

PART A

Report to: Highways Forum
Date of meeting: 7th October 2015
Report of: Transport and Infrastructure Section Head
Title: Watford Borough Council Parking and Highway Works

1.0	SUMMARY
1.1	This report provides current information on the Borough Council's Traffic Orders, Projects relating to highways works within its responsibility and the Parking Service.
2.0	RECOMMENDATIONS
2.1	To note the report.
<p>Contact Officer: For further information on this report please contact: Andy Smith, Transport and Infrastructure Section Head telephone extension:8115 email: andy.smith@watford.gov.uk</p> <p>Report approved by: Jane Custance, Head of Regeneration and Development</p>	
3.0	TRAFFIC ORDERS
3.1	<p>Appendix A details the minor locations across the Borough which formed the 2015/16 various sites Traffic Order.</p> <p>A number of additional sites requiring Traffic Orders were introduced in to the work programme with the consent/ approval of the Portfolio Holder and these are also listed.</p>
3.2	<p>In addition to the committed/ completed schemes listed, a number of sites still remain on the reserve list awaiting consent from the Portfolio Holder for them to be moved on to the action list.</p> <p>These are also listed in Appendix B. Included as an add-on to the reserve list are a number of sites which Members have approached Officers on. These sites are regarded by the Members concerned as being high priority and consequently they have been referred to the Portfolio Holder for decision regarding priority and programming.</p>
3.3	MAJOR TRO SCHEMES
3.4	<p>St Albans Road Parking Study</p> <p>The stage 1 and stage 2 work on the study has focussed further work on the review of the operation of short/ medium stay parking on St Albans Road to identify whether amendments can be identified which will better support traders in St Albans Road. Contact has made with the traders seeking volunteers to take part in a number of workshops to identify and develop ideas regarding the management of the bays. The first of these will take place in mid October. In addition, a review of existing yellow line controls across Callowland Ward with a view to reducing their extend where road safety and congestion considerations allow is also being progressed along with a review of controls at a small number of locations identified at stage 2 where residents have raised concerns at access difficulties caused by inconsiderate parking.</p>

3.5	<p>Controlled Parking Zones - Area Wide Review</p> <p>The views of residents and businesses within the existing CPZs in Watford were sought via questionnaires distributed over the summer 2013. The outcome of the consultation was included in a full report to Cabinet in December 2013. The majority of respondents supported the current CPZ regime. The two most significant changes identified relate to the introduction of full zone controls in zone M/N (currently only match day) and the introduction of a residents parking scheme in The Larches in Oxhey. The scheme in The Larches completed its statutory process and was introduced at the beginning of September 2015. With regard to M/N an additional consultation with residents carried out at the request of the Ward Councillors showed that support for changes to the parking controls in the area had reduced since the original consultation in 2013. As a result the Ward Councillors requested that full zone controls only be taken forward for the following roads:-</p> <p>Whippendell Road (Queens Avenue to Harwoods Road)</p> <p>Princes Avenue (Hagden Lane to Harwoods Road)</p> <p>Harwoods Rd (Kings Avenue to Chester Road)</p> <p>Detailed design work for this amendment is currently under way and the statutory consultation process will take place during the Autumn. Assuming any objections received can be satisfactorily addressed, the amendments should be in place by the end of 2015.</p>
3.6	<p>Radlett Road Estate</p> <p>Several rounds of informal consultation have identified 'commuter ban' controls as the option which best meets the needs of the Estate. Both Watford Community Housing Trust and Places for People (in relation to Octavia Court) have indicated that they do not wish to include their privately controlled parking areas in to the emerging Council proposals for the public highway. Details of the scheme are currently being produced and will progress to Statutory Consultation in the Autumn. Subject to any formal objections being satisfactorily resolved, a scheme should be in place by the end of 2015.</p>
3.7	<p>Cassiobury Estate</p> <p>A number of small scale amendments to the parking controls on the Estate along with the expansion of the zone controls to 3 additional streets (Langley Way-Cassiobury Drive to Parkside Drive; Trefusis Walk and Conningesby Drive) were identified for action. The changes completed their statutory process in early summer and the changes were introduced at the beginning of September 2015.</p>
3.8	<p>Cassiobury Triangle</p> <p>At the request of the Park Ward Councillors and with the agreement of the Portfolio Holder a consultation is planned following concerns expressed by the Cassiobury Triangle Residents Association. The consultation is to test the view of residents regarding the introduction of some form of permit parking scheme to address parking congestion issues which are expected to become worse with the HLF project in Cassiobury Park. Consultation is due to take place in Autumn 2015 with a decision on whether to develop proposal further likely in late 2015.</p>

