



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)

WALTON CONTROLLED PARKING SCHEME – CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS

21 SEPTEMBER 2009

KEY ISSUE

To acknowledge the results of the informal consultation and to decide how to proceed with the proposed parking controls scheme in Walton.

SUMMARY

Following informal consultation Surrey County Council received three petitions and numerous objections to the proposed waiting restrictions. Despite the number of objections received a majority of residents in a number of roads have indicated a preference for the restrictions to be implemented in the manner proposed and in some other roads officers have identified possible solutions that could be successfully applied, with the agreement of residents.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Elmbridge) is asked to agree that:

- (i) Parking controls are progressed in those roads where considered necessary to preserve/improve existing road safety levels, such as main traffic routes and junctions.
- (ii) Parking controls are progressed as consulted only in those roads where responses indicate that a majority of residents are in favour.

- (iii) Further local consultation is undertaken in those roads where responses indicate that parking controls are necessary but not in the exact form as those consulted.
- (v) Discussions continue between Elmbridge Borough Council and Walton Business Group with a view to resolving issues raised concerning on-street parking in residential streets by business employees.
- (vi) Following re-consultation at a local level, further to recommendation (iii) above, the Traffic Regulation Order to introduce the controls that are to be progressed at this time, is advertised in October/November 2009.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Informal consultation was undertaken within a pre-determined area (zone) of Walton-on-Thames during August and September 2007. A total of 3020 questionnaires were delivered to individual premises and 1217 returned, 1127 of which were from residents and 90 from businesses. A summary document prepared following the initial consultation is attached as Annexe 'A'.
- 1.2 Although the consultation document asked a number of questions the two most pertinent ones in relation to the subsequently proposed Walton Controlled Parking Scheme were: (i) "Do you think something should be done to improve on-street parking facilities for residents and businesses in and around Walton Town Centre?" and (ii) "Do you think that residents permits should be available to residents within the red boundary shown on the plan overleaf?"
- 1.3 The responses to the aforementioned questions indicated that 76% of businesses and 84% of residents felt that improvements were necessary, with 67% of businesses and 69% of residents indicating that parking permits should be made available to residents.
- 1.4 As there appeared to be overall support for parking improvements that included permit parking for residents Members and Officers at local and County level decided to prepare more detailed proposals for further consultation. In November and December 2008 an on-street visual assessment was undertaken with a view to producing detailed proposals which subsequently formed the basis of the current consultation.
- 1.5 Although it had been intended to consult again during late May/early June 2009 it was unfortunately necessary to postpone consultation until the end of June owing to the European and Local elections in June.

- 1.6 A total of 3448 consultation documents were subsequently delivered to individual properties within the same pre-determined zone during the weekend of 27/28th June 2009. However, as the plan showing the proposals was too large to be re-produced at a suitable scale for distribution, consultees were invited to view the proposals at public exhibitions held in The Heart shopping centre on Friday 10th and Saturday 11th July at which county council staff would be in attendance to answer questions.
- 1.7 The same information was also made available at an un-manned exhibition laid-out in the Ember Room of Walton Public Library on Sunday 12th July to Wednesday 15th July inclusive, together with facilities for attendees to submit their views/comments. All information relating to the proposals was also posted on Surrey County Council's website throughout, where facilities were again provided for interested parties to submit their views/ comments. The relative information provided is attached as Annexe 'B'

2 PETITIONS

- 2.1 Three petitions have been received and are summarised below.
- 2.2 A petition was received from **Walton Business Group Ltd** containing 333 signatures, mainly from persons employed in the town centre area. The document summarised as follows states "The signatories strongly believe that the introduction of the proposed on-street parking restrictions in Walton-on-Thames, without the provision of all day free or cost effective parking for employees will have a hugely detrimental effect on local businesses".
- 2.3 The petition goes on to point out that "most employees park on the roads where new restrictions will be in place in the autumn. By 'many employees' we refer to (a) survey undertaken in June 2009 by the Walton Business Group (WBG) which showed that a sample of approximately 10% of local businesses accounted for 66 employee cars parked on the roads. It is reasonable to assume that the restrictions may therefore leave as many as 660 employees looking for somewhere cost effective to park".
- 2.4 Businesses believe the proposed restrictions will impact on three particular aspects of trading; (i) staff recruitment, (ii) access to cars for business use, (iii) the letting of business units.
- 2.5 The petition further states: "as Dr Povey highlighted when signing the FSB Code of Practice recently, we need to give extra support to business owners in Surrey at the moment not add to their problems which this parking scheme will do".
- 2.6 It further states: "The WBG is currently working with Elmbridge Borough Council and local private car parks to develop a range of

solutions to this issue. It is vital that Surrey County Council also work with us to ensure provision is made for some employee on-street parking as part of the community parking scheme”.

