

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 6 FEBRUARY 2023

Recommendation from the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel on 19 January 2023:

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- Members asked if charges and timings are approved would these then be superseded with the new budget in April.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.
- 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.

The reports of the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel can be viewed in full here:

<https://democracy.welhat.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=266&MId=1503&Ver=4>