

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
4 October 2018

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

* Reporting to Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL held on Thursday 4 October 2018 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors S.Boulton (Chairman)

J. Boulton (substituting for H. Bromley), H. Bower (substituting for S. Glick), A. Chesterman, C. Gillett, G. Hayes, S. Kasumu, A Rohale, P. Shah, R. Trigg (substituting for J. Cragg) and P. Zukowskyj

ALSO PRESENT: Tenants' Panel Representative

R. Read

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Corporate Director (Resources, Environment & Cultural Services) (K. Ng)
Planning Policy and Implementation Manager (S. Tiley)
Parking and Cemetery Services Manager (V. Hatfield)
Governance Services Officer (G. Paddan)
Governance Services Officer (H. Johnson)

The Chairman announced the sad news of the death of Councillor M Perkins, Leader of the Council. The Panel stood to observe a minute's silence.

91. SUBSTITUTIONS

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

Councillor J. Boulton for H. Bromley
Councillor H. Bower for S. Glick
Councillor R. Trigg for J. Cragg

92. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H. Bromley, J. Cragg and S. Glick.

93. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2018 were deferred, as clarification was sought.

94. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

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

95. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

The following questions were received and the Chairman responded:

Question from Jodi Weston

Could the timeframes please be clarified on how these planning meetings are scheduled and agendas confirmed?

I attended the previous meeting in July 2018 when we were made aware that the proposal to implement a verge protection order in the close was being postponed for discussion at a later meeting. However since July there has been no further contact until a week before the rescheduled meeting is due to take place when residents are advised that further questions can be submitted and/or it is possible to attend. It seems a very short period of time to ask the residents to consider the new information received and make the necessary plans to be able to attend the meeting to hear the discussions. I am a working parent of a young daughter with a husband who works in London and subsequently who is rarely home by 1930. As such childcare needs to be organised and this takes planning. It would also be fairer, in my view to allow more time for consideration of the new information received rather than have to rush through this process. Is it not possible to give residents more time? Are these meetings scheduled at such short notice to render this impracticable?

Answer

The legal requirement is to provide 5 working days' notice for the agenda and reports to be published and made available on the Committee pages of the Council's website.

Letters were sent to all affected parties notifying them of the date of the committee meeting within these timescales.

This particular consultation has been in progress for over a year and all residents directly affected have been consulted on proposals during this period.

Residents during this process, requested that they should be allowed to continue parking on the four formal crossovers, which are classed as public highway. The Council has listened to these requests and together with County have agreed to treat Parkway Close as a special case and allow parking to continue in these areas as long as a valid permit/voucher is displayed during the days and times which the scheme operates. Therefore, the proposals have been amended what was formally advertised, this has

made the scheme less restrictive.

Question from Daniel Barcroft

Can you prove that the four remaining crossovers you are proposing to exclude from the A03 parking zone in Parkway Close were “unsanctioned additions” made at a later stage, with evidence such as an original plan or other documentation? If you cannot prove it then you cannot use that unfounded assertion as rationale for excluding them.

Answer

Any modifications sanctioned by the Council would have followed a process that first of all obtained the necessary approval from the County Council who are responsible for their maintenance; followed in turn by the necessary planning permission. Vehicle crossovers would then have been constructed to the correct standard.

Hertfordshire County Council has confirmed the areas that you are referring to are pedestrian footways and have never been adapted by them to accommodate vehicles.

Question from David Steed

What you term “vehicle crossovers” for permit parking cannot apply to the drives of no 1 and no 8; there is nothing to “crossover “to- just the garage door-nothing beyond. Your concern to be “fair” to residents victimises the two residents (one here for 60 years, living alone and blind in one eye) with nowhere to park whatsoever. This not “being fair.

Will the panel please acknowledge belatedly its embarrassing mistake in including the drives to no 1 and no 8 Honeycroft and remove these from the plan?

