

Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel  
30 June 2016

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the CABINET HOUSING AND PLANNING PANEL held on Thursday, 30th June, 2016 at 7.30 pm in the Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE

PRESENT: Councillors M Perkins (Vice-Chairman)

D Bell, D Bennett, H Bromley, J Cragg (substituting for S Boulton), M Cowan, C Gillett (substituting for M Spinks), G Hayes, M Holloway and P Shah

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Interim Managing Director, Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust  
(C Woodhead) (for items 7-12)  
Housing Client and Policy Manager (J Jethwa) (for items 7-12)  
Parking and Cemetery Services Manager (V Hatfield)  
Governance Services Officer (M Lowe)

---

7. SUBSTITUTIONS OF MEMBERS:

The following substitutions of Panel Members had been made in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 19-22:

Councillor J Cragg for S Boulton (Chairman)  
Councillor C Gillett for M Spinks

8. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Boulton and M Spinks.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS:

Councillor M Cowan declared an interest in items on the Agenda as appropriate by virtue of being a member of Hertfordshire County Council.

10. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS:

The Chairman reported that questions had been received in respect of Item 12 – Arm and Sword Lane, Hatfield and Item 15 – Westland Drive, Oaklands Avenue, The Gardens and Bluebridge Road, Brookmans Park, Hatfield. The Chairman explained that as this was a special meeting of the Panel there was not the facility on the published Agenda for public questions and petitions to be put. However, the Chairman exercised her discretion and announced that she would allow both questions to be put to the meeting and responses given.

1. Question to the Chairman Councillor Mandy Perkins from Mr C Goward

Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel  
30 June 2016

“Parking is a major issue with Old Hatfield residents. Our understanding is that there are 144 permits issued for the 144 spaces in Zone B01, and current development work turning offices into flats has created a demand for maybe 30 more spaces. There is no clear picture of how much space will be provided for existing residents in the new GCE Salisbury Square Car Park, or how car parking will be managed in Old Hatfield in future. I gather that the introduction of B07 is necessary in order to protect parking space for the 6 residents on Arm & Sword Lane when the camera control system which currently controls the Salisbury Square car park is removed. This whole subject needs fuller consultation (I have earmarked 21<sup>st</sup> July with Vicki as a possible meeting date to start this process).

Can the removal of the cameras and introduction of B07 be delayed by a couple of months until the longer term plan is decided?”

The Chairman gave the following answer to the question:-

‘Welwyn Hatfield Council do not currently limit the number of permits in any of our resident parking permit schemes. The Council isn’t aware that parking during the days and hours of restriction is difficult for those residents who have a permit. Not all permit holders need to park in the area at the same time; therefore there is constant turnover of available parking space. Currently the residents in Arm & Sword Lane have the option to purchase permits in B 01. To go ahead with the recommendations would provide those residents with their own permit area without in the future possibly impacting B 01.

Old Hatfield is on the Parking Services medium term work programme and any concerns raised will be addressed as part of that project.’

2. Questions to the Chairman Councillor Mandy Perkins from Mr R Bailie

Question

“May I draw your attention to Item 8 of the Report to the Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel meeting and specifically to the Additional Document 8(f) and ask you to read the 9 objections received from various residents of Westland Drive from which you may detect more than a degree of dissatisfaction at the tactics employed by the council in relation to this matter.

I would also like to refer to the Officer’s Report on the following points:-  
Para 3.5 Where are these “**representations**” and what form did they take?”

Answer

“Either received in writing or logged on our customer services system – Lagan”

Question

*“Para 3.6 “Several residents quoted the fact that for various reasons they were unable to move their vehicles from one side of the road to the other, thereby incurring penalty charge notices.” If that were true residents would be deliberately receiving penalty notices every day and we all know that has not happened. In the few cases where residents have received penalty notices it is because they have forgotten to move their cars and I know from personal experience that one only does that once!”*

Answer

“The Council can only go on information received from residents in this area. A resident has reported receiving 5 fines in 2 years.”

Question

*“Para 3.8 “A previous scheme advertising yellow line restrictions resulted in a petition being lodged at a very late stage requesting a resident permit parking scheme. To prevent any such reoccurrence, a final opportunity was given to residents to vote for this option.” Are we really to believe that if a late petition had not been received on some previous occasion the “final opportunity” for residents to vote for resident parking would not have been given?”*

Answer

“This is correct, without the petition and representations this option would not have been offered.”

Question

“The truth surely is that this had nothing to do with late petitions but was a last ditch device to get a change in the voting to achieve uniformity (and increase revenue) and would have been acceptable if it had given a clear choice between two options. Instead of that it referred to only one of the options presenting it as a “final opportunity” but not making clear that the alternative “final opportunity” was the extension of the existing tidal scheme in favour of which a majority of residents in each of the three roads had already voted (and may have been under the impression that those votes would be carried forward).”

