

* Reporting to Cabinet

PRESENT: Councillors A. Hellyer (Chairman)
S. Boulton (Vice-Chairman)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor B. Sarson (Executive Member for Community Safety and Parking)

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Assistant Director (Regeneration and Economic Development) (G. Sampson)
Parking and Playground Services Manager (E. Robova)
Parking Services Team Leader (M. McCann)
Democratic Services Assistant (V. Mistry)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2022 were approved as a correct record.

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

Report of the Assistant Director (Regeneration and Economic Development) on the Introduction of Resident Permit Parking Schemes and other waiting restrictions in various roads in High Dells and Hilltop, Hatfield.

In September 2021, Parking Services undertook a parking survey with residents and businesses in parts of Hatfield South West ward and a small number of roads within Welham Green and Hatfield South ward. The extent of the consultation area was from College Lane, following Bishops Rise southwards to Southdown Road. The west of the area was bounded by Roehyde Way, and

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
18 August 2022

east to the edge of but not including Travellers Lane. The purpose of the survey was to engage with residents and businesses in seeking their views on parking options for the area. Historically, Parking Services had received many requests from residents highlighting parking issues caused by University students as well as motor traders leaving vehicles parked upon the highway for long periods reducing parking availability for residents. A follow up letter was also sent to remind residents to partake in the survey to ensure a good response rate. Parking Services also sent a letter in February 2022 with draft ideas relating to the parking restrictions to gather any further feedback, where 18 further feedback comments were received.

Owing to the location of the area being within proximity to The University of Hertfordshire it was divided into 2 separate consultation focus areas: High Dells and Hilltop and the University Campus providing the natural break between the two areas.

89 objections had been received relating to the proposed order(s) which were set out in Section 9 of the report. To note, 3 households made 2 objections, one household made 3 objections. Parking Services also received 9 objections from people outside of the consultation area, including an objector from Birmingham and one from Yorkshire, as well as plus 7 objections from residents from elsewhere in Hatfield. This would equate to 74 households within the consultation area that objected overall. This was an objection rate from 2031 properties of 3.6%. A full list of the objections was contained within Appendix A of the report.

Two petitions were also received during the statutory objection period, one from Roe Green Close and one from Tudor Close. The Roe Green Close petition had 68 signatures from 39 households after verification (one household misunderstood the petition and withdrew) and it related to removing the road from the permit zone proposals and this related to 82.97% of Roe Green Close's 47 households. The Tudor Close petition was signed by 40 households after verification related to amending the permit zone days and hours to Monday to Friday 7am to 6pm, this related to 52.63% of Tudor Close's 76 households.

Parking Services advertised proposals for 4 out of 5 proposed permit zones in the area to operate Monday to Sunday 7am to 9pm based upon the indicative survey results. The majority of objections received focused upon the proposed operational days and times being too long, as well as residents highlighting the financial implications for bringing in the permit zone especially over 7 days and for most of the waking day.

Taking into account the detail of the objections received, the report set out the Parking Services' recommendation to proceed with an amended proposal of Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, removal of Roe Green Close and the merging two proposed zones into one, for the reasons set out in Sections 4 and 6 of the report.

The following points were raised and discussed:

