

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
19 November 2024

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

* Reporting to Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL held on Tuesday 19 November 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors R.Platt (Chair)
L.Gilbert (Vice-Chairman)

K.Thorpe, S.Bonfante, S.Goldwater, T.Kingsbury,
G.Michaelides, L.Musk, S.Thusu, P.Shah, M.Hobbs
and J.Quinton

OFFICIALS PRESENT: G.Sampson, Assistant Director (Regeneration and Economic
Development)
C.Cade, Governance Services Manager
M.Pyecroft, Principal Planner (Implementation)
M.Wilson, Planning & Policy Implementation Manager
J Spicer, Senior Planner
E.Robova, Parking and Playground Services Manager
E.Burnham, Planner

141. APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no apologies for absence.

142. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2024 were approved as a correct record.

143. NOTIFICATION OR URGENT BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM 11

No notifications for urgent business were received.

144. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

Cllrs Kingsbury and Thusu advised they were members of Hertfordshire County Council.

Cllr Gilbert advised he was a resident in one of the roads affected by Item 9.

Cllr Thorpe advised he had a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 by virtue of his employment and would leave the room while that item was discussed.

145. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

The following questions were asked of the Committee:

The first question was from a member of the public:

'What assessment has been made of the effect of the proposed parking restrictions on other roads not included in the proposal (eg Woodland Rise), why has the knock-on effect been deemed acceptable to residents, and what will the Council do when the parking problem moves into Woodland Rise as I predict and becomes unacceptable?'

Answer:

"Residents of Woodland Rise were consulted when the area was being surveyed to determine what changes, if any, residents would like to see in the area. 21 of 28 responses to the survey indicated that they deemed yellow lines to be sufficient in this location and this was considered when the proposals were being drafted. As with implementation of any parking restrictions, a displacement may occur, however, the Council monitors any newly implemented parking restrictions to ensure that there isn't any unintended impact and may, subject to the outcome of the monitoring review, make further recommendations. The monitoring feedback form for the Sherrards scheme will be published on the Council's website 3 months after the restrictions came into place, provided the scheme is approved by the committee."

The second question was from Clive Wilson, Welwyn Garden City Society:

"Thank you for the opportunity to ask a question. It's concerning the Statement of Community Involvement that will be discussed later under agenda item 6. I had posed 4 questions on behalf of the Welwyn Garden City Society but the Council stipulated that these be restricted to a single question and this question has also been edited to remove important context. I understand the full text has been circulated to members and will be made publicly available via the Society website. The question is: In the proposed Statement of Community Involvement, notifications appear to have an overly heavy reliance on online notices. This bypasses many residents who are not online/ do not spend considerable time online. Please could the Council consider increasing measures for 'offline' notifications for applications that will have a major impact on the town?"

Answer:

"There was no mandatory requirement for consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement. However, as discussed at this panel in August, a six-week consultation in the spirit of meaningful engagement in the planning process was proposed. That consultation was held in September and October.

The consultation did seek to direct residents to online resources, but this was supplemented with offline means of consultation. Offline measures included a

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
19 November 2024

notice in the local newspapers setting out key information about the consultation, including where and how to respond. All documentation relating to the consultation was made available at local libraries, town and parish councils and the Council office during opening times. The various means of responding, including via post and telephoning for a response form was also set out.

As set out in the report on the SCI this evening, the SCI reflects the requirements for consultation as set out in planning regulations. It may be appropriate to increase community engagement in some circumstances, and if resources permit, using methods of engagement that move beyond the regulatory requirements. However, it is important the SCI does not commit the Council to actions that cannot be resourced in all cases, as this could then call into jeopardy decisions and actions taken, give rise to disproportionate costs, or cause delays to the planning process.”

The third question was from a member of the public:

As a resident of Greenfield, where there are 21 houses and only 11 parking spaces, what alternative parking provision do you intend to provide and will it mean that residents, particularly women, will have to walk further from their cars to their front doors, especially on dark mornings and evenings?

Answer:

“The entirety of Greenfield is publicly adopted highway. The creation of additional parking provision would therefore fall under Herts County Council as the Highways Authority for this locality. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council will write to Herts County Council and ask them to investigate whether the creation of additional parking provision in Greenfield is desirable and if so whether they would be able to carry out works to implement it.”

146. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Director (Planning) on the public consultation for the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The draft SCI was the subject of a report to CPPP on 15th August 2024, in which the revised SCI was presented and agreement sought to carry out a public consultation, with the final version being brought back to members for consideration and adoption.

The current SCI requires updating to reflect changes to government policy and the move to a more digitised planning system and sets out how the Council will engage on planning matters.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- A member quoted a question that had been asked elsewhere: the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 had recommended the removal of the SCI requirement and he wondered if the Act would impact the SCI in the future. Officers clarified that it was expected there would be a

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
19 November 2024

number of changes as a result of proposed changes to the Planning system, one of which might be the SCI. Officers felt it was prudent to look at the requirements of legislation presently and accepted it may have a short shelf life.

