



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Richard Pincroft
Head of Transportation
BCP Council

Glynn Barton
Chief Operations Officer
BCP Council

30 September 2026

Dear Richard and Glynn,

I am following up on our meeting about van dwelling on 6 July, where I raised people's concerns and approaches to tackling van dwelling on Boscombe Overcliff Drive and surrounding roads. I recap the meeting below:

- Officers said that the scale of the issue may not be as significant as some residents perceive or alternatively that incidents are not being consistently reported to them.
- Officers said that where reports are received, BCP responds quickly and effectively.
- Officers said that they did not consider there to be sufficient traffic-related grounds to justify introducing a Traffic Regulation Order; a TRO may not address all forms of van dwelling because some campervan-style vehicles are legally classified as cars and could potentially remain unaffected by certain restrictions; and any restriction could be vulnerable to legal challenge if it could not be supported by a clear traffic management rationale.
- Officers said that no detailed TRO proposal has been developed for Boscombe Overcliff Drive beyond consultation carried out as part of the wider parking charges review; there is limited traffic collision, road safety, or incident data available to support a TRO; and any TRO would be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.
- Officers said that a proposal to introduce parking charges had been considered as a means of discouraging long-term vehicle occupation. The council's leadership did not pursue it due to significant opposition from local residents.
- Officers said that a wider Parking Strategy is under development, although this work is unlikely to be finalised for 12 months due to the number of stakeholders involved.
- Officers set out their approach to managing reports of van dwelling. Parking Enforcement officers first assess whether restrictions are being breached, such as

parking regulations or vehicle taxation requirements. If no parking offences are identified, the matter is referred to other council teams for investigation.

In response to our meeting, I commissioned a survey of residents on affected roads to establish an evidence base. Early findings suggest that the scale of the issue and the level of public concern may be greater than previously understood by BCP Council. I feared this and commissioned this survey for the specific reason of sharing residents' reality.

The survey identified significant concerns regarding road safety, sanitation, long-term occupation of public highways, and anti-social behaviour. However, almost as prominent was dissatisfaction with the council's response. Many respondents stated that they had reported concerns, but little meaningful action had followed.

A recurring theme was that enforcement is perceived as reactive rather than proactive, with some residents reporting that the same vehicles have remained in place for months or years despite repeated complaints. Respondents highlight poor communication following reports and declining confidence that concerns will be acted upon. There was a strong view that greater intervention, transparency, and enforcement are required.

The survey shows a gap between the council's understanding of the issue and residents' experiences as I represented them in our meeting. I hope the evidence and the analysis that follow will assist BCP Council in identifying measures to address concerns.

Requests

1. Investigate the specific vehicles repeatedly identified by residents and provide feedback to my office on action taken.
2. Carry out visibility assessments at key junctions and provide feedback to my office on action taken.
3. Establish a dedicated task-and-finish group involving relevant services, my office, and ward councillors to consider the findings of this survey, identify solutions to the issues raised, and coordinate a comprehensive response to residents' concerns.
4. While I recognise that the wider Parking Strategy is under development, the issues set out in this report require immediate consideration. I would be grateful for BCP Council's response to the concerns and recommendations raised in this letter without waiting for completion of the broader strategy review.

Who Responded

My survey continues to receive responses. For the purpose of sending feedback sooner, I am collating feedback from 69 unique individuals received over a 10-day period of 20-30 September. The overwhelming majority of responses are from BH5, particularly properties immediately surrounding:

- Boscombe Overcliff Drive
- Shelley Park

- Chessel Avenue
- Browning Avenue
- Penrith Road
- Keswick Road
- Portman Crescent
- Wentworth Close

The survey reflects the views of residents living closest to the roads affected by long-term van dwelling. The second largest group came from neighbouring Southbourne postcodes:

- Stourcliffe Avenue
- Stourwood Road
- Sea Road
- Southbourne Road
- Boscombe Cliff Road

Street-by-Street Analysis

Street	Main Issues Raised	Notable Comments
Boscombe Overcliff Drive	Visibility problems; waste disposal concerns; long-term occupation by vans; obstruction of bus stops	Repeatedly the focal point of concerns about van dwelling and associated impacts.
Penrith Road	Dangerous junction visibility; human waste; permanent occupation of vehicles	Described as being "very difficult to exit safely."
Browning Avenue	Red van near Shelley Park; obstructed sightlines; anti-social behaviour; concerns around Shelley Park	Frequent references to a long-term occupied red van and associated activity.
Keswick Road	Blind junctions; road safety concerns; large motorhomes blocking views	Situation described as "an accident waiting to happen."
Wentworth Close	Large Iveco van/horsebox; difficult road exits; long-term occupation	Concerns focused on visibility and extended vehicle occupation.
Portman Crescent	Long-term caravan occupation; detached caravan; concerns about overnight living	Highlighted caravans being left in situ for prolonged periods.
Boscombe Cliff Road	Tourism impacts; visual impact; waste disposal concerns	Feedback came from residents in seafront apartment blocks.
Stourcliffe Avenue and Stourwood Road	Large numbers of vans; loss of visitor parking; support for alternative motorhome facilities	Respondents favoured provision of designated sites elsewhere rather than unrestricted roadside occupation.

