

Part I

Item No: 0

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Sherrards Ward

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL – 9 NOVEMBER 2023

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT)

INTRODUCTION OF RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING SCHEME, AND OTHER WAITING RESTRICTIONS, IN VARIOUS ROADS, SHERRARDS WARD, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Sherrards ward was added to the 2022/24 Works Programme due to 67 requests submitted from within the ward between 2013 and 2022. Over 25% of these requests were from the 4 streets within the proposed "A02" Permit Zone. Many of the previous requests highlighted a lack of all-day on-street parking for residents of Walden Road/Place, as well as ongoing high demand from non-residents as soon as the current single yellow line restrictions end at 11am. This in turn led to residents finding it difficult to seek parking during the daytime overall.
- 1.2 In October 2022, the Council undertook a parking survey with residents in Sherrards Ward, Welwyn Garden City. The purpose of the survey was to engage with residents in seeking their views on parking options for the area.
- 1.3 Due to clearly defined physical boundaries and the existing "AV" permit zone, this area was subjected to its own survey, independent from the remaining properties in Sherrards Ward. Residents in that zone indicated to keep the restrictions as is whilst giving provision to prohibit parking on verge and footway.
- 1.4 This report sets out the results of the consultation pertaining to parts of **Blakemere Road, The Orchard, Walden Place and Walden Road**, the statutory consultation, and the recommended course of action.
- 1.5 The existing parking restrictions in the four roads are single yellow lines effective Monday to Saturday, 9am to 11am and have been in place since 1991. The current yellow line restrictions apply to all drivers at a detriment to residents who cannot park on the roads as a permit cannot be acquired to park on a single yellow line long term.
- 1.6 It is now established practice that with all new parking restrictions, the Council monitor any reports as to their effectiveness for the first 6 months following their implementation via an online feedback form. Should the Council receive reports requesting changes or amendments to the new restrictions due to significant safety issues, then a review of the restrictions would take place which may result in further recommendations.
- 1.7 No objections have been received relating to the proposed order relating to the introduction of the Prohibition of Stopping and Waiting on Verge or Footway.
- 1.8 73 objections have been received relating to the proposed order for the Permit Zone which are set out below in Section 4. These objections are detailed in Section 5. A full list of the objections is contained within **Appendix A**.

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 **"The Borough of Welwyn Hatfield (VARIOUS ROADS, SHERRARDS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY) (RESTRICTION OF WAITING AND PERMIT PARKING ZONES) ORDER 2023"**

That the Panel considers the objections received in Section 5 in addition to the issues raised in Section 16 around equalities and diversity and recommends to Cabinet to proceed with creation of the amended traffic regulation order as set in Section 3.7 of this report; and to note the delegated powers conferred to Executive Member for Environment to sign an executive member decision to proceed with the creation of the traffic regulation order, subject to unanimous recommendation of the Panel.

2.2 **"THE BOROUGH OF WELWYN HATFIELD (VARIOUS ROADS, SHERRARDS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY) (PROHIBITION OF STOPPING AND WAITING ON VERGE OR FOOTWAY) ORDER 2023"**