- Members stated that the parking issues and concerns on many of the roads within the proposal were well known and historic with some of them being the worst constructed roads of all of Welwyn Hatfield.
- Members were concerned that some streets that currently had no or mild parking issues may find that without a permit scheme their road will become the new place for people to park.
- Members stated that there were many grass verges in the area and many had been damaged and continue to be parked upon despite efforts to discourage them from parking on the grass verges. A permit scheme coupled with verge protection orders, could be positive in preventing and repairing the damage already made.
- Members stated that they were happy to see that the consultation had been extensive and had not been rushed.
- Members noted that there were many more cars now and the streets in the area were not designed to accommodate large amounts of cars on the street and many of the properties had no designated on-street parking. It was noted that the students from University of Hertfordshire also park their cars there.
- Members noted that the cost of living crisis had grown in scale and had impacted considerably since the consultation began. There were multiple objections citing the cost of living crisis as a concern and would impact the residents that live there.
- Councillor Thorpe proposed adding another recommendation on setting up a hardship fund for residents within any parking area within the borough who can demonstrate the impact that additional costs of permit parking would have upon them financially.
- Members asked when the scheme would be implemented with regards to the university term as it would be better if the six month assessment was done during the university term and not during the holiday period. Officers stated that they will take the term time into account and will ensure that parking services can assess the situation across the larger time scale.
- Member wanted to know how the hardship fund would be defined in terms of who would be eligible for it as it might need some consideration. It was determined that Cabinet would have to decide who would be eligible and a criteria created for the fund. The money for the fund could come from the general fund or from increasing the cost of permits. It was noted that the Hardship Fund would have to come out of the council's budget and possibly increase taxes.
- Members stated that every parking scheme from now on will always have this problem of cost of living and asking if people will be able to afford it whether it will be in Hatfield or Welwyn Garden City.
- It was noted that the parking scheme in the area had been requested by residents over the years as the parking was very bad and had been for a long time. It was noted that any thought of a scheme to alleviate the cost needed to be quite separate to what members were deciding on. Firstly, it would be wrong to pick one item for the alleviation of poverty. Secondly

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
18 August 2022

the Council had next to no money and the Council was run on a very difficult budget. In order to set up any scheme it would either mean raising the council tax for other people or it would mean cutting services which at present the Council carries out.

- Members were supportive of the scheme and the proposals. Members thought that it was good that the officers had offered to amend the proposal to 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and the removal of the weekend permit was a good idea. It was noted that there were residents that were supportive of the scheme.
- Members asked if the timings were based on the recommendations received from residents. Officers stated the proposal was based on feedback from the residents. Initially it was proposed Monday to Sunday 7am to 9pm but now the Council was looking at proposing Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. It was noted that parking outside of the hours will be free.
- Members asked if there were any letters of support on the permit parking or how many people supported the proposal? Officers stated that when they asked residents for the feedback initially 626 out of 2,031 responded to the consultation and out of those who responded 428 were in favour of the scheme and the vast majority of those indicated that there was a problem with non-residential parking. Within the feedback in the objections received, there were comments in favour of the proposal however they did not like the excessive times or the operational hours.
- Members asked if the students would have access to purchasing a parking permit as they will be residents on the street. Officers stated that once the proposal was in place each household will be able to purchase some residential parking permits and also visitor parking permits. There were certain criteria that each applicant needed to fill out for example, being a resident in controlled parking zones. They will need to show proof of being a resident and the vehicle needed to be registered to the property. It was noted that not everyone would be eligible and needed to live in the list of eligible properties.
- Members asked if the council had explored speaking to the university to see if there was anything they could do to provide some additional parking spaces on campus for students just to alleviate some of the issues the council was having as the students were also part of the community. Officers stated that they had not had a conversation with the university about providing extra parking for students. The university were aware of the proposals and they do support it. It is in their handbook as well that students should not bring a car to Hatfield unless they need it for their placement for example nursing students.
- Members stated that a permit scheme can be better and residents can buy visitor parking that can last 24 hours. It can alleviate problems with parking on the street.
- Members asked about the small number of households who have a postal address which was attached to a different street but their houses and their normal egress and where they park was within the parking zone yet because their street address is not within the parking zone they cannot

get a parking permit. Is there any way the council could include that small number of households and allow them to purchase the permits? Officers stated that within the area there were a few residents who asked about this and unfortunately parking services were unable to do that because when they designed the scheme they always allocate the property address within the zone. Parking services will look at an exception if there is no road and will always go by the property and it is not possible to change that. Parking services did look at the comments received and those properties had parking available to them, it might not be the parking they were using previously but there is parking available to them in a short distance.

