

ANNEXE C (1)

Analysis of the Consultation Responses to Questions about the Traffic Management Arrangements on Church Street and High Street, Leatherhead.

Question 22

The consultation did not deliver a clear result in favour of one particular course of action. This is reflected in the responses to question 22 which asked the simple question whether the existing arrangements should remain or be changed. 53.8% thought a change to the TRO should be made and 46.2% were happy with things as they are. Those that considered there should be change included those that thought there should be a greater degree of vehicular access and those that thought there should be less.

A read through the comments made in response to this question reveals strong feelings both ways. Of those that wish to see a greater degree of vehicular access, the commonly made points in favour are:

- It increases the vitality and business of the street
- It is customer friendly and allows the picking up of bulky goods
- It is essential for the viability of businesses by increasing the visibility of shops
- It allows disabled people to get close to the shops and businesses they use
- Encourages people to come into the town

Of those that wish to see more control over vehicular access, the points made are:

- The street is more pleasant to walk through
- There is less danger to pedestrians
- Eating out becomes less like sitting in a car park
- There is adequate, free and underused parking close by and there is no need to use the High Street for parking
- Maintenance of street surfaces, otherwise subject to heavy loads and oil spillage, is made easier

There were 116 comments made in the text box. 17 comments were recorded from those who appeared uncompromising in their advocacy of unrestricted vehicular access. At the other end of the argument, 31 recorded comments wanting a complete restriction on vehicular access, except for deliveries and, occasionally, disabled vehicles. Most of those leaving comments were looking for some form of compromise.

A number of comments referred to the pedestrian only time period. Whilst some wanted this period to be increased, there were calls to have the period of pedestrianisation reduced. The times suggested when the barrier would be raised ranged from 3.00 am. to 4.30 pm. It was often recognised that the 4.30 pm to 6.00 pm period, when deliveries were permitted but not parking, is problematic. Without the barrier to prevent them, cars do access the High Street. Although some of these are undoubtedly legitimate deliveries, others are not. If they are given parking tickets,

this causes upset both amongst the drivers and the shops that service them. If it not enforced, this equally causes concern. Without the barrier to prevent them, drivers will take a chance. There may be some drivers who genuinely have not seen the restrictions notice, but others are making the most of an opportunity for free parking when the off street car parks are still charging.

Views on parking in High Street and Church Street are equally diverse. However, there does appear to be a significant body of opinion that wishes to see parking better managed if it is retained. There are a number of suggestions that parking should be confined to one side of the street, leaving the other side uncluttered. But there is also another body of opinion that says that there is adequate free parking close by (the Swan Centre car park is mentioned) that should be promoted to leave the High Street uncluttered.

Providing more control over where car parking takes place will reduce the number of car parking spaces. It may not, at least in the short term, reduce the through flow of vehicles looking for a car parking space and, without enforcement (either in the form of car parking attendants or physical restraints) cars will continue to park where they can.

Those that advocate parking during the day, sometimes suggest that this should be short term, limited to perhaps 30 minutes, to ensure that there is a good turn around of users. The value for customers of being able to pick up bulk goods, particularly from Argos, is mentioned. In a similar vein, there are those who value the late afternoon ability to park in the High Street, when it is less busy, and visit shops, including Sainsbury's. This is a period when car parking charges apply elsewhere. There were some suggestions that a different charging system within the off street car parks would ease the demand for parking in High Street.

The control and regulation of car parking brings its own challenges both in terms of the infrastructure that is needed to support it (signs, lining out) and its enforcement. It is likely that a system would need to be largely self enforcing.

In conclusion:

- There is probably sufficient support for the continuation of vehicular access in the evening, but consideration might be given to whether the delivery only period from 4.30 pm should allow access and parking for private vehicles.
- Parking is still regarded by many people as problematic. Parking takes places wherever there is a space and is not confined to the areas surfaced in York Stone setts, where parking and deliveries were originally intended. This leads to complaints associated with restricted pedestrian movement, blocked shop windows and doorways and an unpleasant environment within which to sit out in the evenings. The problem extends to Sundays during the day when some shops are open and parking is unrestricted and unregulated. Allocating spaces will reduce the car parking capacity and, if accompanied by signage, street furniture and road markings, will degrade the visual amenity of the streets. The most likely way forward would be to follow a number of suggestions made and retain some parking on the south side of High Street and protect the remaining areas with good quality street furniture. With this

solution, there would be no parking in pedestrianised section of Church Street.

- A more radical solution would be to exclude traffic and parking from the High Street at all times. There is some support for this solution and there are good environmental arguments for it. The commercial reasons for retaining private vehicular access are difficult to assess; some businesses say it is essential and others do not. However, if the County Council is to go down this route there would be a significant degree of opposition and objections to the revised TRO.