That the Panel considers that no objections were received, in addition to the issues raised in Section 16 around equalities and diversity and recommends to Cabinet to proceed with the creation of the traffic regulation order as set in this report; and to note the delegated powers conferred to Executive Member for Environment to sign an executive member decision to proceed with the creation of the traffic regulation order, subject to unanimous recommendation of the Panel.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 Following on from a parking survey carried out in October 2022 for the Sherrards Ward, residents were asked to comment on parking proposals. The number of responses in the area was generally good, with most respondents being in favour for some form of parking restrictions to be introduced or maintained.
- 3.2 The existing "AV" Permit Zone response rate was low with 52 out of 264 properties responding, (excluding duplicate household responses). Parking Services only accept the first response from a household to ensure every household has an equal say within the informal consultation. Members of the same household will likely have a shared experience and the onus is on the household to co-ordinate a response where there may be differences of opinion within a household. 75% of these respondents were in favour of retaining the existing Permit Scheme.
- 3.3 The majority of respondents in "AV" Permit Zone also highlighted verge and footway parking as the main issue.
- 3.4 The proposed "A02" Permit Zone had a higher response rate with 44 properties out of 119 responding (37%), most respondents were in favour of a resident permit Scheme. Walden Road / Walden Place with a 15/2 split with 15 being in favour of a permit scheme and two for retaining the single yellow lines. Blakemere Road / The Orchard much closer with 11/10 split between Permits (11) and Single Yellow Lines (10). The original survey results only identified the request for a Permit Zone, so expanding the existing "AV" zone was proposed Monday to Friday, however at the second feedback stage the residents clearly indicated a preference for a smaller Zone with longer restrictions, some relaying fears of the proposed Campus East development, at this point the proposed "A02" Permit Zone was initiated with Monday to Sunday Restrictions.
- 3.5 The majority of respondents in "A02" zone also highlighted verge and footway parking as the main issue.

- 3.6 Following the review of the survey results in conjunction with comments and objections received, it is recommended to proceed with the creation of an amended Resident Permit Parking Scheme as outlined in Section 3.7 of this report.
- 3.7 Zone A02 to operate Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm and covering Blakemere Road, The Orchard, Walden Place and Walden Road.
- 3.8 Verge and Footway Prohibition Order (VFPO) was proposed as residents raised concerns regarding the damage caused to grass verges or the obstruction of the footway because of parking. Therefore, the officer's recommendation is to introduce a Verge and Footway Prohibition Order throughout zones "AV" and "A02", which would prohibit this practice. Sections of Blakemere Road, Walden Place and The Orchard was not proposed as the width of the carriageway was too narrow to allow parked vehicles on the carriageway.

4 Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO)

- 4.1 On 16th August 2023, a Public Notice of Intention proposing the below Orders was advertised in the Welwyn Hatfield Times. (**Appendix B**).
- (1) **"The Borough of Welwyn Hatfield (VARIOUS ROADS, SHERRARDS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY) (RESTRICTION OF WAITING AND PERMIT PARKING ZONES) ORDER 2023"**
- (2) **"THE BOROUGH OF WELWYN HATFIELD (VARIOUS ROADS, SHERRARDS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY) (PROHIBITION OF STOPPING AND WAITING ON VERGE OR FOOTWAY) ORDER 2023"**
- 4.2 Notices were erected in the affected length of roads and letters delivered to residents and businesses. Plans illustrating the proposals for each Order are attached to this report. (See **Appendix C**).

5 Objections

- 5.1 Seventy-three (73) objections were received. 24 from the four roads within the proposals, 5 from neighbouring roads in Sherrards Ward and 68 overall objections specifically mention The Orchard Tennis Club. (See **Appendix A**).
- 5.2 Below is a summary of the grounds for objection and reasons for moving forward with the proposed restrictions as outlined in Section 3.7 of this report.

The below table summarises the objections and the officer’s responses. It should be noted that all objections were considered however for the purpose of this report, objections made on the same grounds were consolidated into one objection point and officers’ response provided for each point.

