

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
19 January 2023

## WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

\* Reporting to Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL held on Thursday 19 January 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber.

PRESENT: Councillors A. Hellyer (Chairman)  
S. Boulton (Vice-Chairman)

S. Bonfante, G. Michaelides, L. Musk, R. Platt, J. Quinton, D. Richardson, P. Shah, C. Stanbury, K. Thorpe, S. Thusu and F. Wachuku

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors B. Sarson (Executive Member for Community Safety and Parking)

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Executive Director – Place (C. Barnes)  
Assistant Director - Planning (C. Carter)  
Assistant Director - Regeneration and Economic Development (G. Sampson)  
Parking & Playground Services Manager (E. Robova)  
Planning & Policy Implementation Manager (M. Wilson)  
Planner to Senior Planner (L. Burnham)  
Senior Democratic Services Officer (C. Francis)

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31. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2022 were approved as a correct record.

32. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

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

33. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

**K. Winbow asked the following question:**

Condition 16 of the planning permission for the car park states:

16. Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, a management plan setting out measures to deter anti-social behaviour within and around the extended car park shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The car park shall thereafter be maintained and operated in

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accordance with the details set out in the approved management plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of security and to protect the amenities of neighbouring residential properties in accordance with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005.

All the objections have been dismissed in the officer's report without proper consideration. How can the parking charges and times be set by CPPP without the management plan to deal with ASB being discussed? What if it was found installing a barrier or closing the car park at night is the way to deal with ASB?

So, my question to this committee is: if you are not prepared to discuss it this evening then when is the management plan going to be prepared and when is condition 16 of the planning permission going to be discharged?

**The Chair read the answer provided by officers as shown below:**

Thank you for your question. The Officer has prepared a thorough report, which addresses the objections and comments in so far as they relate to the matter at hand. Parking Fees and Charges are set by Full Council through the budget-setting process. Before us today is consideration of the proposed traffic regulation order. The planning condition is required to be discharged ahead of first use of the development, and I understand from Officers that this will be submitted to the planning department in the near future and undergo the normal process for the discharge of conditions. It will not be for this panel to consider that submission, and the future submission and discharge of the condition does not prevent us from considering the traffic regulation order today.

34. LEMSFORD VILLAGE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Report of the Assistant Director (Planning) on the Lemsford Village Character Assessment.

Essex Place services have been commissioned as heritage consultants to carry out a review of the heritage assets in the borough, this is in line with national planning policy and guidance, which requires that Local planning authorities review their conservation areas from time to time and determine whether any parts should be designated as conservation areas.

Conservation Area designation introduces additional planning controls and considerations to protect an area's special character and appearance and the features that make it unique and distinctive. These can include the need for planning permission for some developments, demolition and tree works. Lemsford village is not currently designated as a conservation area, however there are a number of listed buildings within the area.

Place services have produced a draft character assessment which identifies areas of special architectural or historic interest within the Lemsford area, and

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this assessment has been carried out in accordance with best practice guidance from historic England.

The report includes a discussion on the suitability of conservation area designation, as well as the suggested conservation area boundary.

It is now proposed that the draft character assessment undergoes a six-week consultation, this is to gain public opinion on whether the area should be designated and whether the suggested boundary is appropriate. Consultation will increase the weight attached to the character assessments, as it will allow for community and stakeholder views to be considered and any necessary revisions made prior to adoption of the statement.

The consultation will take place online using the council's consultation portal, and notification letters will be issued to key stakeholders and residents, this is all as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.

It is intended to send notification letters to residents within the wider Lemsford area, as well as within the proposed conservation area boundary following the consultation. The results will be presented to Council prior to the adoption of the documents and any decision on designation being made. Should it be decided to designate Lemsford as a conservation area, the necessary statutory processes for designation would then be followed.

In summary, officers recommended the draft character assessment is approved and goes ahead to consultation.

The following points were raised and discussed:

- Concern raised by members that Lemsford being designated a conservation area prevents residents, for example, upgrading their windows, getting solar panels etc. Officers said that some permitted development rights works will still apply within the conservation area, but in some cases, because it's a conservation area, there may be further restrictions, say, for example, you may be able to put on solar panels, but you may be restricted to where you can put these. In that case they would need to apply for planning permission for that kind of development, but it would depend on what they are trying to do. Permitted development rights fall under national legislation and apply to every conservation area.
- Concern raised that parking can be problematic and whether being a conservation area would make this any different. Officers said if highlighted as a particular threat in the adopted Character Assessment, parking would be one consideration to be balanced against other material considerations such as amenity, highway safety etc when determining planning applications.
- A comment was made that Mill Close should potentially be included in the conservation area. During consultation officers can gauge opinion on whether people would like it designated and also the extent of the boundary.

