

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET HOUSING AND PLANNING PANEL COMMITTEE – 17 MARCH 2016
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (FINANCE AND OPERATIONS)

HANDSIDE – THE WAY FORWARD, NEXT STEPS

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 In September 2015, over 3,200 general parking questionnaires were delivered to the residential properties in Handside ward, of those 1,061 forms were completed and returned. These have been collated and analysed, and this report provides details on how Parking Services proposes to investigate the parking issues which were highlighted during this process and in what order the Council will address them.
- 1.2 At the same time businesses in Welwyn Garden City town centre were sent a slightly different questionnaire, which focused more on their customers and employees. Over 150 businesses received this questionnaire, but only 21 businesses felt compelled to complete the forms and return them.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Panel recommends to Cabinet the proposed work programme in Handside ward, as outlined in item 3.4.5 and Appendix A.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 Handside ward was added the Parking Services work programme 2015/16.

3.2 External parking study

- 3.2.1 The initial work involved an external contractor conducting a parking study of all the roads within this ward (including the town centre). This included Welwyn Garden City town centre. The study was carried over three days:

- Saturday, 11th July 2015;
- Wednesday, 15th July 2015 and;
- Sunday, 19th July 2015

The parking study captured the following data:

- Number of parked vehicles
- Length of time parked

- 3.2.2 The parking study only provided a snap shot of the parking which took place on the three days it was carried out. The result of the parking study can be found on the Handside ward consultation pages of the website.

<http://www.welhat.gov.uk/handsideparking>

3.2.3 The study indicated parking pressures either during the day, on an evening or both in the following roads:

Day	Evening	Both
Guessens Court	Amethyst Walk	Hobbs Way
Attimore Close		Downfields
Stacklands		Newfields
Farm Close		Melbourne Court

3.2.4 The council looked next to residents to report specific parking issues they are currently experiencing, sometimes on a daily basis.

3.3 Parking questionnaire - Businesses

3.3.1 Businesses in the town centre were sent a bespoke questionnaire (Appendix B) which focussed on their customers and staff requirements/challenges. The council only received 21 completed forms from over 150 which were delivered.

3.3.2 Of the comments received these centred on affordable parking options for their staff, and looking to increase the amount of free parking on-street for their customers.

3.3.3 The results of the study indicated all the roads which form the town centre are very busy. Regularly, there are vehicles queuing to get in to the John Lewis car park or to find a space in Stonehills.

3.3.4 The comments from a small number of residents in the town centre, focussed on providing more parking options for residents, particularly in the evenings and weekends.

3.3.5 Parking Services are proposing to separate the parking consultation and solutions from Welwyn Garden City town centre from the rest of the Handside ward. The separate consultation will include residents and businesses in the following roads:

- Church Road (between Osborn Way and Parkway)
- College Road
- Fretherne Road
- Howardsgate
- Parkway (to the junction of Church Road)
- Stonehills
- Wigmores North

3.4 Parking questionnaire – Remainder of Handside

3.4.1 A general parking questionnaire (Appendix C) was delivered in September 2015 to over 3000 properties. This provided recipients to report specific parking issues they were experiencing, which would not have been captured in the parking study.

3.4.2 The council received over 1000 completed forms from residents which equates to a 33% response rate. This high response indicates there are areas which need to be investigated further to see how these could be resolved. Many of the roads which responded already have a parking restriction. However, the current types of restrictions are now less appropriate for residents of Handside ward.

3.4.3 The requests for changes are spread throughout the ward. The top five issues reported were:

- Requests for resident parking permit scheme;
- Not enough parking for residents and their visitors;
- Extending restrictions to include Sundays and/or longer hours;
- Visibility issues particular at junctions;
- Inconsiderate parking from both residents and non-residents (Footway and verge parking).

3.4.5 The roads within Handside will be split into four areas (Appendix A), the proposal is to consult residents in the following order, of which 1 and 2 will be consulted concurrently:

1. Longcroft Lane and surrounding roads (East of Parkway)
2. Welwyn Garden City town centre
3. North of Barleycroft Road and Applecroft Road
4. The remaining roads in the ward

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

4.1 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.

5 Financial Implication(s)

5.1 The cost of TRO works recommended in this report will be funded through existing Parking Services revenue and capital budgets.

6 Risk Management Implications

The risks related to this proposal are:

6.1 A risk assessment has not been prepared in relation to the proposals in this report as there are no new significant risks inherent in the proposals.

- 6.2 There is a potential for adverse or positive risk for the Council with regards public opinion for the management or introduction of new parking restrictions. The risk is likely but any significant safety issues will be reviewed and dealt with following the six month monitoring period.
- 6.3 The amount of yellow lining and parking control within the borough continues to increase, and this increase may in due course require additional budget to ensure lining and signage is correct for enforcement.
- 6.4 Changing the parking conditions in the above areas could generate negative publicity. There needs to be some real consideration about how to maximise the use of the space available, which may mean introducing more shared use bays as in Parkway.

7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

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

8 Procurement Implication(s)

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

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

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

10 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 10.1 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 – Deliver effective parking services;
- Engage with our communities and provide value for money;
- Revitalise our town centres and other shopping precincts

11 Equality and Diversity

- 11.1 I confirm that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out. The creation of a TRO requires further statutory consultation. An EIA will be finalised during each stage of the TRO process.

Name of author *(Vikki Hatfield)*
Title *(Parking and Cemetery Services Manager)*
Date *(1 March 2016)*

Background papers to be listed (if applicable)