recommendation

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is requested to determine how to proceed with the resolution.