

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
16 December 2021

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

\* Reporting to Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL held on Thursday 16 December 2021 at 7.30 pm Via Zoom.

PRESENT: Councillors S. Kasumu (Chair)  
S. Boulton (Vice-Chair)

G. Hayes, A. Hellyer, S. McNamara, G. Michaelides, R. Platt, J. Quinton, D. Richardson, A Rohale, P. Shah, C. Stanbury and S. Thusu

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor D. Bell (Executive Member, Resources)  
Residents Panel Representative A. McHugh

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Head of Environment (D. Reyner)  
Environment, Parking & Bereavement Manager (K. Roberts)  
Parking & Playground Services Manager (E. Robova)  
Principal Governance Officer (J. Anthony)  
Democratic Services Assistant (B. Taylor)

---

31. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2021 were approved as a correct record.

32. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

Councillors S. Boulton and S. Thusu declared a non-pecuniary interest in items on the agenda as appropriate by virtue of being a Member of Hertfordshire County Council.

33. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

The following question was received from Mr Russell Haggard, and the Vice-Chair as Portfolio Holder of Environment, Planning, Estates and Development responded with a response:

“At November’s CPPP, I asked a question about the ongoing Village Green application for Singlers Marsh in Welwyn. The substance of the question was: “Why does WHBC refuse to discuss the application with its local residents, and

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
16 December 2021

what is the basis for its claim that the lesser protection of not being a village green is the best situation for Singlers Marsh?”

The council gave a comprehensive answer at November’s CPPP meeting to first half of that question. But its response utterly failed to address the second half. To recap briefly, in an email sent to me on 4th October this year, the council’s Head of Environment wrote:

Our authority has now completed its assessment on Singlers Marsh and whether to retain the Marsh (sic) ongoing status as a nature reserve or becoming a village green. The conclusion of the assessment is that Singlers Marsh is best served under the current arrangements, and the Council will therefore not be supporting the village green application.

My question was, and remains, what is the basis for WHBC’s claim that the status quo at Singlers Marsh serves it better than being registered as a village green?

The council’s representation to the Registration Authority (i.e., HCC) against the village green application consists, as it should, of technical points around the pros and cons of whether Singlers Marsh is, or is not, being used as a *de facto* village green. I understand the council’s reluctance to enter into discussion about these points while there is a legal process afoot, though it is a matter of some regret that the council did not take the opportunity to discuss these points prior to the process commencing.

However, the question as to whether Singlers Marsh is best served as a nature reserve or as a village green is wholly outside of this process. Since there is clearly no reason to hide behind the legal process regarding this question, might the council see fit on this occasion to answer the actual question?”

Answer:

Thank you to Mr Haggar for this further question.

The Council gave full consideration to the matter and reached the view that the legislative criteria for village green status for the Singler’s Marsh site is not met. The statutory process, in relation to the village green application, is ongoing and it would not be appropriate for this Council to deal with questions relating - whether directly or indirectly - to the application outside of the formal procedures. It will be a matter for the Registration Authority, Hertfordshire County Council, to decide if the application to register Singler’s Marsh as a village green should be granted or not. The Council has set out its reasons against supporting a village green application to Hertfordshire County Council and this has also been shared with the applicant.

34. AMENDMENT TO THE PARKING SERVICES WORK PROGRAMME 2022 - 2024

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
16 December 2021

An Amendment to Report of the Head of Environment on the Parking Services Work Programme 2022-2024. Officers stated that Woods Avenue was included within the South and East Hatfield workstream, and this would be made explicit in the work programme table. Furthermore, Officers stated that the table in the original report had been updated to include Robin Hood Lane/ The Common and Pine Grove to the works programme.

RESOLVED:

**(Unanimous)**

- a) That it is noted that Woods Avenue was included in the South/East Hatfield works programme area.

**(Unanimous)**

- b) That Robin Hood Lane/ The Common and Pine Grove be included into the 2022 – 2024 works programme

**(Unanimous)**

- c) Having unanimously agreed the inclusion of Robin Hood Lane/ The Common and Pine Grove into the 2022-2024 works programme, the Panel recommends to Cabinet that delegated authority is given to the Executive Member of Resources to amend the works programme accordingly.

35. INTRODUCTION OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT USING AUTOMATED NUMBER PLATE RECOGNITION (ANPR) TECHNOLOGY

Report of the Head of Environment following a recommendation from the Parking Modernisation Review to enhance parking enforcement using mobile and static Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras. Officers stated that the system would be more efficient to deal with parking permit issues, and that tickets would still be given manually under legislation. The static cameras would be outside schools to tackle inconsiderate parking on yellow zigzags and improve road safety. Any tickets issued from the static cameras would be posted to the address registered to the vehicle. Officers stated that signage on the vehicles and the location of cameras would be overt.