Objection Point	Response
<p>As residents of Blakemere Road, we have always felt the current parking restriction i.e., 9am-11am Monday to Saturday are more than adequate and works well. There have never been any problems with non-resident parking in this Zone.</p>	<p>The survey results indicate the existence of non-resident parking in Walden Road and to some extent Blakemere Road due to the requests for a Permit Scheme, any such restriction in Walden Road would likely cause displacement into Blakemere Road. The current single yellow restrictions do not allow for residential parking.</p>
<p>We also feel allowing non-residents to park freely in the Zone after 11am helps with footfall in WGC Town Centre. I am sure you will agree that the retail offering in the town centre needs all the support and assistance it can get. With the current cost of living crisis, some shoppers are attracted to the town centre for a reasonable amount of time without incurring a parking fee. If this restriction goes ahead, shoppers may choose to visit alternative retail areas where free parking is easily accessible resulting in further losses to our Town Centre.</p>	<p>Residents within Walden Road especially had indicated in the survey stages the struggle to find parking space after the existing yellow line times caused by shoppers, local workers, and college students. The Town Centre does already provide a significant number of free on street parking for 1 hour within the core of the town.</p>
<p>My objection is that the proposed scheme is unnecessarily restrictive and is a solution to a problem that does not exist as the existing scheme is sufficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposed parking restrictions Monday – Sunday 09:00 to 17:00 is unnecessarily restrictive and the nature of the restrictions to be imposed was not communicated during your survey. I believe the 30% support would have been reduced further had it nature been communicated. • the current restriction of 2 hours prohibited parking being viewed as sufficient to control excessive non-resident parking. <p>I would urge a rethink especially the Saturday and Sunday parking restrictions which I believe is very unnecessary. The Saturday and Sunday restrictions will restrict and reduce the enjoyment of weekend visits by family and friends and simply add to the stress of modern life.</p> <p>If Walden Road has a specific concern, being significantly closer to the town centre, than I would suggest that their situation is reviewed independently from Blakemere Road and The Orchard.</p>	<p>The survey results indicate the existence of non-resident parking in Walden Road and to some extent Blakemere Road due to the requests for a Permit Scheme. Whilst 31% of respondents within the proposed Zone were in favour of Mon-Fri restrictions, 54% were in favour of Mon-Sat or Mon-Sun restrictions.</p>
<p>The proposed restrictions will result in current on-street parking on Blakemere and Waldon Roads being displaced onto neighbouring roads, including Coneydale, after 11am. This will further increase the burden on Coneydale if 9-5 restrictions are imposed such as Great Dell, Pentley Park and Mandeville Rise</p>	<p>We cannot influence where the displaced non-resident / non-permit holders park, nor can we ignore the views of the residents within the scheme who have requested the Permit Zone.</p>
<p>The restrictions are being requested by residents on the assumption that non-resident parking will increase due to increase housing in the town centre. This</p>	<p>We cannot assume the reasoning behind the survey responses, only act upon the results received. The current single yellow restrictions do not</p>

<p>is, yet, unknown. Currently, there is almost no daytime parking on Blakemere Road.</p>	<p>allow for residential parking.</p>
<p>We understand the reason a consultation was called would be that there had been some complaints about parking. Also, that of the residents who responded to your consultation a small majority were in favour of parking restrictions. The figures given were that 25% responded of which 59% were in favour of parking restrictions. This, of course, equates to fewer than 15% of residents who have expressed a preference for the proposed parking restrictions.</p>	<p>The majority is counted based upon responses received. We cannot assume that a lack of response from a resident means they do or do not want change. Now more people are working from home than ever before, the new proposals would also allow residents more daytime parking. The proposal of a permit scheme broadly has the same effect in that it stops non-residents being able to park but crucially would allow residents to park upon the road during daytime hours by way of a permit or voucher. The 25% quoted represented the entire area including the current "AV" Permit Zone, for the proposed "A02" Permit Zone we received 44 responses from the 120 eligible properties (37%) of which 26 (59%) specifically requested a Resident Permit Zone.</p>
<p>Our understanding regarding the reason some Blakemere Road residents support parking restrictions, despite having no current parking issues, is concern about the proposed flats to be built at Campus East having only 0.7 parking spaces per dwelling and expecting that some residents may be looking for nearby roads to park their cars. This logic seems flawed for a couple of reasons – Blakemere Road is a good 10-minute walk from the site of the new flats so if anyone were to park there, it would most likely be for long term parking rather than just during the working day. Because there is already a 9-11 restriction in place that would prevent such long-term parking. People parking overnight and moving their cars by 9am would still be able to do that with the proposed change, so there is unlikely to be any difference apart from added inconvenience for visitors and residents.</p>	<p>At this time, the road would be physically closest to the Campus East development site via College Way and The Campus. The existing 9-11 single yellow line prevents all drivers including residents, which has been reported for years to cause impact to residents with no or limited off street parking.</p>
<p>Though it might make some sense for Walden Road and Walden Place to have a residents parking zone (which presumably would be up to those residents), by extending that along Blakemere Road instead of keeping the current 9am-11am restriction makes no sense and would simply push any necessary parking onto fewer roads, thus causing more congestion and subsequently, more calls for further resident parking zones, which for an area such as this, of large detached and semi-detached houses, which all have driveways and garages, seems frankly bizarre, unnecessarily inconvenient and a total waste of resources.</p>	<p>The survey results indicate the existence of non-resident parking in Walden Road and to some extent Blakemere Road due to the requests for a Permit Scheme, any such restriction in Walden Road would likely cause displacement into Blakemere Road, by including Blakemere Road and Walden Road in the same scheme will assist in the overflow for Walden Place and The Orchard Residents.</p>
<p>In my opinion, it appears that the Club has not been consulted on a scheme which will have a considerable impact on its members. For this reason, I am objecting to the proposed changes and hope that Orchard Tennis Club are offered the opportunity to engage in a discussion with the Council to ensure that their parking needs are met.</p>	<p>The Tennis Club was included in all mailings, an email response from the club dated 22nd Feb confirms letter received. The club's indication that visitors start matches around 6pm was part of the reasoning behind the 9-3pm permit time slot. (See Appendix D)</p>

