

**FULL COUNCIL – 21 FEBRUARY 2022 – QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS
UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A**

First Questions

Question 1

From Cllr Allan Glass to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure, Cllr Diane Andrews

I have received requests from people who have had to walk or take children in buggies, also users of mobility scooters or wheelchairs on to the road because cars, trucks and vans park on the pavement often blocking the pedestrian use they are provided for. This puts the persons having to walk or wheel into the traffic at considerable risk.

Could NFDC investigate and as no laws exist currently consider obtaining a bye law to prevent vehicles parking one or more wheels on the pavement?

Answer:

The Department for Transport started a consultation exercise on this topic in late 2020 and the results are currently being reviewed. If a ban on parking on pavements was introduced outside London then it would be the Highway Authority (HCC) who would be responsible for the enforcement of such a ban within the district. A bye law would be ineffective and toothless in terms of enforcement. In addition, the police have powers to deal with unnecessary obstruction of the highway which includes the pavement and where they deem this to be an obstruction offence they can remove vehicles and where necessary prosecute the owner of the vehicle.

Note – in response to a supplementary question on encouraging police engagement on the issue, the Portfolio Holder provided the details of the Hampshire Chief Inspector.

Question 2

From Cllr Neil Tungate to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services, Cllr Steve Davies

During the past six months, as I have awaited delivery of an electric vehicle on a slow boat from Korea, I have obviously become interested in matters surrounding EV use. I note the Environment Portfolio Holder's dashboard contains an assertion that more than four tonnes of CO2 emissions have been saved through the installation of EV charging points in NFDC car parks. Whilst I welcome CO2 emission reduction, it is unclear how this number is derived because overall electricity generation is not carbon free. Can the portfolio holder please explain?

Answer:

It is important to assure our customers that they are in fact helping to reduce carbon emissions. When cars are charged in NFDC car parks, the power is 100% carbon free. The electricity is 100% renewable from hydro, solar or wind power.

I think the hydro source is fascinating since it comes via interconnector from Norway – similar to that provided to Northumberland and North Tyneside.

The grid is run by Statkraft, a Norwegian company.

Question 3

From Cllr Mark Clark to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Edward Heron

During a recent presentation made by KPMG to this Council about freeports, much was made of the potential influx of jobs into the area. A figure of 8,000 was mentioned.

Of course, there was nothing stopping the UK from setting up tariff and tax-free import zones when it was a member of the EU (around 80 such zones are in operation across the bloc today).

However, the EU zones can't deviate from single market regulations, including those on employment protections and other workers' rights.

But Freeports in the UK won't be bound by this rule, so anyone working in them is likely to have less protection at work – not only with the EU but with the rest of the UK as well.

That means lower pay and less job security in coastal communities such as ours.

Freeports encourage tax avoidance and are likely to become tax havens. That means less money for our NHS and schools. Several academic studies have debunked the suggestion that free ports even create that many jobs or stimulate growth.

It found that, while there was significant job reallocation when businesses moved from local areas to the new zones, the net impact on overall job creation was negligible.

Can the Leader of the Council assure us that these issues have been taken into account and that a firm plan is being worked up with KPMG to bring in these magical thousands of jobs but that they are duly protected with workers' rights being maintained?

Answer:

There is no change in Freeports between employment protection legislation and the rest of the United Kingdom. Therefore, I see no reason why there would be any greater risk of exploitation for employees within a Freeport, than anywhere else located with our District. For those of us who believe that the British Government is the best place to set employment and other laws, the Freeport makes no difference.