Answer

“The Council made a decision not to offer the tidal system as some residents found this cumbersome and would not be at home to be able to move their car when the restriction switched over. The proposed resident

scheme is a more practical and flexible restriction for residents which doesn't not require them to move their vehicle during the restriction.

The Council does not make a profit from this type of scheme. The charges contribute to the cost of the administration and enforcement of a resident parking permit scheme. The Council have taken the view to consider the area as a whole, rather than considering each road as a single entity. Had Westland Drive been treated in isolation, this would have lead to confusion for the casual motorist unfamiliar with the area."

Question

"Para 3.8 *"With the notable exception of Westland Drive, all of the current and proposed waiting restrictions in the village are in response to the majority opinion of the residents who replied to the consultations."* This is totally untrue. On the only occasion on which residents of these three roads were given a choice a majority of residents in each of the three roads voted in favour of extending the existing tidal scheme and the residents were told that on the strength of that vote "resident permit schemes will now be excluded from these proposals" (Appendix B of the Officer's Report)."

Answer

"This consultation Mr Bailie's referring was held before some of the other restrictions in the village had been introduced. Information received after the introduction of the restrictions prompted the Council to consult residents again."

Question

"Finally is it the case that since there was a material error (Monday to Saturday instead of Monday to Friday) in the advertisement of the proposed TRO it will have to be re-advertised? That would give the opportunity for proper consultation with two choices?"

Answer

"Residents who contacted the Council to query the proposed Monday to Saturday restriction were informed as to the error. All notices in the locality have been replaced with the correct version displaying the Monday to Friday restriction. The error portrayed a longer restriction in the letter to residents; therefore the TRO does not need to be re-advertised."

11. WELWYN HATFIELD COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUST MONITORING:

The report of the Director (Finance and Operations) provided a summary of the performance in the key areas of Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust's activity up to the end of the fourth quarter 2015/16.

Members gave careful consideration to each individual section of the monitoring report and made the following points:-

- Partnership working with the Council; Citizens Advice Bureau and the Trust was excellent;
- Members congratulated the Trust on the figures reported in the performance management report for Quarter four 2015/16;
- Changes in Universal Credit were likely to have a significant impact on the number of families in temporary accommodation in the Borough;
- The under occupancy and over occupancy of properties had implications on the family unit both financially and emotionally; where possible help and support was given to families to alleviate the stresses caused by these situations;
- Families were very rarely placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation due to the cost and quality of the accommodation and the vulnerability of the families. The Trust's own properties were used for temporary accommodation;
- The housing market impacted significantly on tenants in the privately rented sector. Advice was given to landlords and tenants to try to address homelessness at as early a stage as possible;
- A report on over occupancy statistics would be welcomed in the housing needs register/report; (Action: Interim Managing Director, Housing Trust,
- Members were to be encouraged to use the Trust's central repository for all housing matters. This would ensure that all matters were dealt with as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- It was considered to be helpful to Members for the generic email addresses for housing; planning and planning appeals to be included in the minutes and are set out as follows; (Action: Governance Services Officer)  
[memberenquiries@welhat-cht.org.uk](mailto:memberenquiries@welhat-cht.org.uk).  
[planning@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:planning@welhat.gov.uk)  
[planningappeals@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:planningappeals@welhat.gov.uk)
- Gas safety compliance and repairs must continue to be a priority for the Trust and that work practices should be continuously reviewed and improved.
- Feedback from customers was considered to be crucial.
- Members agreed that the Trust should tighten up on how and when customer satisfaction was obtained.
- Section 10 – Diversity of applicants on Housing Needs Register and re-housed in the period to be re-circulated by the Interim Managing Director. (Action: Interim Managing Director).

RESOLVED:

That the summary of performance in the key areas of Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust's activity up to the end of the fourth quarter 2015/16 be noted.

12. ARM AND SWORD LANE, HATFIELD - RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING SCHEME:

As part of the introduction for the benefit of new Members, the Parking and Cemetery Services Manager explained the overview of the parking consultation process.

The report of the Director (Finance and Operations) set out the results of the informal consultation, the formal consultation and the recommended course of action which has taken place as part of the redevelopment of Salisbury Square, Hatfield.