Key Findings

Theme	Main Issues Raised	Examples of Feedback
Road Safety	Most frequently cited concern. Residents report large vans and motorhomes blocking visibility at junctions and side roads.	Obstructed sight lines; difficulty exiting residential roads; near misses involving vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians; concerns that a serious collision could occur. Affected roads include Penrith Road, Keswick Road, Browning Avenue, Chessel Avenue, Wentworth Close, Ravine Road and Portman Crescent.
Public Health and Sanitation	Significant concerns about waste disposal and hygiene.	Reports of human waste, toilet paper and wipes in public spaces; waste deposited in bins; grey water discharged onto roads; sewage and urine odours; concerns regarding contamination, disease and impacts on children and pets.
Long-Term Occupation of Roads	Respondents generally distinguish between tourism and permanent occupation.	Most respondents accept short-term visitors but object to vehicles staying for months or years, detached caravans, overnight living, and encampment-style behaviour. The area is described by some respondents as an "unofficial campsite".
Impact on Residents and Local Area	Many respondents felt the situation had reduced their enjoyment of the area.	Residents report avoiding certain routes, feeling uncomfortable around occupied vehicles, reducing use of Shelley Park and concerns about the seafront's appearance.
Visual Impact and Tourism	Respondents frequently raised concerns about the appearance of the area.	Descriptions of large numbers of vans as an eyesore; concerns about the image of Bournemouth; worries about impacts on tourism.
Anti-Social Behaviour	Complaints focused on behaviours associated with some long-term occupiers.	Reports of loud music, generators, fires, BBQs, cannabis use, washing lines, tables, chairs, and storage of belongings on public land.
BCP Council Response	Strong dissatisfaction with perceived lack of action.	Reports of unanswered complaints, automated responses only, limited enforcement activity and declining confidence in reporting incidents.

Preferred Solutions

Proposed Solution	Summary of Views
Overnight Parking Restrictions	Most commonly supported measure. Respondents favoured restrictions on overnight sleeping, camping, and long-term occupation of vehicles.
Traffic Regulation Order (TRO/ETRO)	Strong support for a trial scheme with monitoring before any permanent decision.

Dedicated Campervan Facilities	Many respondents supported providing alternative locations with toilets, water, waste disposal, and overnight facilities.
Improved Enforcement	Requests for stronger parking enforcement, action on abandoned vehicles, and enforcement against waste dumping and anti-social behaviour.
Vehicle Size Restrictions	Some respondents suggest restricting larger motorhomes, caravans, and converted vehicles from specific roads.

Identification of Specific Vehicles

Multiple residents repeatedly reference several specific vehicles, often using consistent descriptions of the problems they create.

Vehicle and Location	Issues Raised	Comments	Significance
Red Van (EO59 ZGW), Shelley Park / Boscombe Overcliff Drive	Long-term occupation; encampment behaviour; storage of belongings; generators; washing lines; anti-social behaviour; highway obstruction	"Parked outside Shelley Park for months"; "now an encampment with a trolley, generator and other detritus littering the public highway"; "storing materials on the highway"; "hangs his washing on a line attached to trees"	Most frequently mentioned vehicle. A symbol of wider concerns about long-term van dwelling, highway use and, lack of enforcement.
White Iveco Campervan (FJ60 DHV), Ravine Road Junction	Road safety; visibility obstruction; pedestrian safety; enforcement concerns	"Since October 2025, it has not moved an inch"; "incredibly dangerous for pedestrians and motorists"; "three near misses"	One of the strongest examples of safety concerns from vehicle placement near junctions.
Silver Iveco Box Van / Horsebox (M601 KNR), Wentworth Close	Long-term residence; poor visibility; possible wastewater discharge	"Return each day to reside in this van/horsebox"; "liquid and fluid emanating underneath the van"; "we can't see cars around it"	Linked to concerns regarding both road safety and environmental health.
Caravan, Portman Crescent	Long-term occupation; detached caravan; possible residential use; abandoned appearance	"A male living in an old caravan"; "abandoned unattached opposite our house"; "appears to have been decoupled and dumped"	Frequently referenced by multiple residents as an example of long-term occupation on a residential street.
VW Van (LG04 FVA),	Possible abandonment; visual impact;	"A rusty wreck and an eyesore"; "definitely over 8 months"	Cited as an example of a vehicle perceived

Shelley Park Area	long-term stationary vehicle		to be abandoned and contributing to environmental decline.
Large Horseboxes and Converted Trucks	Sightline obstruction; residential occupation; oversized vehicles; visual impact	"Large green horse box"; "huge converted horseboxes"	Recurring concern relating to vehicle size, visibility and suitability for residential roads.
Red and Blue Vans, Keswick Road Junction	Road safety; visibility; prolonged stay	"A risk every time trying to join Boscombe Overcliff Drive"; "been on Boscombe Overcliffe for months"	Demonstrates that concerns were not limited to single vehicles but also groups of vehicles in key locations.

Conclusion

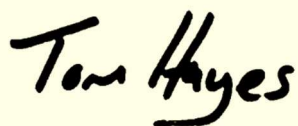
The findings set out in this letter are not the views of a small number of isolated residents. They represent the experiences of a first wave of respondents, 69 local people living closest to the areas most affected by long-term van dwelling.

The evidence shows significant concerns regarding road safety, public health, environmental quality, and public confidence in enforcement.

I wish to work constructively with BCP Council to find solutions and would welcome a response to the issues and requests set out in this letter, together with details of further investigations, enforcement activity, or policy measures the Council intends to take.

I look forward to working with you, local ward councillors and council officers to address these concerns and improve the quality of life for residents.

Sincerely,



Tom Hayes MP

Labour Member of Parliament for Bournemouth East