- It was queried how engagement would look in the future if the document had a short shelf life. The detail of what the future requirements of the Council would be and once the secondary legislation was released would inform the Council's processes in the future.
- It was queried whether this would take place before or after the Local Plan. Officers clarified this would likely take place at the same time and would be brought back to CPPP then.
- It was noted that the majority of engagement took place online, and queried how offline engagement could be improved. Officers confirmed that the consultation was published in the newspaper, in libraries in the borough, in parish council offices and copies were available in the Council offices.
- It was requested that the consultation process be looked at to ensure all residents are consulted.
- It was queried how the SCI would work with developers. As a Planning authority developers are encouraged to engage with the Council in a pre-application process and are encouraged to engage with the public. The Council is unable to require developers to engage in consultation. If a developer did not consult with the public it would not be considered a "material consideration" for developers.

Resolved:

(unanimous)

That the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel (CPPP) recommended to Cabinet:

- (a) That the SCI, as detailed in Appendix A, is formally adopted.
- (b) For the decision to be taken by the Executive Member using their delegated powers under paragraph 18.1(b) of the Cabinet procedure rules.
- (c) That any subsequent material amendments be made by the Executive Member for Planning and any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content can be delegated to Assistant Director (Planning) in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning.

147. LAND WEST OF BROOKMANS PARK RAILWAY STATION (HS22)
MASTERPLAN (STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK)

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Director (Planning) on the Land West of Brookmans Park Railway Station.

Site HS22 (Land West of Brookmans Park Railway Station) is allocated for development in the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (adopted October 2023) with an indicated site capacity of 428 dwellings plus a 2FE (Form Entry) primary school.

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
19 November 2024

Policy SP9 sets out a number of criteria where masterplans are required. In this case, HS22 meet the criteria for a mixed-use site where consideration needed to be given to the integration of the site into the surrounding area. The masterplan was to be informed by an appropriate evidence base together with consultation and be endorsed by the Council prior to the determination of any planning application.

A strategic framework had been prepared by the developer and landowner, in conjunction with a consultant team and in collaboration with officers from Welwyn Hatfield BC, to ensure the site is planned comprehensively and integrates well with the surrounding area. The document has been prepared in line with the Council's Approach to Masterplanning Guidance note which was endorsed by the Council in March 2024.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- It was noted that the process between developers and the Council was collaborative.
- It was queried what the mitigation was in place to ensure more dwellings are not included in proposed plans. Officers clarified that the aim was to ensure the Council was working with land owners and developers in land development. The next stage for this process would be to look at where the dwellings would be, and what the sites could support.
- It was highlighted that the proposed school on site would be larger than what was needed for the area.
- A member asked whether all Master Plans could in future set out what types of dwellings, such as flats and houses, would be included on the proposed sites. Officers clarified that this masterplan set out that there would be 35% affordable housing, but the types of housing and additional details would be included as part of the detailed planning application stage. In terms of dwelling types, the report provided a snapshot of how things were. It was intended that the cross-party steering group would continue to work with the developer as they prepared the detailed scheme which would be considered through the Development Management process.
- It was asked whether there could be more detail included in the primary and secondary roads, and it was felt it would have been beneficial for the Panel to consider this when more details were able to be included. Officers were of the view that the strategic framework as proposed provided high level principles, that had been tested and the detail for the Plan was now more appropriate for a Development Management process.
- It was queried how much of the Master Plan would be considered a "material consideration" and how strong the document was. Officers stated that a planning application should reflect the principles set out in the Masterplan.
- It was noted that a policy requirement of the Local Plan was that a bridge was included.

Resolved:

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
19 November 2024

(unanimous)

1. That the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel (CPPP) recommends to Cabinet that the strategic framework for HS22, as detailed in Appendix A, be endorsed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.
2. If unanimously agreed by the Panel, for the decision to be taken by the Executive Member using their delegated powers under paragraph 18.1(b) of the Cabinet procedure rules.

148. UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE - ENDORSEMENT OF ESTATES VISION 2035

Councillor Thorpe left the meeting at this point as per his declaration of interest.

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Director (Planning) on the University of Hertfordshire – Endorsement of Estates Vision 2035.

The University wishes to bring forward significant redevelopment and consolidation of its estate in the next few years which will bring considerable benefit to the borough.

Individual planning applications would still need to be made, and the applications and their impacts will be fully considered through this process. However, endorsement of the Estates Vision will give an overall framework under which these applications can be considered and will put individual proposals into a longer term context, and will show the Council's in principle support for the University's future development aspirations

At this stage in the meeting Councillor Shah declared an interest as his wife worked at the University of Hertfordshire and left the meeting.

