Finance and General Purposes Committee

12 December 2024

Appendix FG122

Review of Shropshire Banners, Bunting and Festive Lighting Policy and Proces

**Introduction:**

Many people feel that banners (sporting, recreational, charity & cultural content only), bunting and festive lighting, over and alongside the highway, all add to the community experience within an area and can enhance event and general visitor attendance numbers signiﬁcantly proving a valuable tool for the local economy.

However, they require approval under the Highways Act 1980 section 178 to conﬁrm they fall within guidelines and policies of safety and do not hinder the aesthetics of the surrounding environment.

The current application and approval process to display community event banners, bunting or festive lights falls within the remit of Shropshire Councils Street Works team. The team were restructured in 2013 to better align to the objectives of the “Traﬀic Management Act 2004” and the Shropshire Council Permit Scheme (West and Shires Permit Scheme). On review of existing tasks within the team the application and approval process for banners, bunting and Christmas illuminations was highlighted as a task with minimal value in meeting the primary team objectives of “minimising disruption caused by roadworks” and was generally an administrative process with set conditions only.

Subsequently a review of Shropshire Councils policy and process for banners, bunting and festive lighting/illuminations was ﬁrst referred to the “Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee” in 2018. Recommendations from the committee led to an initial engagement exercise with Town and Parish Councils being carried out on an opportunity and proposal to entirely devolve policy, process, licencing and enforcement of banners, bunting and festive lighting to town and parish councils.

As a result of that engagement further recommendations from the “task and ﬁnish” group of the Place Overview Committee included that Shropshire Council, as designated Highway Authority, retain the licencing powers for permitting banners, bunting and illuminations, but also look to engage and consult further with towns and parishes in order to identify any ‘best practice’ provision for speciﬁc retail centres and any local conditions or considerations that could be included as part of the licencing process.

Whilst it’s accepted that Shropshire Council would retain the legislative licencing function, views are sought on a possible devolvement of the administration function/process to respective town and parish councils, and the proposal for Town and Parish Councils to act as sole applicant with an annual licence being issued for those locations identiﬁed as acceptable within the Town or Parish area.

The group also recommended that further engagement seek views regarding separate policies created for banners “over” the highway and “alongside” the highway; any speciﬁc locations that would need to be excluded or restricted, and, for deﬁning acceptable design and content of the banner, if there is any local area aesthetics or community sentiment which need to be taken account of.

This survey is the ﬁnal step of this process of engagement with town and parish councils and seeks to gather those ﬁnal pieces of feedback about licensing processes and speciﬁc considerations that should be taken into account with regard to a revised policy on banners, bunting, and festive lighting. Shropshire Council appreciates your town or parish council taking the time to provide this important feedback, which will be taken into account as a ﬁnal policy is drafted for approval in early 2025.

Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback.

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\* Which town or parish council are your responding on behalf of? (if you are responding on behalf of more than one town or parish council, please complete one survey for each council).

What is your role with the town or parish council? (optional)

Shropshire Council (as designated Highway Authority) would need to retain the overall licencing powers for banners, bunting and illumination. To what extent would your own town or parish council support the possible development of the entire administrative/booking process to your council? (This is in order to be able assess and process any applications, and agree or refuse the erection and removal of banners/bunting/Illuminations within your local area).

 Strongly support  Support

 Neither support nor oppose  Oppose

 Strongly oppose  Unsure/don’t know

If the above devolvement of process is supported and feasible, to what extent would your council support the development of a process whereby your council would act as the sole applicant (and hence holder) of a licence to erect from Shropshire Council?

 Strongly support  Support

 Neither support nor oppose  Oppose

 Strongly oppose Unsure/don’t know

If the above idea of the town or parish council acting as sole licence holder is supported and feasible, to what extent would your council support Shropshire Council issuing an “Annual Licence” to respective Town Councils with applicable set and agreed conditions to allow banner use at any local agreed locations for that 12-month period?

 Strongly support  Support

 Neither support nor oppose  Oppose

 Strongly oppose  Unsure/don’t know

Please tell us anything else you would like to about the options surrounding processes and licensing discussed above.

To what extent would your council support the creation of separate policies for banners/bunting “over the highway” and banners/bunting “alongside the highway”.

 Strongly support  Support

 Neither support nor oppose  Oppose

 Strongly oppose  Unsure/don’t know

Please tell us more about your answer to the question above

Are there any particular locations within your town or parish council area that would need to be excluded or restricted from banner licencing and installation due to safety/aesthetic/any other local issue?

 No

 Unsure

 Yes (please tell us more)

If there are any “best practices” that could be adopted as part of the assessment and administration process, please tell us more here:

Based on local area aesthetics and/or known community sentiment is there any comment you wish to make regarding acceptable banner design or content?

Feedback is sought from any known local groups or individuals with neurodiverse conditions or visual impairments. This could include comment on agreed locations for banners and mitigating any excessive street clutter etc. Are you able to provide any comment and/or provide contact details in order that local interest groups or individuals can be contacted separately?



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**How we will use your information**

The information you have provided will be used for statistical purposes and to inform decision making and service performance.

The survey results data will be shared within Shropshire Council. We will not share the survey data with any third parties. We will only publish anonymised responses, parts of responses, or a summarized version of responses and will ensure individual survey respondents cannot be identiﬁed. Your response will be stored securely and kept in line with Shropshire Council’s Retention Schedule.

We comply with data protection laws concerning the protection of personal information, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For more information on how information is held by Shropshire Council and your rights to gain access to the information we hold on you please see our corporate privacy policy at [www.shropshire.gov.uk/privacy](https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/privacy/)

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.**