

# MOTORHOMES TASK GROUP

CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, MARCH 2023

22 JULY 2022

The East Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee asks the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Committee to look into the policy around and provision for motorhome and caravan users. This was in response to local concerns about improper use of facilities by users of these vehicles.

22 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Scrutiny Committee resolved that a Task Group be set up "to consider a county-wide policy for the provision of longer and short term sites for Recreational Vehicles and Campers." This would consist of Councillor Trail as Chair, with Councillors Bullivant, Dewhirst, Hartnell and Roome as members.

## The Scope

The Terms of Reference for the task group were:

- To understand the benefits and frictions that surround motor homes.
- To examine the impact of overnight parking on local residential areas
- To examine the above with reference to seafront areas and other tourist destinations throughout the whole area of Devon.
- To consider what a county-wide consistent and clear policy for the provision of longer- and short-term sites for Recreational Vehicles and Campers with associated amenities and services should include, recognising the unique challenges of different areas of the county in developing the policy.

## Aim and Methodology

The group wanted to explore opportunities for the County Council to support motorhome visitors and residents. Members were keen to understand what regulations could be considered for implementation and the challenges of enforcement.

The Task Group met four times, with officers and members undertaking their own individual research. A number of witnesses were invited to these meetings, or to contribute information for consideration by the task group, including Devon County Council staff, officers from district authorities and wider organisations such as The Caravan Club.



# FINDINGS

These are some of the key points that came out of the Task Group:

## CHANGING DEFINITIONS

At the time of the Task Group's formation, a motorhome was defined as a vehicle with **living accommodation that has been permanently installed**. This was a barrier for enforcement of restrictions, where for instance a van with a mattress in the back, which was being used in much the same manner as an 'official' motorhome, was not subject to the same restrictions.

## THE LOCAL VIEW

It was clear from talking to officers from district councils that **much work has already gone on in this area**. All of them had developed their own approach to motorhomes, which broadly consisted of providing them car parks for maximum two-nights overnight stay, expecting that they would move to dedicated campsites after this. Districts were clear that **they were not competing with campsites**, nor would they wish to provide the kinds of facilities (showers, charging points) that a motorhome user could access at a dedicated site.

## CHASING THE PROBLEM

Some local concerns are around unsightly parking of motorhomes such as on residential streets. Addressing this is complex; where a motorhome is parking there legally, there is little that can be done, and implementing restrictions may only serve to **'move the problem along'** and means the Council is left **'chasing' these motorists via costly Traffic Regulation Orders** which represents a **massive maintenance liability and effort**, probably disproportionate to the problem. Where they are parking illegally, enforcement becomes the key area of focus.

## ENFORCEMENT

Where motorists were contravening regulations already, **further regulations would be redundant**. The issue therefore becomes enforcement of existing restrictions - and how to prevent users avoiding punishment by circumventing parking restrictions, for instance parking late at night and leaving early in the morning.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATION ONE

Write to invite District Councils to review their policy on motorhomes and motor caravans in liaison with one another to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the County.

## RECOMMENDATION TWO

Devon County Council, in partnership with District Councils to dedicate a webpage to provide clear and accessible information for motorhome users including outlining parking restrictions, good practice and available off street facilities.

## RECOMMENDATION THREE

The Council's definition of motorhomes / motor caravans within its Traffic Regulation Order be reviewed to more appropriately reflect current parking practices and enable consistent enforcement of rules with regards to vehicles being used in the manner of a motorhome (but which have not been permanently converted).

## RECOMMENDATION FOUR

The Council adopts a consistent approach to managing parking for motorhomes and motor caravans for areas that it controls, , to allow for consistent enforcement and clarity for motorhome users. This would include consistent times for restrictions to apply. This would typically focus on key destinations such as seafront locations.