Councillor Hobbs raised that a number of his former students have attended the University.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- Concerns were raised around the lack of detail on how net zero would be achieved. Officers confirmed that the University was keen to address this.
- It was asked that the consultation process be clearly defined when planning applications are received so that potential impacts are properly understood.
- It was expected that there would be an increase in the number of students, and therefore an increase of other issues such as houses of multiple occupancy. Officers had been advised that there would be limited impact, and the impact of individual developments would be assessed through the planning application process including a travel plan.
- Disappointment was raised as the university's Uno bus company had not made comment on the document. Officers met with the university on a quarterly basis and would pick this issue up with the university. Transport

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
19 November 2024

arrangements would be considered as part of the application and the County Council would be consulted on the proposals.

- It was highlighted that a visit to the university had highlighted that the university had fallen behind in comparison to other universities in terms of some of the older buildings and that a better environment would support better learning, with the new engineering building in particular being very impressive.

Resolved:

(unanimous)

That the Panel recommends to Cabinet that:

1. The University of Hertfordshire Estates Vision and accompanying phasing plans (Appendix A) be endorsed for development management purposes.
2. That the contents of the Estates Vision be treated as a material consideration in future planning applications.

149. INTRODUCTION OF RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING SCHEME, OTHER WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND VERGE AND FOOTWAY PROHIBITION, IN VARIOUS ROADS, SHERRARDS WARD, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Thorpe and Shah returned to the meeting, and Councillor Gilbert left the discussion following his declaration of interest.

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Director (Regeneration & Economic Development) on Introduction of Resident Permit Parking Scheme, Other Waiting Restrictions and Verge and Footway Prohibition, in Various Roads, Sherrards Ward, Welwyn Garden City.

In October 2022, the Council undertook a parking survey with residents in Sherrards Ward, Welwyn Garden City. 2,485 households were consulted. Following feedback, adjustments were made to the proposals and 69 objections had been received (out of 1,170 households); 49 to the verge and footway parking prohibition and 18 to the residential permit zone. Minor changes to the proposal were then made, as set out in the report.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- It was highlighted that while no one wanted parking on grass verges or curbs, but that there was a need for parking. It was felt that not enough had been done to provide alternative provision.
- It was suggested that if Hertfordshire County Council were to be written to this should have been done before the proposals were brought to the Panel.
- Officers highlighted that in terms of Greenfield, initially 58% of respondents were in favour of verge and footway protections; when the proposals were sent out there were no responses against them but a large number of objections were received after the notice of intent was published, which was a late stage given the initial two consultations. It was clarified that the Council can conduct works to increase parking

where the Council owns the land. All the grass verge in Greenfield was adopted highway and following the feedback received from residents, Hertfordshire County Council would be written to.

- The Council could review land it owned to introduce additional parking.
- A member highlighted that Appendix D had a cut off piece of text, and clarity was sought on what residents were being asked if they supported; it was confirmed residents were asked whether they supported the principle of parking restrictions. It was felt that the response received had a large number of those against the application, although there were more in support. Officers clarified that Appendix D showed the response rate for or against the proposal, and the initial consultation received a higher response rate.
- A member felt that the attendance from residents at this committee showed there was a need for this to be reviewed further.
- It was felt that the consultation process should be simplified (for example, residents could simply be asked whether or not they wanted parking restrictions) which in turn would increase responses to consultations. Officers clarified that the initial data gathering had a range of options which officers then investigated. The second consultation presents a limited number of options for consultation. These two processes take place several months apart.
- A member queried what the review process was, and when this would take place. Officers confirmed that when parking restrictions were implemented, a monitoring process would take place within 6 months, and any unintended consequences could lead to changes in the parking restrictions. A feedback form is published on the Council website 3 months after implementation and would remain there for 3 months. Residents could find these on the Council's website and residents would be written to.
- It was queried whether when this was implemented, could the written confirmation to members could this include links or a QR codes to the feedback surveys. Officers confirmed this could be explored.
- It was queried how officers would respond if residents fed back that they could not park near their house. Officers highlighted that each situation was unique which was why there was a post implementation review. A verge protection order in a specific location could be removed if it was causing issues if the Council and Executive Member felt this needed to be addressed.
- It was asked whether there were any compromises that could be reached, for example if there could potentially be exceptions for cul de sacs that were not pathways, and what alternative arrangements were being put in place for residents. A lengthy consultation had taken place, and the review period would allow the Council to make further changes, and re-consult in line with the legislation.
- It was queried how disabled people would have bays implemented. Officers confirmed that the disabled bay scheme falls under the remit of the County Council.

