

Part I

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Ward: Hatfield Central

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL – 31 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES)

AMENDMENT OF THE RESTRICTIONS IN HATFIELD TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 There are currently five car parks located in Hatfield town centre, which the Council are responsible for (**Appendix A**). The Council is intending to build a Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) in The Common car park next year. Although additional parking provision has been made to mitigate the loss of the 148 parking spaces, there will be 90 less spaces during the construction period of the MSCP. Therefore the Council has consulted the businesses and the residents in the town centre on these changes, so as to try and ensure that there is adequate parking provision for local workers, deliveries, customers and residents during this time.
- 1.2 This report sets out the results of the informal consultation, the statutory consultation and the recommended course of action. A total of 570 businesses and residents have been consulted directly. Twelve objections have been received and shown within this report. See **Appendix B**.
- 1.3 The Council can amend proposals once advertised, as long as they make the scheme less restrictive. This can be done without having to re-advertise the Traffic Regulation Order.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Panel consider the objections received in 5.1 to 5.12 and in particular the issues raised in Section 16 around equalities and diversity and having considered all the detailed issues in this report including any proposed mitigating actions, recommends to Cabinet to proceed with the amended proposals (**Appendix E**) and the creation of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for all the reasons set out in this report.

3 Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)

- 3.1 On the 7th August 2019 the public notice proposing “**THE BOROUGH OF WELWYN HATFIELD (VARIOUS CAR PARKS, HATFIELD) (OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES) ORDER 2019**” was advertised in the Welwyn Hatfield Times. Notices were also erected in the car parks affected. The closing date for formal objections was Friday 13th September 2019. See **Appendix C**

4 Background

- 4.1 Consultation letters and proposals were sent to the businesses and resident who reside in the town centre at the beginning of July 2019 (**Appendix D**). Within the letter there was an invitation for anyone wanting to discuss the proposals to come to a drop-in session on 26th July 2019, which was held at White Lion House between 12pm and 7pm. Ten people came to the drop in session and a total of 30 responses were received to the proposals.
- 4.2 The majority of the responses related to:
- The lack of parking available for more than 2 hours and there were concerns that the unrestricted parking bays in Lemsford Road car park would be occupied by local workers not wanting to pay for a permit.
 - Lack of available parking for residents of the town centre and with the reduction of spaces this would make it even more difficult to find parking within a reasonable distance to their homes.
 - Concerns about time limiting the disabled bays, which may have an negative impact on local workers who currently use these spaces

- 4.3 In response to these comments the proposals were amended and advertised on the 7th August 2019 (**Appendix C**).

5 Objections

- 5.1 There is one objection from a resident pertaining to the resident parking permits and that only one will be issued per resident.

Below is a summary of the grounds for objection.

- a) I believe that this proposals discriminates against residents of town centre properties as elsewhere in the district where on street parking permits have been brought in properties are able to purchase additional permit, why are we been treated differently?
- 5.2 The reasons for moving forward with the proposal of one permit per residential property, which does not already have existing parking provision is as follows:
- a) In similar locations, such as Welwyn Garden City town centre or other local shopping centres such as Bradmore Green, Brookmans Park and Station Road, Cuffley; additional residential parking permits are not available to resident who reside within the town/village centres. The Council recognises that there are limited parking options during the days and times the scheme would operate, which is one of the reasons why Saturday's limitation has been removed and the proposal of one resident permit per property.
- 5.3 There are ten objections from the businesses pertaining to the advertised proposals Order.

Below is a summary of the grounds for objection from a business located in The Common.

- a) Your relocation of parking does not account for staff working late at night or consider their vulnerability. The majority of our staff work shifts and therefore those working evenings would be more at risk.
- b) We feel it would be reasonable to request that the council considers permit holder status to our employees considering the importance of job they do within the area. It would also be prudent to provide an annual permit status cost for the practice at a reduced rate given this is a NHS GP practice.

5.4 The reasons for moving forward with the proposals are as follows:

- a) The 1 hour limited waiting restrictions for the on-street finish at 5pm Monday – Friday, anyone could park in these bays after 4pm and all night until 9am the following morning. There are at least three parking spaces available at Lister House Surgery, these could be reserved for those staff working night shifts
- b) The businesses permit which are proposed for Dog Kennel Lane and Link Drive car parks are already discounted to £50 for the businesses in Hatfield town centre. In all other areas of the borough these are £225 per permit.