As part of the redevelopment of Salisbury Square, Hatfield, the landowners, Gascoyne Holdings Ltd (Hatfield Park Estate) had requested that the Council consult the occupiers of a newly completed residential development in Arm and Sword Lane, Hatfield on new waiting restrictions. The purpose of the consultation was to prevent long term parking by non-residents. Three letters of objection to the formal consultation had been received for the following reasons:-

- The advertised hours of operation were Monday to Saturday 8:00am to 6.30pm and this would not prevent non-residents from parking in residents' spaces before they get home from work so they would therefore like 24/7 enforcement, 365 days a year.
- The proposed zone would give a handful of properties in Arm and Sword Lane more than two parking spaces per dwelling.
- The proposal was prejudicial to existing residents of Old Hatfield, reducing the number of spaces currently available for business workers and existing residents.

In response to concerns raised by Members regarding similar issues experienced in other areas of the Borough, the Parking and Cemetery Services Manager advised that these were on the Parking Services work programme. Members were asked to note that the Parking Services Team was a small team with limited resources. The roll out of any parking scheme was governed by the resources available. A whole area approach, on a Ward by Ward basis was being taken currently to address the parking issues rather than looking at individual streets.

Members requested that for clarity, a map of the area to be considered be included in all future reports pertaining to Traffic Regulation Orders.

Members were of the view that more signage pertaining to the public car park should be provided to make it much clearer. This would be clearer to visitors and would encourage them not to use the two residents parking bays.

It was noted that the people most likely to benefit from these proposals were the residents. It was standard procedure to monitor new parking restrictions for the first six months after they were implemented. During this period any reports of

Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel  
30 June 2016

safety issues or parking displacement would be recorded and any significant issues dealt with as part of this process. This might lead to further consultation or amendments to the existing parking restrictions.

The primary objective of this scheme was to reduce the number of commuters parked on the road and thereby ease parking pressure for the residents. Parking Services therefore recommended the scheme to proceed and be implemented as advertised.

RESOLVED:

That having considered the proposal and the objections, the Cabinet be recommended to proceed with the creation of the "Borough Of Welwyn Hatfield (Arm And Sword Lane, Hatfield) (Restriction Of Waiting Permit Parking Zone) Order 2016" for the reasons outlined below:-

- A number of residents would have need of permits/vouchers as their vehicles will be on the road during the hours of the restriction.
- The Council's current enforcement resources did not provide 24/7 enforcement so the proposed days and times of operation were as extensive as the Council could practically manage
- Improvements would be made to the existing council car park signage, advertising its availability after 6.00pm.
- The proposed permit parking bay was 36m in length, equating to 6 x 6m. A standard parking space was 6m, therefore each property had been allocated one parking space.
- Existing residents of Arm and Sword Lane were currently purchasing permits for Zone B01 (Old Hatfield) – the creation of this new scheme would free up parking space.
- Business workers and existing residents would not have access to park on the proposed resident parking bay as this had been created specifically for residents of Arm and Sword Lane. No changes were proposed to the Salisbury Square car park which the business workers and existing residents currently used.

13. BRADMORE GREEN, BROOKMANS PARK - PARKING PLACES ORDER 2016:

The report of the Director (Finance and Operations) set out the results of the informal consultation, the formal consultation and the recommended course of action in relation to the Borough of Welwyn Hatfield (Bradmore Green, Brookmans Park, Hatfield), (Parking Places) Order which was implemented in January 2015. Subsequent to this date, the scheme had been monitored to consider any further representations from businesses and residents. As a result

Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel  
30 June 2016

of this process, it was proposed that the original Order be amended to reduce the waiting restriction in six parking bays. One letter of objection to the formal consultation had been received on the grounds that whilst there would still be some two hour spaces, just not enough for everyone, especially between 9:00-11:00am when the side roads had resident restrictions between 10:00-11:00am.

It was noted that the proposals were in response to requests made to both local Members and also to Parking Services. The additional presence of local worker parking has also reduced capacity for the casual shopper, denying many businesses the quick vehicle turnover essential to their trade. Parking Services therefore recommended the scheme to proceed and be implemented as advertised.

RESOLVED:

That having considered the proposal and the objection, the Cabinet be recommended to proceed with the creation of the "Borough Of Welwyn Hatfield (Bradmore Green, Brookmans Park, Hatfield) (Parking Places) Order 2016" for the reasons outlined as follows:

- The proposal was for two parking bays only to revert back to the one hour period. There still remained a further six separate parking bays where the waiting period was two hours.
- The surrounding roads subject to resident restrictions were split between 10.00-11.00am and 11.00am-12.00noon, offering visitors a suitable alternative.

14. PEPLINS WAY, BROOKMANS PARK - AMENDMENT TO WAITING RESTRICTIONS:

The report of the Director (Finance and Operations) set out the results of the informal consultation, the formal consultation and the recommended course of action subsequent to the implementation of a resident permit parking scheme together with junction protection in Peplins Way and Bradmore Way, Brookmans Park and a six month period of monitoring. No objections had been received by the Council in response to the formal advertisement of these proposals and only two minor changes were now proposed to improve access.