<p>Please can I propose that the tennis club is treated as a "resident" and therefore you allow the club to purchase parking permits / vouchers in the same way the residents in this area will be able to buy them.</p>	<p>Resident parking permits are only issued when a vehicle is shown to be registered and insured at the permit address. Permit restrictions are introduced on the basis that organisations and businesses cannot freely buy vouchers in order to correctly limit parking to residential properties and their visitors.</p>
<p>For The Orchard/Walden and lesser extent Blakemere the main issue is lack of off-road parking spaces, parts of Welwyn Garden were simply not built with a view that most houses would have 2-4 cars in 2024. This proposal does not change the reality of this situation, merely forces residents to pay for what road space there is. The Orchard has 12 houses and only 7 parking spaces.</p>	<p>A residents permit scheme will ensure that the available parking spaces will be accessible to the local residents and can utilise Blakemere and Walden Road if The Orchard was to capacity.</p>
<p>My wife runs a small business from home that requires multiple people to visit for short duration (30 mins). Current proposal means this is not sustainable, this proposal actually restricts number of visitors to people homes.</p>	<p>Each property within the zone is allowed 240 digital visitor vouchers per year, each voucher can be utilised for several vehicles as the Registration number can be changed via the permit system thus enabling the voucher to cover several vehicles throughout the day.</p>
<p>There is no need for restrictions on Sundays, there are no areas locally with such restrictions and this will be more severe than the town centre (!) also very unclear/confusing when we have bank holidays. Monday to Saturday restrictions will suffice.</p>	<p>After the original Survey, we suggested in the follow up letter that the existing "AV" Permit Zone be extended to cover Blakemere Road, Walden Road, Walden Place & The Orchard with a Mon-Fri 8am-6pm Restriction. Of the 29 feedback responses received from within these named roads, 18 (62%) specifically requested a separate scheme, and 16 (55%) requested Mon-Sun restrictions.</p>
<p>Orchard LTC is very concerned and is formally objecting to more stringent parking restrictions in Blakemere Road. The proposed restrictions could impact significantly on the ability of members and visitors to access the club's daytime activities, particularly children's coaching, club tournaments, Open Days and League matches all of which contribute to a thriving local, community tennis club. Indeed, it is possible that the club will lose members and fail to attract new members if more stringent parking restrictions hinder access to the club.</p>	<p>The Tennis Club is approximately 350 metres from Campus West car park which has this year increased its capacity and would provide appropriate parking for drivers visiting facilities within the area. The amended permit scheme proposal would also enable tennis club members to park within the roads at weekends</p>
<p>If parking on the street will be for permit holders only all-day Mon – Sun, this may also cause a safety risk for dropping off both on the club's driveway and on the road once the limited spaces on the club's driveway have all been taken.</p>	<p>A permit restriction does not prevent passengers from boarding or alighting a vehicle, a vehicle can still stop to allow such activity. In the informal stages of the consultation, the Tennis Club indicated parking was most needed after 3pm, which led to Parking Services amending the original idea for restrictions to finish at 6pm to 3pm. The Tennis Club partook in the consultation before the objection stage, though they may not be in favour of the proposals, they were consulted. (See Appendix D)</p>

