



**Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham,
Executive Director - Resources**

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
Date:	28 January 2021
Subject:	Councillor Call for Action - Resolving obstruction of the Highway / Creation of Parking Spaces on West Street, Barkston

Summary:

The report invites the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to consider a Councillor Call for Action request received by the Chief Executive from Councillor R Wootten in respect of West Street, Barkston.

Actions Required:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is requested to:

1. consider the Councillor Call for Action request attached at Appendix A.
2. determine whether to refer the Councillor Call for Action request to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee for final determination.
3. if referred, provide advice to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee for its consideration on 8 March 2021.

1. Background

Under Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Section 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, councillors can submit a Councillor Call for Action (CCfA). Councillor Call for Action came into force on 1 April 2009 and provides councillors with an opportunity to raise a matter of local concern through the overview and scrutiny process. A Councillor Call for Action will be a last resort, when the councillor has tried all other means of resolving the matter and everything else has failed.

The criteria for such a request are set out in the Council's Constitution and the guidance for councillors, which is attached at Appendix B.

Background to the Councillor Call for Action Request

On 31 December 2020, Councillor R Wootten, who represents the Grantham North division, submitted a Councillor Call for Action in relation to resolving obstruction of the Highway / Creation of Parking Spaces on West Street, Barkston.

The reasons for this request are set out in the Councillor Call for Action form attached at Appendix A.

In summary, a farmer and businessman on West Street, Barkston has raised concerns with Councillor R Wootten over the obstruction of the road by parked cars, which in turn are restricting access to his private property. The situation has become worse during the Covid-19 pandemic due to increasing numbers of people following the Government's advice to exercise and this location has gained popularity as an area for countryside walking along the River Witham. There are no parking spaces along West Street and the passing point is also being used for parking.

Councillor R Wootten has attempted to resolve the matter by contacting the Lincolnshire Police Neighbourhood Team, Lincolnshire County Council officers in Highways and Countryside Services, National Farmers Union, the local MP, and the Barkston and Syston Parish Council.

The matter is therefore now being brought forward as a Councillor Call for Action by Cllr R Wootten who has identified some potential options that Lincolnshire County Council could undertake to resolve the matter in his Councillor Call for Action at Appendix A.

As outlined in the guidance at Appendix B, once the Councillor Call for Action has been submitted, the Chief Executive will need to determine whether the request is valid.

The form was presented to Debbie Barnes, Chief Executive, on 4 January 2021 to determine whether the Councillor Call for Action request was valid. The Chief Executive confirmed on 8 January 2021 that the request was valid.

Response to the Councillor Call for Action from Highways and Countryside Services

Colleagues in both the Highways and Countryside Services have reviewed the submitted issues since they were first raised in May 2020 during the initial Lockdown period, and the County Council's Traffic and Minor Works Team is currently looking to assist with the parking issues but this only centres on the parking within the two passing places. The Team is not currently looking at parking on any other areas at this end of West Street.

The farmer has placed white verge marker posts near to the entrance to his property and a sign in the verge asking people not to park in the passing places, all without formal permission. At this point in time, there are no immediate plans to

have these removed, but the Team would not want to see more of either and it is not planning to place anything similar there.

With regards to the suggestion of a layby, the Council could bid for funding to do this, but it does not normally provide on-street parking laybys and does not have any allocated funding within current maintenance budgets to do this.

Displacement of the parking would cause significant issues elsewhere in the village including within the residential part of West Street.

The root cause of the problem is that the public are seeking to use the local Public Rights of Way network to undertake their exercise and there is little here that can be regulated by the Council. This is currently a nationwide concern as the whole country is suffering in similar ways across rural areas, where the public are picking natural beauty / places of interest / promoted areas for going out to exercise during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is unclear whether the significant increase in usage will be sustained once the pandemic restrictions have been relaxed. This can only be evaluated against summer usage when children are not at school and the weather is more conducive.

The suggestions submitted thus far mainly focus on road management solutions except for the suggestion of moving the Section 34 notice advising traffic that motor vehicle use is not allowable on a bridleway. Moving this signage will have no material effect on addressing the problem as the parking occurs at locations that could not be covered by that informative sign.

Next Steps

As the Councillor Call for Action has been accepted by the Chief Executive, the next step in the process is consideration of the request by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to determine whether the request should be referred to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.

If it agrees to refer, then the Board will provide advice prior to referral to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee for final determination.

2. Conclusion

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is requested to consider the Councillor Call for Action request and determine whether it should be referred to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee for final determination.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Councillor Call for Action form from Cllr Ray Wootten 31-12-2020
Appendix B	Councillor Call for Action Guidance for Councillors

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, who can be contacted by e-mail at tracy.johnson@lincolnshire.gov.uk