5.5 Below is a summary of the grounds for two objections received from businesses in The Arcade.

- a) We already struggle with the 3 hours limit. Some of my customers have to go and move their cars with colour/ foils/conditioner in their hair. Which really doesn't give them the relaxing service that other Hairdressers in other towns can give you. I am losing money because of the existing parking restrictions.
- b) The council have said that they did a survey and most people coming to the town only stay 2 hours. That's fine, but what about those who want to stay longer??? No options to stay longer unless you move the car.
- c) They are also Lengthening the restrictions from Monday – Friday to Monday to Saturday.
- d) What happens when there is a function in the town?? You have 2 hours and then you have to leave. The Christmas light switch on?? After 2 hours

5.6 The reasons for moving forward with the proposals are as follows:

- a) The council have made some further changes and increased the number of 3 hour limited waiting bays from 26 to 117, and provided a further 61 parking bays to park for 4 hours.
- b) See a) for response

- c) The council have amended the proposals so that the restrictions will only be operational from Monday to Friday.
 - d) See a) and c) for response
- 5.7 Below is a summary of the grounds for an objection received from one of the businesses in Market Place.
- a) At a meeting which took place in 2012 when the council initially suggested restrictions were first introduced in the car parks, particular businesses such as hairdressers need clients to be able to park for 3-4 hours for longer treatments
 - b) It is also unacceptable to change Link Drive into permit only car park when you say there is only going to be a limited amount of permit spaces for businesses, so not only do you want to stop our trade we are expected to not be able to park to work either. If a car park is to be made exclusive permit only then enough spaces should be provided for those business people who require space to park or not implement the system at all.
 - c) Parking Manager also mentioned that it would not be much of a burden to be charged £50.00 a year per permit, but does not also understand that due to the economic conditions in Hatfield for years we have lost money and staff every year since the last recession 2007 and this may not be much to them but it is to us
- 5.8 The reasons for moving forward with the proposals are as follows:
- a) The council have made some further changes and increased the number of 3 hour limited waiting bays from 26 to 117 and provided a further 61 parking bays to facilitate parking for up to 4 hours.
 - b) It is not physically possible for the Council to provide parking for every vehicle that requires to use the car parks. The Council endeavours to maximise the spaces available. The Council has no facility to guarantee a parking space within any of the car parks in Welwyn Hatfield, even those car parks that are chargeable. However, the number of permits issued will be monitored to try and alleviate over subscription..
 - c) The businesses permit which are proposed for Dog Kennel Lane and Link Drive car parks are already discounted to £50 for the businesses in Hatfield town centre. In all other areas of the borough these are £225 per permit.
- 5.9 Below is a summary of the grounds for two objections received from the Citizens Advice.
- a) The parking survey being used for the consultation dates from 2012.
 - b) Concerns raised about permit parking numbers and now that residents have been included additional parking spaces have not been provided to compensate for this.

- c) Introducing parking restrictions in the surrounding roads at the same time reducing the number of spaces available for all-day parking is going to make parking beyond 2 or 3 hours extremely difficult
- d) When I met recently with the Parking Manager at Welwyn Hatfield Council, we discussed that the proposed business permits allow 2 vehicles on a permit I asked about the possibility of allowing 3 vehicles per business permit for volunteers. This was suggested because a scheme for business permits better reflects the parking requirements of full time employees, rather than volunteers who work 1 or 2 days each week. I have since heard that the council would not be able to extend this to 3 vehicles and it will remain at 2.
- e) We would like reassurance that the council has factored in enough parking for people who work in the town centre and need to be here all day
- f) Volunteers and staff are finding it very difficult to park since the recent changes to the parking restrictions in the surrounding roads, particularly if they arrive after 8:30am and are then spending time driving around the town centre locating a space. Those who can only find short term parking are having to set alarms to remind themselves to move their vehicles before the 3 hours expire or face a parking fine. This means them having to leave the office to search for another parking space, in some cases twice during the day. This results in the following disruption

5.10 The reasons for moving forward with the proposals as follows:

- a) The parking study used to guide the proposals was carried out in March 2018.
- b) There are no alternative locations to be able to increase the number of parking spaces available. The Council will create two temporary car parks to try and mitigate the loss of parking during the construction phase of the development.
- c) The introduction of the restrictions in the surrounding roads were requested by residents. This is due to the number of non-residential vehicles parking; preventing residents and their visitors from being able to park near to their homes, As with all changes these will be monitored. There are some shared use parking bays on Link Drive near the car park, if these are underused they could be considered to be included in the permit parking area at a later date.
- d) A business permit is issued to the person and allows for two vehicles to be added onto the permit as they may have access to more than one vehicle. The Council has agreed to provide an account for someone at the Citizens Advice to be able to change the permits depending on who is working that day.
- e) It is not feasible for the Council to provide parking for every vehicle who want to use the car parks, every effort is made to maximise the spaces

available. Local workers could look at alternative methods of travelling into work, possible public transport, cycling or walking where possible.

- f) The Link Drive car park is currently unrestricted, so non-residents who were parking in the surrounding roads are now looking for alternative parking. If the permit scheme is introduced then only local workers/residents with a valid permit will be able to park there.

5.11 Below is a summary of the grounds for five objections received from the Queensway Health Centre which is located in Kennelwood Lane car park.