Answer

The crossovers are still classed as public highway, and as such should not be classed as additional parking for residents. However, as in the case of Parkway Close the Borough Council and County Council have recognised these are a special case and included them within the relevant resident parking permit scheme for the area.

Question from Susan Busse

In view of the fact that there are already more cars belonging to the residents of Parkway Close than there are spaces for, how can this committee possibly continue to ignore the fact that every single one of the households in Parkway Close and Parkway numbers 70 -84 is against the amalgamation of the parking in Parkway and Parkway Close.

The bombshell letter from the county council yesterday demanding the removal of a further four spaces immediately surely makes this even less sensible.

Answer

It is not the council's responsibility to provide parking for every vehicle within the Borough.

However, parking management is the Council's responsibility and by amalgamating the two resident parking permit schemes this will provide residents access to more spaces than currently available in A03.

Question from Jean Cook

My garage does not accommodate my small Citroen C3 car and allow for me a 78 year old widow to park and exit my car. I am therefore required to park on the run in for the garage. I am not able to part on the road as the area outside my house is opposite Honeycroft and double-lined. At 78 I require help from my three daughters and a gardener who comes once a week. I am a pensioner and cannot afford to purchase four separate resident permits for the proposed parking area further along the road which is currently filled up with commuters from dawn to dusk. I am very concerned that this will have a massive impact on people visiting me and providing me with additional help as an elderly lady I require.

Can the group please identify how I am to afford the cost of concreting my driveway or the resident passes this will ultimately require if you enforce the discontinued use of the cross-over driveway, as parking outside my house is not an option available to me.

Answer

There will be resident parking permit bays marked on the ground on the same side of the road as Mrs Cook's property. These will be only be available for residents and visitors to use during the days and times the resident scheme is in operation. As Mrs Cook is 78, she would qualify for vouchers at a discounted rate. These vouchers can be used more than once a day, if residents have visitors at different times.

96. ST ALBANS CITY AND DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PUBLICATION DRAFT CONSULTATION DOCUMENT, SEPTEMBER 2018

Report of the Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) on St. Albans District and City Council's (SADC) published Local Plan Publication document 2018, which was out for consultation between 4 September and 17 October 2018. Once adopted, this Plan would cover the period between 2020 to 2036 and would replace the policies contained within its existing District Local Plan (adopted in 1994) that covered the period between 1981-1996.

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As the Plan is at the formal Regulation 19 stage the Council's response would need to focus on any soundness or cross boundary strategic issues relating to the Duty to Cooperate.

The report noted that the NPPF Revision was published in July 2018 and would apply as SADC were intending to submit their Plan for examination after 24 January 2019 (Para 214). This required strategic plan-making authorities to collaborate, to identify and address strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries. The main body of the report highlighted the key issues for this Council whilst the proposed Council's response had been included in Appendix A attached to the report.

Members noted that it was not possible to state the accurate number of dwellings needed for St Albans under the government's standard methodology as the government have announced that they will be consulting on changes to the methodology which are likely to be in place when the St Albans Local Plan is at examination. With a number of key pieces of evidence having yet to be completed and therefore it was not possible to fully assess the proposals set out in Regulation 19 consultation. Therefore the Council will make a number of holding objections which it hopes to resolve before the submission of the St Albans Local Plan for examination.

Members agreed that the Council's response should be robust.

RESOLVED

1. That the Panel agrees to the proposed response to the SADC Local Publication consultation document (2018) as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and indicate any further issues that Members wish to see included in this Council's response.
2. That the Head of Planning be given delegated authority to agree the final response to the consultation with Councillor S Boulton, Planning Policy.

97. INTRODUCTION OF VERGE PROTECTION ORDER IN VARIOUS ROADS, HANDSIDE WARD, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

The Panel considered the report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on the introduction of Verge Protection Order in various roads, Handside Ward, Welwyn Garden City.