4.0	PROJECTS
4.1	<p>Under s115 of the Highways Act/Highway Agreement</p> <p>The Borough Council can undertake works on the highway where they are providing an amenity.</p> <p>In February 2014, Watford Council approached Hertfordshire County Council with a view to entering into an Agency Agreement for undertaking works on the Highway. In April 2014, a new Agreement was entered in to between the two Councils.</p> <p>Subject to the appropriate Noticing of works and prior agreement for the delivery of major projects, Watford can now carryout highway works using our in-house term contractor.</p>
4.2	<p>Car Park refurbishment projects – Timberlake car park Radlett Road and Watford Business Park car park</p> <p>Both Timberlake car park at Radlett Road and Watford Business Park car park have now been upgraded including introducing dedicated disabled and infrastructure for electric vehicle charging. In mid-November 2015 parking management controls in the form of an Off Streets Parking Places Order will be introduced in both car parks.</p> <p>The controls in Timberlake car park will help to protect some spaces that are currently occupied by commuters for the Allotment Holders and those residents and visitors wishing to use the Colne Valley Linear park.</p>
4.3	<p>Land Drainage</p> <p>Phase 2 of the watercourse improvement works at the Lairage Land will commence in February 2016 once the treatment of the Japanese Knotweed has been completed.</p>
5.0	HERITAGE PROJECTS AND RENOVATION SCHEMES 2015-16
5.1	<p>Estcourt Conservation Signage</p> <p>A project in the Estcourt Conservation Area was completed in September. Two circular (200mm diameter) etched zinc roundels have been placed at each of the ten roads to highlight the access points into the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The project was funded through a 50% financial contribution from the County Council Highways Locality Budget supported by County Councillor Giles-Medhurst and the Borough Council's conservation assets budget.</p>
5.2	<p>Deep Cleaning Programme 2015-16</p> <p>Seven roads in the Callowland/Leggatts, eight roads in Holywell/Vicarage Wards and a further seven roads in Central Ward are set for an Autumn deep clean. The project which has received funding support from Councillor Joynes, Councillor Bell and Councillor Giles-Medhurst and is due to commence on the 13th November and be completed within three weeks.</p> <p>Veolia, Ringway and the Borough Council's civil engineering contractors will be joining forces to carryout intensive street cleaning and highway repairs in roads in</p>

	Watford that have previously been difficult to access. The works will also include gully cleaning, relining and replacing /repainting defective street name plates.
5.3	<p>Watford Heath Landscape works Works commenced in late September to improve the Heath. The project forms part of the town's green spaces improvements programme.</p> <p>New footpaths will be framed with restored historical railings, the war memorial will be given a new setting and unnecessary signs and clutter removed. The trees will be given some care and attention, existing seats will be restored and a new seating feature area will be introduced. The works are expected to take 6-8 weeks to complete.</p>
6.0	SUBWAYS ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
6.1	<p>Following a successful bid for HCC Section 106 funds. Two new subway mirrors have been installed in the Subway leading from Church Road to Watford Junction Station.</p> <p>The project to further enhance the subway leading from Church Street to Vicarage Road is planned for the late Autumn.</p>
7.0	PROMOTING ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING
7.1	<p>In partnership with HCC new signage has been introduced to a number of WBC car park information boards to highlight the availability of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.</p> <p>Appendix C provides a plan showing the locations of where the existing Electric Vehicle Charging infrastructure has been introduced in the Borough and our proposals for further EV sites in 2105/16.</p>
7.2	<p>Introduction of an Electric Car Club for Watford</p> <p>In November 2014 the Council entered in to a 12 Month pilot scheme partnership with E-Car to introduce an Electric Car Club in the Town. The project is one of the first schemes of its kind and aimed at increasing people's transport options in and around the town, giving them an alternative, more sustainable way to travel that will help save money and reduce emissions.</p> <p>E-Car Club complemented Watford Borough Council's vehicle fleet with two brand new zero-emission Renault Zoe electric cars which are stationed at the Town Hall and The Avenue car park, opposite the leisure centre.</p> <p>The cars are available to local businesses and residents who can drive them across the county, neighbouring counties and within easy reach of a return journey to London.</p> <p>In the first 9 months of the Pilot Project there had been 33 active Watford Council staff members signed up to use the staff electric vehicle. There has also been 15 private user sign ups to the E-Car Pay Per Use Car Club Pilot Scheme for the town.</p> <p>Since the scheme started there have been a total of 229 booking. On average, 20 bookings each month, which equates to the vehicle being driven just under 8 miles per booking. In total (up to the 17th August 2015) the electric vehicles combined have covered 3243 miles.</p>