6 Legal Implication(s)

- 6.1 Traffic Regulation Orders 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.
- 6.2 The Council can amend proposals once advertised. Any proposals that are less restrictive can be done without having to re-advertise the Traffic Regulation Order.
- 6.3 Through the Agency Agreement with Hertfordshire County Council, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council can implement restrictions on any road and links in with Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 powers to make certain Orders.
- 6.4 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places an obligation on the Council to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between those groups who share protected characteristics and those who do not, when coming to a decision on the exercise of any of its functions.

7 Financial Implication(s)

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

8 Risk Management Implications

- 8.1 Changing the parking conditions could generate negative publicity. Some parking may be displaced into nearby roads where shorter, or no restrictions exist.
- 8.2 It is standard procedure to monitor new parking restrictions for the first 6 months after any are implemented. A feedback form will be available on the Council's website after the introduction of restrictions to monitor comments. All comments will be recorded. If any issues are discovered as a result of the Traffic Regulation Order being put into place, Parking Services will investigate and consider remedial action that can be implemented to address the issues.

9 Security & Terrorism Implications

- 9.1 There are no known security & terrorism implications 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. This includes consulting directly with all stakeholders and a number of statutory consultees, such as the Police and Hertfordshire County Council. Formal objections can only be made during the period stated on the Notice of Proposal and stating the grounds on which they are being made.
- 11.2 Ward Members as well as emergency services and Hertfordshire County Council have also been consulted as part of this process and no formal written objections have been received relating to the proposals recommended in this report.

11.3 In addition, Public Notices were erected within the area and advertised in the local newspaper, in this case the Welwyn Hatfield Times.

11.4 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 known procurement implications in relation to the proposals in this report.

14 Climate Change Implication(s)

14.1 There are potential climate change implications in relation to the proposals in this report. Residential permits will restrict parking within the zone, and this may decrease the number of non-resident vehicles driving through the zone from other locations in order to park. Therefore, there is a potential for a positive climate change implication.

15 Link to Corporate Priorities

15.1 This report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priorities to engage with our communities and deliver value for money.

16 Equality and Diversity

16.1 I confirm that an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out.

The EqIA found that there is potential for both positive and negative impacts on Age, Disability, Pregnancy. No issues were raised from any of these characteristic groups during the course of the consultation process; however, the use of yellow lines to prevent parking on junctions may have an effect on these groups in that they might have to park further away. Verge and footway prohibitions would have a positive affect for such pedestrians for easier navigation of the public footways.

In mitigation there are statutory exemptions contained within the Order which allow for the unloading and loading of goods and passengers while parked on yellow lines. Blue badge holders can also park on double yellow lines for up to 3 hours. The introduction of resident permit parking will free up additional capacity which will allow these groups better opportunities to park closer to home. Visitor permits may be purchased at a 50% discounted rate for those persons in receipt of a state pension. Parking close to junctions creates a hazard in that it reduces visibility on entry and exit. The benefits accrued to the new restrictions outweigh the above-mentioned risks.

16.2 In addition, the Council will monitor the effectiveness of the scheme for the first 6 months and further recommendations may be made at a later date; should any unintended impacts arise, as a result of the new scheme being introduced.

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Background papers:

Objections – Appendix A

Notice of Intention – Appendix B

Plans – Appendix C

Orchard Tennis Club Correspondence – Appendix D