- 2.7 The petition suggests that business permits could be made available for parking in residential streets during the day and suggests that this is currently available to businesses in Molesey as part of that controlled parking scheme.
- 2.8 The petition ends thus: “In summary, on behalf of 333 employees who have signed the enclosed request, the Walton Business Group urges Surrey County Council to delay implementation of the on-street parking restrictions until some provision for employee parking is in place”.
- 2.9 A second petition was received from the residents of **Esher Avenue, Churchfield Road, Winchester Road and Highfield Road** containing 114 signatures from 100 properties. It states: “We, the under signed are against the currently planned Controlled Parking Zone scheme for Walton on Thames. We would like to point out that the scheme adversely affects many local residents and will not in our opinion solve the Parking problems of the central area of Walton. We request the Council cancels the currently proposed scheme.”
- 2.10 A third ‘petition’ was received in the format of a pre-printed letter signed by the residents of **Dale Road, Harvey Road, Mayo Road and Thames Street** containing 41 signatures from 28 properties. There was only 1 signature from Thames Street.
- 2.11 Each letter in this third petition states: “I the undersigned wish to raise objections to the three aspects of the proposed Walton on Thames controlled parking scheme listed below;” The letter goes on to list the objections as follows:

“1. The implementation of the NO WAITING Mon-Fri 9am-5pm Zones in Dale, Harvey and Mayo Road.

These no waiting zones reduce the amount of available parking for any vehicles in these roads by 50% during the periods indicated. If these zones are implemented there will not be enough parking spaces for the number of residents of the roads affected, let alone the other residents of area A who will use these roads due to the increase in no parking restrictions placed on them in their own roads. Currently we park in the areas designated for these zones and the flow of traffic is not restricted, impeded or unsafe.

These zones should be re-designated PERMIT HOLDERS ONLY Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

2. The limit of 30 visitors vouchers per household per year.

The restriction to 30 vouchers per household is completely unacceptable as is the cost of these vouchers. The amount of vouchers available should be dramatically increased and the cost per voucher slashed.

3. The £35 fee per Residents' Parking Permit

I object to paying to park in my own road. The parking scheme is required because the once free local car parks now have charges in place which has caused any visitors to the area to avoid these car parks in favour of the local residential roads. The cost of the parking permits should be funded by the monies raised from local car park fees”.

- 2.12 This report gives due consideration to the content of the petitions in its recommendations.

3 ANALYSIS

- 3.2 444 responses were received from individuals within the consultation zone. These responses came from 384 properties. It should be noted that some of the documents submitted included multi-signatures from residents in the same street and in some instances more than one response was received from a single property.
- 3.3 Nevertheless, the number of responses from within the consultation zone is considerably lower than in 2007 (1217) and may be due, in part to the fact that residents were invited to attend an exhibition, or view the proposals on-line rather than view a hard copy of the proposals.
- 3.4 A total of 144 responses were marked as agreeing with the proposals as consulted (32.43%), 24 were marked as 'no definite view' (5.41%) and 279 were marked 'other (state)' (62.84%). It should be noted that the total stated of 447 does not correspond with the figure at 2.1 above, owing to the fact that some respondents indicated more than one choice.
- 3.5 In addition to the above a total of 51 responses were received from residents/businesses which, although in Walton were not within the consultation zone. Of those responses only 5 (9.80%) agreed with the proposed restrictions.
- 3.6 An additional 53 responses were received from persons living outside Walton who, in the main indicated that they are employed in the town centre but also includes regular visitors to the town. Of those responses only 2 (3.77%) agreed with the proposed restrictions.
- 3.7 Therefore, out of the total of 548 responses, there were 376 objections (68.61%).

- 3.8 This confirms that the decision previously taken by Members not to promote the scheme as a Controlled Parking Zone was correct, as it will now be possible to treat roads individually, thereby addressing the needs of residents and businesses more effectively whilst maintaining and improving road safety levels throughout Walton.
- 3.9 As it is anticipated that the outcome of discussions currently taking place between Elmbridge Borough Council, Walton Business Group and managers of privately owned car parks will have a positive effect on current levels of non-residential parking, permit parking for residents should only be considered at this time in roads where residents are severely affected by the same.