	<p>On the 17th September 2015 Watford Borough Councils Leadership Team approved a 24 month extension to the current E-Car Agreement.</p>
7.3	<p>Facilitating Electric Vehicles in to the local Taxi Fleet – introducing Rapid Charging Stations</p> <p>In order to help drive the uptake of electric vehicles to kick start the transition to an emission free, national vehicle fleet to combat rising emissions the Borough Council has been working with a company called Electric Blue to facilitate the introduction of Electric Vehicles into the local taxi fleet.</p> <p>(EVs) offer a viable solution to this challenge and importantly are significantly cheaper to operate, given the substantially lower running costs of EVs vehicles the logical starting point was the Taxi industry. To date, widespread adoption of EVs has been limited by the lack of charging infrastructure. The project proposes to tackle this by installing a Rapid Charger Network in the Borough, these chargers are capable of providing an 80% recharge in 25 minutes..</p> <p>In April 2015 the partnership saw the first Rapid EV Charger in Watford introduced. This has been located in Service Road Q near the junction of Beechen Grove.</p> <p>Discussions are currently taking place between the parties to install a second rapid charger. This will then ensure there is sufficient capacity in the network to open up the rapid chargers to the general public.</p>
8.0	<p>PARKING SERVICE UPDATE</p>
8.1	<p>Watford Annual Parking Report</p> <p>This is currently in the process of being prepared. It is being revamped this year so that it is visually more appealing and intended to make the most important information easier to identify. A draft format of the report, which is unlikely to include the comparative appeal statistics, is hoped to be completed in October. A final version will be available when the Traffic Penalty Tribunal have released the appeal statistics for Hertfordshire authorities.</p> <p>This report will show that just over 23,000 Penalty Charge Notices were issued in 2014/15. This is just under a 1,000 increase on the previous year. This is likely to be the result of regular late night enforcement in the met quarter (Zone E) until 10pm.</p> <p>The number of match day tickets fell from 1,252 to 972 and this is likely to be associated to Watford's early cup exits. There will be less home fixtures this year to due to less games in the Premier League.</p>
8.2	<p>Web Services</p> <p>The uptake of the online permit system is growing but it is slow with around 10% of the 5,500 applications being made online.</p> <p>However, the online Penalty Charge Notice challenge system is growing rapidly. The details of the system were printed on the reverse of penalties last month</p>

	<p>(August) and this saw the number of challenges made in this way rise from 9% to 75%. As anticipated, the overall number of challenges made fell by 21% as it is likely that motorists viewed the photographic evidence taken by the Civil Enforcement Officer and elected to pay instead.</p>
8.3	<p>Vinci Park UK Ltd</p> <p>The Local Contract Manager, Lisa Locke, has resigned after 7-years at Watford. She will become the Contract Manager at London Borough of Bromley, which is closer to her home. Vinci are presently interviewing to fill her position and have been keeping the Council updated. Lisa remains available to Watford 2-days a week and by telephone but the monthly enforcement invoices have been reduced accordingly.</p> <p>The Dacorum Operations Manager has resigned and taken up a position at London Borough of Camden. Vinci have recruited and the new Operations Manager took up the post on Monday 14th September.</p>
8.4	<p>The Avenue Car Park</p> <p>Costs have been obtained for the implementation of a credit card pay and display machine to be introduced into The Avenue Car Park, which will assist regular long-stay parkers. The current machines can be upgraded for around £1,500 or a new machine ordered for around £4,000. There will be monthly modem charges and card fees at around 2% for credit cards and 15p for debit cards. The operational impact of this project and the effect on signage etc is being considered.</p>
8.5	<p>Proposed changes to Civil Parking Enforcement – Government Proposals</p> <p>A number of the changes in the Deregulation Bill which went through Parliament earlier in 2015 and these did not make any significant difference to our parking enforcement operation because we do not run the affected services, such as camera enforcement, or we are already doing them, such as re-offering payment of the discounted amount following rejection of a challenge to a penalty, which was recommended within the statutory guidance to the Traffic Management Act 2004 in any event.</p> <p>There is also a will for the TMA 2004 recommendation for Local Authorities to publish annual reports and their cancellation policy to be made compulsory, which again will not affect us as this is something we already do.</p> <p>The most significant change, which will have a notable impact on the service and its income, is the introduction of a 10-minute grace period in permitted parking areas, such as pay and display, shared use and residents bays etc. Previously, motorists were afforded a 5-minute observation period, which relates to the loading laws. Loading is an exemption in all Traffic Regulation Orders that allows motorists to legally park on a restriction in order to carry out that activity. As a result, we are obliged to provide an observation period to determine if any loading is taking place before any penalty is issued and 5-minutes is the commonly adopted period used across the Country and was confirmed as the most appropriate period by a High Court judge in a very well known appeal case.</p> <p>A 10-minute grace period, which does not appear to relate to loading or any other</p>

