

Pavement parking ban to be enforced in Midlothian

A ban on pavement parking across Midlothian will come into force next week despite concerns it will be unenforceable during evenings.

Midlothian councillors approved the enforcement of regulations surrounding parking on pavements, dropped kerbs and footways from April 1 at a meeting this week.

Concerns were raised however over how the new rules would be enforced after elected members pointed out parking wardens in the county don't work at night.

Councillor Derek Milligan told the meeting: "I think we have to recognise something has to be done here but I think I have some real concerns that in certain areas parking just isn't available.

"We are currently seeing the impact in Bonnyrigg where we have cleared the problem from one street and it has had a massive knock on effect to every street adjoining.

"One of the questions I have been asked is how are we going to enforce this, we do not have traffic wardens working after 6pm.

And he warned forcing people to park off pavements could have an impact on bus services, saying: "After a recent meeting we had with Lothian Buses, I understand when this was introduced in Edinburgh they had to withdraw from some of the routes because they could not guarantee the buses getting through.

"I think we do have to do something but this blanket ban gives me real concern and again, how are we going to enforce it because we can't enforce it in one area and not another."

Council officer Derek Oliver told the meeting there were areas such as in Danderhall and Pathhead where the pavements were wide and exemptions could be made adding the enforcement would be introduced in a 'graduated' way.

He said: "We will inform people and engage with communities, community councils and residents in particular streets where we can look to see if there is any way we can assist in parking,"

And councillor Ellen Scott suggested using an 'informal system' in evenings by giving community councils cards they could put on cars advising drivers of the ban.

She said: "They wouldn't get a fine but it would alert them to the fact it is illegal and they could be fined."

The decision to enforce the ban comes after new legislation prohibited pavement parking last year across Scotland.

A report to councillors said: "There are two main reasons for introduction of these parking powers a) damage to infrastructure and b) accessibility. inconsiderate and obstructive parking on footways and at dropped kerbs as well as double parking causes inconvenience and accessibility issues. It particularly affects those with mobility issues, parents with pushchairs and older people. It also causes difficulties for those, such as children, trying to cross a road due to impaired visibility caused by inconsiderate parking. Enforcement of the regulations will improve accessibility for these groups. "

The enforcement was unanimously supported by councillors.

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter



Midlothian House