

Dear Geoff,

I am submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the 29th September 2020 meeting of the Environment, Transport and Sustainability (ETS) Committee.

Parklets

Parklets are small, often green, social spaces, which repurpose kerbside space in residential streets into pleasant outdoor community meeting spots. They can be particularly useful in areas that have a limited amount of green or outdoor communal space. They offer a great opportunity for business owners and residents to improve an area's public space in a way that allows people to enjoy their surroundings. They can provide places for people to rest, thus giving those with reduced mobility the opportunity to walk further or spend more time outdoors than they usually would. They increase the number of welcoming outdoor spaces at which neighbours can gather, thus reducing the risk of social isolation and mental health problems for many.

Pubs and cafés

A parklet increases the amount of outdoor space available to businesses, which would be particularly useful to those selling food and drink to be consumed on the premises. It would be nice to be able to support our struggling local businesses by giving them an opportunity to operate at greater capacity at a time when Covid safety measures reduce the number of people that such businesses can admit indoors. Since pubs and cafés have reopened, more people are now gathering outdoors. Many pubs in my ward and throughout the city lack outdoor space, and parklets would give customers the opportunity to socialise outdoors in comfort, and ensure pavements are kept free for passing pedestrians and wheelchair users.

Outdoor space for residents

Spaces for parklets could be made available to residents to set up, at a low cost. In some London boroughs, residents can use their parking space for a parklet rather than a car. This could be a great way for people without a garden or balcony to be able to spend time outdoors.

A parklet scheme can be put in place by allocating parking spaces to individuals, groups and businesses for parklets and charging for a permit for that space, in the same way as car owners are charged for parking permits. Businesses and individuals could pay or raise funds for materials and the furnishing of their parklet themselves. Using this model, the transport department would not incur costs as the revenue from the parklets could be collected by the council's parking team.

Community parklets

It was agreed at the last ETS meeting (23rd June) that a low traffic neighbourhood (LTN) is to be piloted in my ward, Hanover and Elm Grove, and I'm currently working with local community groups and residents on defining what it might look like. As part of these discussions, parklets have been suggested as a way to increase and improve outdoor social space. They could be a very welcome addition to the scheme as they can also have a calming effect on passing traffic.

Community engagement

Elsewhere in the city, communities could be invited to trial a scheme in their area. Consultation with residents and parking permit holders could take place within these areas, to ensure parklets are wanted and that there is agreement on the reallocation of a small number of parking spaces for them.

Request to pilot parklets in our city

I'd like to ask that this committee:

- calls for a report to consider how a parklet scheme might be put together and piloted in the city.
- agrees that parklets can be considered as part of the pilot Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme in Hanover and Elm Grove, subject to approval by residents.

It would be great if we could follow the lead of other local authorities by creating attractive spaces at the sides of roads that will benefit many of our residents and help improve their wellbeing.

Very best wishes,

Clr Elaine Hills

Green Party councillor for Hanover and Elm Grove



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