

# Make your vote count on Pentlands urges councillor

A concerned councillor urged people to take part in an online survey which could help decide future developments in the Pentland Hills.

Council bosses have proposed plans which include a campsite and parking charges after a summer of anger caused by anti-social behaviour, indiscriminate car parking and wild camping.

Councillor Susan Webber (pictured), who lives in the shadow of the hills, stressed that public consultation ends on December 4.

The results will go before the Pentland Hills Regional Park (PHRP) consultative committee who will then make key decisions.

Proposed are a series of actions including enhanced traffic and parking facilities/controls at four car parks, Bonaly, Harlaw, Threipmuir and Flotterstone.

They are also looking to develop travel alternatives and to recruit a warden for a planned formal camping area and toilets at Harlaw Reservoir.

The provision of additional toilet facilities at the four car parks are being considered along with the introduction of parking charges.

Money raised from them, they say, would help the PHRP maintain park "infrastructure".

PHRP have submitted two grant applications to the Visit Scotland Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) in order to carry out the above proposals.

The web site blurb said: "PHRP will be guided by the comments from this exercise, whether or not the applications are successful.

"The results of this engagement exercise will be presented at the next PHRP Joint Committee meeting.

"The joint committee will make the final decision as to which proposals should be carried forward, taking into account the results of the exercise."

Councillor Webber said: "I urge local people to please make their voices heard. The proposals will impact on the lives of all who live in and around the area.

"There are some far-reaching proposals here and everybody who is involved in the local community should study them, think about the implications and record their views online. The public need to be heard and this is your chance."

She does not believe that charges will stop indiscriminate car parking and said: "Just look at what happens in town. People still park on yellow lines and get tickets but they still do it.

"As regards camping, they may decide to have a site but what happens in people arrive and can't get it. Do you think they will go away? I don't think so, they will camp.

"The Pentlands are not a camp site. They are a recreation area used by dog walkers, cyclists, wild swimmers and fishermen along with those who like paddle boarding and using a canoe. They are certainly not a wild camping area."

The councillor, who represents the Juniper Green area, believes the proposals show that council chiefs are "out of touch" with the real feelings of people in the area.

She said: "That is why local views must be heard and I urge as many people as possible to go online and give their views.

Local people's views can make a real difference here and time is running out."