4 ISSUES RAISED

- 4.1 The following issues were frequently mentioned by respondents:
- The delay between initial consultation in September 2007 and presentation of the current proposals;
 - There were no on-street parking problems prior to the recent re-development of the town centre;
 - The restrictions are only required because no provision was made to address business needs by providing alternative free/low-cost parking provision in the town centre for town centre employees;
 - Town centre parking charges are too high, particularly in The Heart shopping centre multi-storey car park;
 - Provision should be made in town centre car parks for employees;
 - Why should we have to pay to park outside our house?
 - Permits should be free as the parking problems have been recently created;
 - The permits are too expensive;
 - Permits should not be restricted to a maximum of two;
 - All properties should be considered for permits irrespective of their off-street parking facilities;
 - The limit imposed on visitor permits of 30 per year is not acceptable;
 - Funds would be better spent on road repairs.

5 OPTIONS

- 5.1 The options available are:
- (a) implement as consulted;
 - (b) implement as consulted with minor variations;
 - (c) implement restrictions where they would improve traffic flow and enhance road safety in general, e.g. on through traffic routes and at road junctions;
 - (d) implement restrictions as consulted on roads where the majority of responses indicate approval;

- (e) review those roads where the majority of responses objected to the proposals but indicated that variations of the same would be accepted and re-consult locally on that basis;
 - (f) do nothing.
- 5.2 A street by street summary of recommendations is attached at Annexe 'C' which has been marked in the right hand column with the letters (a) to (e) corresponding to the options listed at 5.1 above, for ease of reference and to aid decision making.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER

- 7.1 None.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Although there is considerable objection to the proposed restrictions as a whole, support exists for the introduction of restrictions in some roads, albeit in some instances with a variation of what was originally proposed.
- 8.2 There is also considerable objection to the conditions attached to the issue of on-street parking permits, particularly with regard to cost, restrictions on number per property and the restricted number of visitors' permits available per property.
- 8.3 Many responses expressed considerable ill-feeling over decisions taken in respect of recent re-development of the town centre and construction of The Heart shopping/residential facilities. In many instances responses state that the failure to provide low-cost or free car parking for town centre businesses/ employees has resulted in the current high levels of on-street parking in residential roads by non-residents. It is also pointed out that although one off-street parking space is available, at a cost, to occupants of the 374 flats in the Heart, some occupants have more than one vehicle and currently utilise existing unrestricted on-street parking close to the town centre for the parking of their additional vehicle.
- 8.4 The petition received from Walton Business Group highlights the perceived negative effect that extensive additional town centre waiting restrictions will have on local businesses.
- 8.5 It was intended that the purpose of the 2009 consultation would be to promote the proposed parking scheme and seek the views of residents and businesses, closely followed by minor adjustments to the proposals where required and formal advertisement of the draft Traffic

Regulation Order. In view of the amount of negative reaction received it would not be appropriate to progress to formal advertisement of the scheme as originally planned.

- 8.6 However, as a number of existing road safety issues need to be addressed and the residents in some residential roads indicate that they are in favour of some form of restrictions to dissuade non-residential parking, it is recommended that restrictions in individual streets as recommended in the document attached at Annexe 'C', be progressed at this time and that a further report is submitted to future meetings of the local Committee to inform of progress generally and to seek further guidance and approval where necessary.

9 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Some residents of the area clearly wish to have some parking controls in their roads, so complete withdrawal of the scheme would not seem to be appropriate.
- 9.2 If no objections are received following further local consultation with those residents who would like parking controls but request variants of what were presented for consultation, it would be possible to progress a reduced Traffic Regulation Order in autumn 2009.
- 9.3 As the outcome of discussions being undertaken with regard to the provision of alternative car parking facilities for town centre employees and businesses could have a positive effect on current levels of non-residential parking, it would seem to be appropriate to await the outcome of those discussions before considering any further action area-wide.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 If the Committee agrees with the recommendations, officers will revise the scheme and re-consult at local level where necessary, prior to progressing the required Traffic Regulation Order in October/November 2009.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Walton Business Group Ltd – Petition
Esher Avenue, Churchfield Road, Winchester Road and
Highfield Road – Petition
Dale Road, Harvey Road, Mayo Road and Thames Street –
Letter of Representation