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- Officers clarified that the next steps would be to undertake the consultation and as a result of that, make a recommendation as to whether or not to go ahead with the conservation area designation. This would also include any changes that need to be made to the document and the potential boundary. Officers would then bring it back to councillors to make that final decision on designation, which is likely to be the first meeting after the pre-election period.
- Officers clarified that Place Services, using the Oxford Methodology, are commissioned to look at the whole borough and to undertake a high-level overview of all our heritage assets. As a result of that, some areas may be considered to warrant further assessment. So it may be that further areas come forward as needing a character assessment.
- Concern raised about speeding, and if there was any scope to get Hertfordshire County Council to look at a reduced speed limit through the village. Officers said that the character assessment mainly deals with the architectural and historic character of the area, so speed limits would sit outside the scope of this.
- Members asked if the six-week consultation could fall outside of the school holidays as a number of people are away during this period. Officers said that they are intending to proceed quickly with consultation should it get approval, so it likely to be before the school holidays. In terms of the methods of consultation, there will be a notification letter to everybody within the Lemsford area, it will be done in line with the Statement of Community Involvement, and there would be online press adverts.
- Members asked which area letters would be sent. Officers said they are intending to send letters to the wider Lemsford area, which includes the Great North Road. There will also be letters and/or e-mails going out to statutory consultees and any interested groups in the area.

RESOLVED:

**(13 voting FOR - UNANIMOUS)**

- (1) That the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel (CPPP) recommend to Cabinet that the Draft Lemsford Character Assessment undergo public consultation for a period of six weeks, with the view to designate Lemsford as a conservation area.
- (2) As approval by the Panel was unanimous, the character assessment can be approved by way of Executive Member Decision Notice.

35. INTRODUCTION OF PARKING RESTRICTIONS IN CAMPUS WEST CAR PARK, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Report of the Assistant Director (Regeneration and Economic Development).

This report is to reinstate parking restrictions in Campus West car park whilst taking into account the new layout of the car park and its additional features.

The car park closed in April 2022 to allow for its redevelopment, and it is now due to reopen in spring 2023. A new traffic regulation order is therefore required to set parking rules and regulations within the new layout of the car park and to allow enforcement of parking breaches.

The Council published a notice of intention on 2 November 2022, and the consultation closed 25 November 2022. The Council received three objections to the proposal. Most of these objections are not within the scope of the report as they relate to matters already considered under planning regulations.

The recommendation of the report is to reinstate parking charges that were in place prior to the car parks closure, with chargeable hours being in place Monday to Saturday 8am until 6pm, and 10am until 5pm Sunday and Bank holidays. The operational hours of the car park will be all days and hours, and this relates to parking restrictions that are enforceable outside of the chargeable hours, such as parking in disabled bays without a disabled badge, or parking in a restricted area of the car park.

The proposal also contains a provision for twelve EV charging points, two of which will be reserved for blue badge holders. These two disabled badge holder electric charging bays will be wider than a standard EV bay, therefore more accessible for disabled motorists who might require extra space in order to enter or exit the vehicle.

The following points were raised and discussed:

- Members said they were pleased that accessible EV charging points are being provided. Officers clarified that these are being fully funded by external sources.
- Members asked if charges and timings are approved would these then be superseded with the new budget in April. Officers clarified that charges need to be in place before the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) can be approved, and there is a chance that the car park may not open in time for these charges to come into effect. In that case the charges approved at Full Council would come into effect when the car park opens.
- Concern raised about potential Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and if opening hours need to be reconsidered how is this facilitated. Officers said the decision on opening hours was already taken as part of the planning process, so it is a 24-hour car park and closing it is not within the scope of the ASB plan. Officers will be looking at what actions can be taken to reduce and prevent ASB. If a barrier were recommended as part of the ASB plan, officers would then look at whether that could be implemented under the existing TRO, or whether it would need to come back to the Panel.
- Members mentioned ASB issues at Hatfield Multi-Storey Car Park. Officers said they are happy to talk to the ward members outside of this meeting to discuss this.

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- Officers advised that this TRO will be reviewed at 3 and 6 months after implementation. There would not be anything to prevent the Council from reviewing further at a future date, but it would need to form part of a programme of TROs within the borough.
- Officers confirmed that no other Council owned multi-storey car parks have barriers at the present time.
- Officers clarified that in relation to parking charges 'local workers' are defined as anyone who can supply proof of working within Welwyn Garden City Town Centre.
- Concern raised that Hertfordshire County Council have suggested Campus West staff do not get free parking as we should be encouraging sustainable transport. Members were concerned as most staff work unsociable hours and are potentially on minimum wage. Officers said that free parking for certain council employees is a crucial part of the package of retaining and recruiting staff, and that is something which will be considered.
- Officers clarified that in the event the committee reject the TRO, and this was not a unanimous rejection, it would go on to Cabinet. If members choose unanimously to reject the TRO, then the Council would have to decide whether or not the car park should open without a TRO in place. The TRO is not a pre-opening planning condition but would prevent enforcement taking place within the car park.
- Members raised concerns about opening without a TRO as the car park would become a free for all.
- Officers clarified that statutory parking consultations last 21 days.
- Officers confirmed that the number of parking spaces were looked at as part of the initial proposals. The Campus West Car Park is part of the enabling works for Campus East.

**RESOLVED:**

**(10 voting FOR, 3 voting AGAINST)**

- (1) *"The Borough of Welwyn Hatfield (Campus West, Welwyn Garden City) (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2022"*
- (2) 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 the creation of the traffic regulation order as set in this report.

Meeting ended at 8.13 pm  
CF