- a) The restriction to 2 hours in Kennelwood Lane car park will impact patients who often have to wait a long time during group clinic sessions and we also run training sessions which last longer than 2 hours.
- b) Object to permits to be provided on a first come first served basis and this should be considered in much detail. I have considerable concerns about the reduction in the number of spaces available for health workers carrying out a valuable service to the local community and the restrictions on parking having a significant impact on the elderly people and families who visit our Health Care on a regular.
- c) Can people that have a Doctor/Health Visitor permit, still apply for a permit for Link Drive?
- d) I cannot see that the council has made any effort to consult staff members at Queensway Health Centre regarding the necessary parking provision needed to run an effective service.
- e) With the proposed changes to the car parking where do you propose we park without incurring a substantial cost to the NHS for parking?

5.12 The reasons for moving forward with the proposals as follows:

- a) The Council have made some further changes and increased the number of 3 hour limited waiting bays from 26 to 117 and provided a further 61 parking bays to park 4 hours.
- b) Everyone working in the town centre provide a valuable service and the only way to manage parking fairly is to have the permits issued on a first come first served basis. If the proposals are approved; notification letters of the new parking arrangements will include how to apply and pay for your permit. These will be hand delivered to each shop to make sure that the letters reach the workers as well as the owners/managers.
- c) Yes.
- d) Consultation letters were sent to every business including the Health Centre, the drop in session was available to all to attend, giving everyone an opportunity to offer parking ideas and discuss their concerns.

- e) The business permit which are proposed for Dog Kennel Lane and Link Drive car parks are already discounted to £50, and this will remain the same for the businesses in Hatfield town centre. In all other areas of the borough these are £225 per permit. Local workers with the relevant evidence are able to purchase a permit.

6 Legal Implication(s)

TROs are created under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Consultations follow a statutory legal process as set out in The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. No other legal implications are inherent in relation in to the proposals in this report.

7 Financial Implication(s)

- 7.1 The cost of TRO works recommended in this report will be funded through existing Parking Services revenue and capital budgets.
- 7.2 It is standard procedure to monitor new parking restrictions for the first 6 months after they are implemented. During this period all reports of safety issues or parking displacement will be recorded. If any significant safety issues are discovered during the monitoring period, Parking Services will investigate and carry out the appropriate remedial action.

8 Risk Management Implications

- 8.1 Changing the parking conditions in the above-mentioned roads could generate negative publicity. Some parking may be displaced into nearby roads.
- 8.2 It is standard procedure to monitor new parking restrictions for the first 6 months after they are implemented. During this period, all reports of safety issues or parking displacement will be recorded. If any significant safety issues are discovered during the monitoring period, Parking Services where possible will investigate and carryout the appropriate remedial action.
- 8.3 The amount of yellow lining and parking control continues to increase, and this increase may in due course require additional budget to ensure lining and signage is appropriate for enforcement.

9 Security & Terrorism Implications

- 9.1 There are no security & terrorism implications inherent in relation to the proposals in this report.

10 Human Resources

- 10.1 There are no known Human Resources implications in relation to the proposals in this report.

11 Communication and Engagement

- 11.1 When making any changes to parking restrictions there is a statutory consultation process set out in the Local Authority Traffic Orders (Procedures) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 which the Council needs to adhere to.
- 11.2 This includes consulting directly with all affected parties and a number of statutory consultees the county councillor, Police and Hertfordshire County Council.
- 11.3 The Ward councillors have been consulted at every stage of the consultation. They have been made aware of the recommendations in this report and no objections have been received.
- 11.4 In addition, Notices are required to be erected within all roads affected and as per the 1996 Regulations to advertise in the local newspaper, in this case the Welwyn Hatfield Times.
- 11.5 This process has been carried out and there are no known implications in relation to the proposals in this report.

12 Health and Wellbeing

- 12.1 There are no known Health and Wellbeing implications in relation to the proposals in this report

13 Procurement Implications

- 13.1 There are no procurement implications inherent in relation to the proposals in this report.

14 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 14.1 There are no climate change implications inherent in relation to the proposals in this report.

15 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 15.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority Protect and Enhance the Environment, and specifically to the achievement to Deliver Effective Parking Services
 - Protect and enhance the environment and deliver effective parking services;
 - Engage with our communities and provide value for money

16 Equality and Diversity

- 16.1 I confirm that an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out.
- 16.2 The EqIA found that there is a positive impacts on Disability. The disabled parking bays will not be time restrictive and they are able to park for three hours

in any other limited waiting parking spaces as long as a valid blue badge and time clock is displayed.

- 16.3 Disabled drivers with a valid blue badge are however allowed to park on double yellow lines without a loading prohibition for up to 3 hrs where it is safe to do so without causing obstruction to traffic.
 - 16.4 During the six months monitoring period should any unintended impacts become known, Parking Services will where possible investigate and carryout the appropriate remedial action.

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Date 11th October 2019

Background papers to be listed (if applicable)