	<p>activity, will affect the levels of general compliance to the restrictions, which is the fundamental purpose of enforcement, the income levels and the overall efficiency of the operation. Effective coverage of patrolled areas will be reduced because Civil Enforcement Officers are required to stand by a car for 10-minutes or will not be able to stray very far, meaning that the current beat patrols are not enforced to the same degree that they were previously.</p> <p>Our pay and display charges are 20p/30p for 12-minute blocks of time. In busy and popular locations, such as Market Street, where vehicle turnover is important to the local businesses, motorists can now effectively purchase 22-minutes for their 30p, which reduces the overall turnover of spaces and has a longer term effect on income, particularly as the maximum stay is 1-hour. This has become 1hr 10mins. Visitor vouchers now provide an additional 10-minutes beyond their stated time because they are used in permitted parking bays. At this stage It is difficult to understand how this change is helping businesses and something we will monitor closely .</p> <p>It is clear that we will issue less PCNs annually but this is obviously the intended outcome of the changes.</p> <p>There is also a proposal that a set number of local residents, 50 has been suggested, can present their petition to the Council to request them to review yellow lines on their road. This may also have a knock on effect on the implementation of other schemes, the costs of changing TRO's and the workload of the Traffic Engineers.</p> <p>With regard to income, all on-street income is ring-fenced and can only be spent on transport related projects under s.55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Similarly, this also applies to all off-street PCNs.</p>
9.0	CCTV, WI-FI AND FOOTFALL UPDATES
9.1	<p>CCTV control room move to Shady Lane</p> <p>The Council continues to replace its oldest cameras as part of a 3 year programme of camera improvement. Many of the cameras are 15 years old and nearing the end of their operational life. Planned in conjunction with the Highway Authority there will be a number of night time traffic restrictions on some town centre roads to enable these works to take place.</p> <p>Officers are also advising the Cassiobury Park HLF team on the options for cctv coverage around the relocated bandstand, The Cha and the proposed Hub centre.</p> <p>The Town Centre CCTV Annual Report was signed off by Cllr Sharpe, Portfolio Holder, and will be sent to all Borough Councillors, County Councillors and published on the Council's web-site shortly.</p> <p>Discussions are ongoing with the Watford Community Housing trust around the provision of monitoring services at a number of their sites. A trial will commence at The Brow shops once the trust have completed a system upgrade in Nov 2015.</p> <p>An evaluation of cctv options is underway for the Westland Rd PSPO which may result in the installation of additional fixed cctv cameras and the use of re-deployable cameras. These will also be available to cover known ASB sites.</p>

9.2	<p>Town Centre Footfall Counter Project</p> <p>The final counter site, at the corner of Water Lane and High St, was installed in late July 2015. There are now 12 counter sites across the town centre providing the Council and partners valuable data on pedestrian flow rates, times and directions of travel.</p>
9.3	<p>Town Centre Access WI-FI</p> <p>The Council, in partnership with Herts CC and WCHT, have granted a 10yr concession to Intechology WiFi Ltd to provide free public area wifi in the town centre and at the Trust's community sites. Installation commences in early October and the network will be live by the end of 2015</p>
10.0	Monitoring Officer Comments
10.1	The legal implications are contained within the body of the report
11.0	s151 Officer Comments
11.1	The Director of Finance advises that the cost of the schemes listed above can be met from within existing budgetary provision.

Appendices

Appendix A: TRO Various Sites

Appendix B: TRO Reserve List

Appendix C: Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure sites

Background Papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

File Reference

None