- Members asked if that was a matter of policy or a matter of physical space where parking would be allocated to a property. Officers stated that once they draw parking zones, each property falls into certain zones and when they are looking into this, they write a list of eligible addresses. Normally that is by the address of the property so for example, if someone lives within a high-street then they will be able to park on the high-street even though they used to park elsewhere. It was a very common approach across the UK.
- Members mentioned paragraph 4.3 of the report and that the University of Hertfordshire had displayed unauthorised signage in Roe Green Close. This showed that there is a disconnection between the Council and the university.
- Members wanted clarification on the doctors/ health visitor permit for £24 per annum and who would be paying for it? Officers stated that within the scheme there were various permits available for example the doctors/ health visitor permits were for health professionals that were required to park within the controlled parking zone in order to carry out their duties. There was also a 50% discount for OAP residents on visitor vouchers and blue badge holders can park for free. It was noted that some of the health permits were in circulation and were being used by health professionals and officers stated that the employer had applied on behalf of the employees for a permit. Health professionals can also buy a permit themselves. With the permit, health professionals can park across the borough in any zone as long as there are carrying out their duties.
- Members asked at what point does the Council protect those that have gone out in an emergency to care for someone but have not got a parking permit or if they are visiting a family member in an emergency, would they be expected to be fined and clamped because they had been called out in an emergency. Officers stated that street wardens can only issue penalties and not clamp cars. Wardens who issue penalties unfortunately have to issue penalties in every situation that they observe such as a vehicle parked illegally, they cannot be biased and cannot take anything into consideration. However, if there was a medical emergency and a penalty was issued then this can be considered as part of the challenge process and the penalty would be cancelled if a genuine medical emergency was confirmed.

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
18 August 2022

RESOLVED:

(13 voting FOR - unanimous)

- (1) “The Borough of Welwyn Hatfield (Various Roads, High Dells, Hatfield) (Restriction of Waiting and Permit Parking Zones) Order 2022”**

That the Panel considers the objections received in Section 9 in addition to the issues raised in Section 20 around equalities and diversity and recommends to Cabinet to proceed with permit zones with amended days and times – Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm as set out in Section 4 and the creation of the traffic regulation order for resident permit zones; and to note the delegated powers conferred to Executive Member for Community Safety and Parking to sign an executive member decision to proceed with the creation of the traffic regulation order as advertised, subject to unanimous recommendation of the Panel.

(13 voting FOR - unanimous)

- (2) “The Borough of Welwyn Hatfield (Various Roads, High Dells, Hatfield) (Prohibition of Stopping and Waiting on Verge or Footway) Order 2022”**

That the Panel considers the objections received in Section 9 in addition to the issues raised in Section 20 around equalities and diversity and recommends to Cabinet to proceed with the creation of the traffic regulation order as advertised; and to note the delegated powers conferred to Executive Member for Community Safety and Parking to sign an executive member decision to proceed with the creation of the traffic regulation order as advertised for the verge and footway prohibition, subject to unanimous recommendation of the Panel.

(13 voting FOR - unanimous)

- (3) “The Borough of Welwyn Hatfield (Various Roads, Hilltop, Hatfield) (Restriction of Waiting and Permit Parking Zones) Order 2022”**

That the Panel considers the objections received in Section 9 in addition to the issues raised in Section 20 around equalities and diversity and recommends to Cabinet to proceed with permit zones with amended days and times – Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm as set out in Section 6 and the creation of the traffic regulation order for resident permit zones; and to note the delegated powers conferred to Executive Member for Community Safety and Parking to sign an executive member decision to proceed with the creation of the traffic regulation order as advertised, subject to unanimous recommendation of the Panel.

(13 voting FOR - unanimous)

- (4) “The Borough of Welwyn Hatfield (Various Roads, Hilltop, Hatfield) (Prohibition of Stopping and Waiting on Verge or Footway) Order 2022”**

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
18 August 2022

That the Panel considers the objections received in Section 9 in addition to the issues raised in Section 20 around equalities and diversity and recommends to Cabinet to proceed with the creation of the traffic regulation order as advertised; and to note the delegated powers conferred to Executive Member for Community Safety and Parking to sign an executive member decision to proceed with the creation of the traffic regulation order as advertised for the verge and footway prohibition, subject to unanimous recommendation of the Panel.

A fifth recommendation was then proposed and seconded by Councillors K.Thorpe and P.Shah and

RESOLVED:

(6 voting FOR, 5 voting AGAINST and 2 ABSTENTIONS)

- (5) To recommend to Cabinet to rapidly explore setting up a hardship fund for any resident within any permit parking area within the borough who can demonstrate the impact the additional cost of a permit or permits would have upon them financially and/ or socially to allow for a defined process to alleviate this pressure until it is deemed that this fund is no longer required.

Meeting ended 8.33pm
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