RESOLVED:

That having considered the proposal relating to Peplins Way, Brookmans Park – amendment to waiting restrictions and noting that no formal objections had been received during the formal consultation period, the Panel recommended the Cabinet to proceed with the creation of the "Borough Of Welwyn Hatfield (Peplins Way, Peplins Close, Bradmore Way and Bradmore Green, Brookmans Park, Hatfield) (Restriction Of Waiting and Permit Parking Zone) Order 2014 (Amendment) Order 2016" subject only to minor changes.



15. WESTLAND DRIVE, OAKLANDS AVENUE, THE GARDENS AND BLUEBRIDGE ROAD, BROOKMANS PARK, HATFIELD - REVIEW OF WAITING RESTRICTIONS:

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow members an opportunity to read and consider the questions posed by Mr Bailie. (Minute 11.2 refers)

The report of the Director (Finance And Operations) set out the results of the informal consultation, the formal consultation and the recommended course of action in relation to the proposed waiting restrictions at Westland Drive, Oaklands Avenue, The Gardens and Bluebridge Road, Brookmans Park. The Council received ten letters of objection to the formal consultation on the following grounds:-

- The existing restriction of one hour for alternate sides on Monday to Friday worked well.
- Why was Saturday included when all other schemes in the village operated on Monday to Friday?
- Why were the proposed double yellow lines active as far as No 7 Westland Drive?
- What was the point of consulting residents of the road not once but twice only to ignore the majority of people's views?
- The current and proposed restrictions were too cumbersome and unnecessary for the village.

Since the introduction of a number of other schemes within Brookmans Park, a number of residents had requested to be re-consulted on a resident parking permit scheme. The purpose of the scheme was to prevent long term parking by non-residents, but still provide a system which enabled residents if needed to park during the restriction. In parts of Westlands Drive and Oaklands Avenue the current restriction relied on residents having to move their vehicle from one side of the road to the other, which some residents found to be cumbersome and had led them to receive a penalty charge notice if they had not been home to move their vehicle.

It was noted that the people most likely to benefit from these proposals were the residents. Only a resident parking permit scheme had the benefit of allowing residents and their visitors to park on the road during the hour(s) of the restriction. With the removal of the yellow lines it would be less expensive to maintain and would be more in keeping with the look and feel of the rest of the village. There would be no requirement to move vehicles as there would be with a tidal system. Parking Services were firmly of the opinion that this was the best option for all residents. All monies accrued were channelled into both the enforcement and operation of the scheme. Parking Services therefore recommended this scheme to proceed and be implemented as advertised.

Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel  
30 June 2016

During discussion, Members acknowledged the reasoning behind the proposed changes and that parking issues were now being dealt with on a whole area approach.

The Parking and Cemetery Services Manager advised that Parking Services also had a duty to produce parking schemes where the restrictions were clear and transparent and easy to comprehend, not only for residents but also for the casual visitor. If Westland Drive was treated in isolation, this would lead to a proliferation in signage leading to confusion.

Members were of the view that the reasons for going ahead with the proposed changes to the parking restrictions for this scheme should be explained more fully in the letter sent to the objectors and be clearly stated.

The Chairman advised that future reports would include a summary of the equality impact assessment and the impact of proposed schemes within the body of the main report.

RESOLVED:

That having considered the proposals and objections received, the Cabinet be recommended to proceed with the creation of the "Borough of Welwyn Hatfield (Westland Drive, Oaklands Avenue, The Gardens and Bluebridge Road, Brookmans Park, Hatfield) (Restriction of Waiting and Permit Parking Zone) Order 2016" for the reasons outlined as follows:-

- The existing restriction only worked well if residents were at home and able to move their vehicles at the time of changeover. Complaints have been received from residents who were unable to do so.
- There was an error in an earlier Notice. The proposal was for the scheme to operate on Monday to Friday, and not Saturday as previously advertised.
- Residents in Westland Drive requested that yellow lines be installed at that location.
- Consultations running at the same time in an adjacent area resulted in a far larger resident permit scheme than originally anticipated, producing a higher level of parking displacement. A previous scheme advertising yellow line restrictions resulted in a petition being lodged at a very late stage requesting a resident permit parking scheme. To prevent any such reoccurrence, a final opportunity was given to residents to vote for this option.
- With the notable exception of Westland Drive, all of the current and proposed waiting restrictions in the village were in response to the majority opinion of the residents who replied to the consultations.

Meeting ended at 9.30pm  
ML