Members asked whether any wardens would be lost or if more wardens could be hired in replacement of a vehicle. Officers confirmed that there would be no changes to the enforcement team and that enforcement would be carried out with greater efficiency in the borough with a vehicle as permit areas are expanding. The vehicles are a one-off outlay that would be benefits of being able to get around the borough and cover more areas.

Members sought assurance that the cameras would be protected against vandalism and be insured. Officers assured ways to protect against vandalism

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
16 December 2021

would be considered as part of the procurement process, and they would be insured in line with Council policies and procedures.

Members asked about the cost of moving the static cameras and the breakeven on the investment. Members also enquired about how often the static cameras would be moved, expressing some concern that once the static cameras had been moved then people's behaviour around parking outside school would return to the old way. Officers stated that movement of cameras was included in the budget and the breakeven point would be achieved in a few years. Officers added that these details would be considered during the procurement process, but the assumption would be that the cameras would be moved every few months with research indicating that the cameras helped change behaviour even after being located in a particular location for short period of time.

Members sought clarification on the ticketing process. Officers stated there were two systems. The warden would drive the ANPR electric vehicle in a permit area or carpark, the driver would then issue a ticket to any vehicle that flagged on the system. The vehicle would only be static whilst the FPN was given. Outside schools with the static camera the ANPR system would register and then a ticket would be sent to the address of the vehicle. The latter system would be centrally managed, and resources were in place to deal with any complaints. Members asked about the work being managed. Officer stated that the current team would deliver FPN, the appeals process was managed by East Herts and there would be no additional resources required to operate with the proposed new vehicles or static cameras.

Members raised a question over the time saving of having the vehicles and what the savings would be. Officers answered that there was expected to be about 30% efficiency made, including the time that would be saved by moving from a system where individuals were required to walk and check each parked vehicle, to one where the ANPR vehicle would identify cars that were in violation.

Members asked if there was a contingency plan if there were lower than expected income from parking tickets, noting that the proposed costings was based on 30% on funding being derived from parking ticket revenue. Officers explained that it would be a good thing if income from parking tickets was reduced as this would mean drivers were parking more considerately and purchasing the necessary parking permits, with the increase in permit sales providing a greater income stream.

Members sought clarification what was meant by funding from the capital reserves and borrowing. The Executive Member of Resources stated that the Council would consider the best way to purchase the equipment, and this might involve borrowing. However, the borrowing could be internal, as well as external, and this approach was the way the Council paid for its capital schemes.

Members asked about the viability of adding ANPR technologies to bicycles. Officer confirmed that the idea was original and had not been considered when

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
16 December 2021

officers tested the market. However, officers agreed this would be considered as part of the procurement process.

Members asked whether the costings included new EV charge points, and whether they would be council only. Officers confirmed that new EV charge points were included in the budget, and they would be for the council's use only.

Members raised whether new investment would be needed to upgrade the technology from 3G/4G to 5G in the future. Officers stated that this could be added to the system specification and considered as part of the procurement process.

Members raised concern over the timing of the operational hours of the cameras given that residents with permits could lose out on spaces after enforcement hours were over. Officer stated that this procurement would not alter the enforcement hours or parking restrictions, which would be for officers and Members to consider separately. However, the operational hours of the ANPR vehicle would vary.

Members considered whether there was merit in acquiring more static cameras at this point, given that the issue over road safety outside of schools was felt throughout the borough. The ANPR vehicle after some time could then be purchased at a later date. Officers' response was that the report was of initial estimates and the acquisition of cameras would be dependent on the procurement process. Officer stated that more static cameras could be acquired, but the proposal would replace two diesel vehicles with two electric vehicles, with the vehicles needed to cover a larger area. It was stated that Parish and Town Councils as well as HCC could be approached to enquire whether they would consider providing financial support for more static cameras at specific locations should this be desired at a later date.

Members questioned the scheme and impact on blue badge holders. Officers stated that the ANPR vehicle might flag blue badged vehicles, but officer would see the badge and not issue the FPN.

Members asked whether there had been contact with schools. Officer confirmed that there was a list of schools that were happy to have the cameras and there would be more communication with the schools before installation.

Members expressed support for the scheme stating the Council and welcomed this modernisation. Support was also given to the scheme in promoting school safety. Members stated they would be happy to see the income go to nothing as that would mean the scheme worked and areas were improved. Members also stated that they believed Welwyn Hatfield residents would be on the whole supportive of the scheme but may welcome quicker appeals process to resolve unintended infringements and mistakes.

**RESOLVED:**  
**(Unanimous)**

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
16 December 2021

Recommendation to Cabinet the inclusion of a capital budget in 2022/23 for the purchase of two new electric vehicles with ANPR capability, static cameras, and associated software to enhance parking enforcement across the borough.

Meeting ended at 20:24  
BT