The report noted that the Council began consulting with residents in the four areas which are described as Parkway A, B, C and D. The proposals included the introduction of two new Resident Parking Permit Schemes (RPPS) and merging two existing residents' parking schemes into one. In addition, the Council's proposals included introducing a Verge Protection Order (VPO) to cover verges, footways and vehicle crossovers (VXOs).

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The VPO covers the limits of the public highway, extending from the centre of the road to the highway boundary, which in many cases is the boundary of the private property. Yellow line waiting restrictions also share the same boundary.

The Council receives a significant number of requests to deal with people parking on the verge and pavements. At present, enforcement of parking on the pavement has been the remit of the Police as this could be classed as obstruction, however this was being regarded as a low priority for the Police due to other work pressures. Vehicles parking on the verge and green areas are reported through to the Council and the Street Warden Team who monitor and place notices on vehicles parking in such areas, requesting that they refrain from doing this. Without a VPO in place, there would be no means to effectively and robustly manage vehicles parking in these areas.

The report set out the results of the informal consultation, the statutory consultation and the recommended course of action. A total of 258 properties and businesses had been consulted. The report also outlined the amendments the Council are proposing and the objections which were received in response to the advertised VPO.

It was noted that 25 objections had been received relating to the VPO proposals (attached as Appendix A to the report).

Councillor Cowan spoke on Parkway Close in respect of the reduced number of parking spaces and resident's opinion on the proposals and why life was being made difficult for these residents. Reference was made to a potential petition which was not acknowledged as a petition due to having less than 50 signatures. He added that the changes made since the last proposal did offer a few more spaces but raised the point as to why some crossovers were acceptable to park on and others were not. He suggested that as the proposal was not being welcomed by some residents that this matter be either deferred or rejected. He also commented on the letter sent out to residents from the County Council, which was discreditable.

The Chairman explained the procedure of the Panel meeting, as a number of comments were being made by the public present during the deliberation of the meeting.

The following points were raised and discussed:

- Clarification was sought on the consultation that took place; in particular the process and the recommendation being presented to Cabinet.
- Parkway B objection at 3.2.4 – a question was raised whether it would be possible for residents to maintain the crossovers and whether this was something that other Councils delivered.
- Discussion ensued on cross-overs and whether the distance was reasonable. It was noted that some residents were of the opinion that they should be allowed to continue parking on the four formal and three informal cross-overs.

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- Had there been a parking survey conducted? Officers explained that there had been a spot check survey conducted and results were available on the website but not a seven day survey.
- It was noted that the size of the garages was outdated, as vehicles had changed and that garages should be built for purpose.
- The Panel was sympathetic to resident's concerns and the requests received but it was agreed that the ethos of the Garden City should be maintained.
- Some Members agreed that the resident's concerns should not be dismissed and that this matter should be deferred and reconsidered.
- Disabled advisory bays should be upgraded as they do not always serve their intended purpose. The Officer explained that these bays will be monitored.
- An open forum meeting was suggest so that resident's questions could be answered.

The recommendation in the published report was:

1. That the Panel consider the objections received in sections 3.1.1, 3.2.4 and 3.3.7 of the report, in particular the issues raised in Section 15 around equalities and diversity. Having considered all the detailed issues in the report including any proposed mitigating action; recommends to Cabinet to proceed with the creation of VPO order as amended (Appendix C attached to the report) for the reasons set out in the report.
2. That the Panel recommend to Cabinet to the principles as outlined in Section 4 when consulting and introducing VPOs within the Borough.

It was moved by Councillor G. Hayes and seconded by Councillor P. Zukowskyj that the **recommendation be amended** to the following wording:

'I propose and seek a seconder to defer this decision today due to an unusual strength of feeling by members of the public. As it is unusual, I propose an open forum meeting be held for residents so they can have their questions fully answered so there is no confusion when this matter is brought back to this Chamber'.

On the amendment being put to the meeting there voted:

FOR approval of the amendment – 7

AGAINST approval of the amendment – 4 and the amendment was carried.

Meeting ended at 8.50 pm
GP