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
19 November 2024

- It was noted that residents had communicated that they desired parking restrictions put in place as it was the view that restrictions were being put into neighbouring roads. Residents therefore were no longer in support of the restrictions. Officers stated that they could only form options based on the consultation response data.
- Officers clarified that a number of requests had been received for this area, and at the time officers wrote to residents the majority of residents were in favour.
- It was asked whether it was fair to say that the majority of residents wanted the proposals set out in the report. Officers could not confirm what residents had agreed, or disagreed with, within the proposals. Proposals had been modified based on the second consultation and reflected what had been requested on a road by road basis.
- It was felt that both the residents walking the road and the residents wanting to park in the road needed to be considered.
- It was clarified that if there was a verge protection order in place; someone parked on the verge could receive a fine.
- Hertfordshire County Council was responsible for dealing with parking obstacles in verge protection areas.
- It was queried how many times significant changes or reverses had been made to parking restrictions following the 6 month review. Officers said several schemes had been amended; this was subject to feedback received.
- It was queried whether a hard copy of the feedback form could be circulated to residents. It was confirmed this request could be accommodated.
- It was queried when the last parking scheme was implemented which did not have a verge protection order attached to it. Officers confirmed this was implemented as default in 2016 for all roads which are 4.5 metres or over.
- Officers had a list of the addresses where consultation letters were sent; follow up letters were sent where a response was not received. Newspapers adverts were used for the notice of intent.
- The Chair queried the implications if the scheme was not passed at the meeting. Officers confirmed that if 50% or more Panel members agreed the proposals this would then go to Cabinet for a decision. If more than 50% of the Panel objected to the scheme there would be discussions with the Executive Member and a decision would be made as to whether to revisit the scheme and carry out further consultation or whether the scheme would fall away.

Resolved

1) (7 in favour):

THE BOROUGH OF WELWYN HATFIELD (VARIOUS ROADS, SHERRARDS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY) (RESTRICTION OF WAITING AND PERMIT PARKING ZONES) ORDER 202X” 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 Planning and Parking Panel
19 November 2024

Cabinet to proceed with creation of the advertised traffic regulation order as set in Sections 3.6 and 3.7 of this report.

2) (6 in favour)

THE BOROUGH OF WELWYN HATFIELD (VARIOUS ROADS, SHERRARDS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY) (PROHIBITION OF STOPPING AND WAITING ON VERGE OR FOOTWAY) ORDER 202X"

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 Section 3.7 of this report.

The report would therefore be recommended to Cabinet for discussion and approval.

150. INTRODUCTION OF PARKING RESTRICTIONS IN NORTHERN SECTION OF HOLLYBUSH WARD - YELLOW LINES, PERMITS AND VERGE AND FOOTWAY PROHIBITION

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Gilbert rejoined the meeting.

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director (Regeneration and Economic Development) on Introduction of Parking Restrictions in Northern Section of Hollybush Ward – Yellow Lines, Permits And Verge And Footway Prohibition.

Hollybush ward (northern section) was initially consulted from 6 March 2023 until 7 May 2023. Due to a low response rate to the initial consultation, a further letter was sent on 30 June 2023 to encourage consultees to submit their view on parking in their area to the council by 30 July 2023. The data from the second survey resulted in 281 responses from a total of 998 properties. 28.2% of consultees had participated which met criteria to progress the scheme to a formal proposal. The data highlighted areas where residents expressed a high level of concern relating to parking issues including footway and verge parking.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- It was queried whether the area was an area of concern especially given that the initial consultation did not receive many responses. The area had been included in the works programme and the Council wanted to hear residents views for the area.
- The threshold for an initial consultation is not fixed. Every two years, the number from each ward is reviewed and ranked. The Executive Member is informed and in consultation with the ward councillors, the information is brought to CPPP for them to set the parking works programme.
- A member highlighted that this was an area with ample parking.
- It was asked whether the parking works programme could be implemented more quickly, and problem areas could be added to the

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
19 November 2024

programme before they become bigger issues. Officers confirmed that there is a statutory consultation process which would not allow it to be quicker.

- The Executive Member (Environment) highlighted the importance of ward councillors' voices in this process.

Resolved:

(unanimous)

1. THE BOROUGH OF WELWYN HATFIELD (VARIOUS ROADS, HOLLYBUSH NORTH, WELWYN GARDEN CITY) (RESTRICTION OF WAITING AND PERMIT PARKING ZONES) ORDER 202X

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.

(unanimous)

2. THE BOROUGH OF WELWYN HATFIELD (VARIOUS ROADS, HOLLYBUSH NORTH, WELWYN GARDEN CITY) (PROHIBITION OF STOPPING AND WAITING ON VERGE OR FOOTWAY) ORDER 202X

That the Panel considers the objections 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 amended traffic regulation order as set in Section 3.7 and in **Appendix D**; 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.

Meeting ended at 9.45 pm