

Part A

Report to: Highways Forum
Date of meeting: 5th March 2013
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 Parking Shop.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the report.

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

Report approved by: Jane Custance, Head of Planning

3.0 TRAFFIC ORDERS

3.1 Woodland Drive and Orchard Close

The Council prepared proposals to amend parking bay arrangements following representations received from residents of Woodland Drive and to a lesser extent Orchard Drive to take advantage of the un-marked road surface presented as a result of resurfacing work carried out by Herts Highways in April 2012.

The proposals were developed in consultation with Ward Councillors and following survey work to identify the level of through traffic in both roads during the morning and evening peak periods.

The consensus from residents in Woodland Drive is that they would wish the 'signage only' approach to be adopted by the Council. By implication this would result in the abandoning of the current scheme for the road and a Statutory Consultation process being carried out on a new scheme meeting those wishes. The difficulty with this approach is that the 'signage only' approach is not consistent with the advice given by

the Department for Transport in paragraph 7.15 of Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual. Unfortunately the advice is not detailed however the pertinent section reads as follows:-

Guidance from the Department for Transport states that reserving parking in an entire road for the sole use of permit holders by removing bay markings and only erecting signs at the entrance to the road is permissible. However, guidance advises that such a scheme is likely to be most suitable for cul-de-sacs or small networks of roads with little or no through traffic and that unfortunately many roads may not be suitable for this type of signing.

Surveys to assess the level of through traffic in both Orchard Drive and Woodland Drive were carried out at the end of May 2012 and the resulting data analysed.

This analysis has shown that Woodland Drive carries higher levels of traffic than Orchard Drive and that a significant proportion of this is through traffic, possibly trying to avoid queuing traffic on Hempstead Road.

The consequences of adopting the 'signage only' approach in Woodland Drive are not safety related. Safety issues in the context of parking management in the road are dealt with by the appropriate positioning of yellow line restrictions at junctions, on bends and at pinch points. The purpose of the guidance is to ensure that motorists are clear on the parking requirements in an area. The 'signage only' approach provides a lesser level of information than the more conventional approach and as such is felt suitable in the main only for locations where passing motorists unfamiliar with the area are relatively low in number. The risk to the Council in taking this option forward lies in potential future appeals against PCNs issued if the Adjudicator holds that the scheme is unenforceable because it fails to meet the DfT guidance.

The issue has been discussed with the Portfolio Holder and the above issues have been raised. In considering the matter the Portfolio Holder has given considerable weight to the views expressed by residents through the Statutory Consultation process. As the risks associated with the 'signage only' approach lies with the parking appeals process the Portfolio Holder has indicated that he wishes to abandon the current conventional scheme and to bring forward a 'signage only' proposal.

Provision for the funding of a review of the bay arrangements in zone V has been made in the 2012/13 budget and the cost of this review will be met from this allocation.

For Orchard Drive we would need to re-advertise the existing traffic order.

For Woodland Drive we will need to re-advertise inviting objections. The objection period will be for three weeks. The TRO is currently being drafted and assuming we receive minimal objections we hope to implement the scheme in the middle of June.

3.2 Woodside Leisure Centre

The original Traffic Regulation Order controlling the use of the car parks at the Woodside site was introduced in 2009 to tackle problems of inappropriate parking behaviour. The current Order covers approximately 350 spaces at the lower end of the site, nearest to Horseshoe Lane, including the main car park of approximately 250

spaces. A second large car park of approximately 160 spaces is located to the west of the site between the Indoor Bowls arena and the football changing rooms. Currently this car park is not covered by the existing TRO and consequently is often the site of inappropriate parking patterns which block aisles. In addition there is no control over length of stay or the activities which can be carried out in the car park which leaves the site open to uses for which it is not intended such as car washing or commercial sales. The top car park is also adjacent to a major depot for the Council's grounds maintenance operation. On occasions parking areas needed to support this operation are taken up by private cars using the site, affecting the operational efficiency of the service.

It is proposed to extend the current parking controls on the site to cover this second car park, along with associated roadways. Charging is not proposed at present however the controls will be effective in addressing out of bay parking and use of disabled bays and coach bays by unauthorised vehicles. It will also effectively cover unauthorised parking in bays required by the Grounds Maintenance Service for operational vehicles. It is proposed to implement the changes by revoking the current Traffic Order and implementing a new one covering the whole of the site. Following discussions with SLM and Community Services, the opportunity is also being taken to incorporate some minor layout amendments and to bring the operating hours of the car parks in to line with the operating hours of the site as a whole.

The scheme is currently within the three week objection period, assuming no objections are received then the scheme is set to be implemented in late April.

3.3 **TROs Various Sites**

Appendix A details the eight locations across the Borough which have been discussed and agreed with the Portfolio Holder that will form the next TRO various sites Traffic Order.

The sites have assessed in terms of Highway safety and accident data provided by the County Council. Details on the proposed restrictions are currently being drafted and will be presented to the Ward Councillors who have requested parking restrictions be investigated.

Depending on the level of objections received it is envisaged that the Various Sites TRO will take between 6 – 9 months to deliver.

3.4 **Nascot Ward - Grandfield Avenue / Bellamy Close / Priory Fields**

The above roads have been subject to Commuter Parking, Obstructive Parking and as a result there is lack of available on-street parking for residents.

Following consultation and in conjunction with the Ward Councillors a scheme was developed (version 1). The preferred solution was to introduce yellow lines at the junctions and pinch points plus a commuter ban prohibiting all day parking.

Following concerns raised by the residents with the detail of version 1, officers amended the proposals and produced a further scheme which was discussed at an exhibition with residents in early February.

Version 2, includes some commuter ban restrictions, additional at any time restrictions to protect the junctions and to deter double parking.

The outcome of the residents' meeting is currently being discussed with Ward Councillors with a view to delivering a scheme.

3.5 TROs Un-Actioned Sites

Appendix B details the list of locations which will be considered for the next Various Roads Traffic Order.

3.6 Off Street Parking Places Order Amendment

An Off Street Parking Places Order Amendment is currently being processed for Pinner Road car park at Bushey Arches, Timberlake car park, off Radlett Road and the Watford Business Park car park.

Provision within the amendment order will also cover the use of the electric vehicle charging bays in all of three car parks above plus our existing car parks (Town Hall, The Avenue and Longspring). This is being introduced to deter misuse of the bays by non electric vehicles.

3.7 Callowland Parking Study

The area-wide residents' questionnaire has been agreed and finalised with the Ward Councillors and is currently being printed. Distribution is planned in early March to all residents and businesses in the Callowland area and an area of the Leggatts Ward adjacent to the Callowland recreation ground.

The questionnaire is seeking residents' and businesses' views on the current parking situation and offers a broad range of options for managing it. This will include a 'leave things as they are' option as there will be a proportion of respondents who will be content with things as they are. The responses will be analysed and the outcome reported to Councillors.

The way forward will be decided upon consideration of this report and will be the basis of the decision made. If a decision is made to introduce revised parking controls then a detailed scheme will be produced for further consultation.

If there still seems to be support for this refined scheme then this will be subject to more formal Statutory Consultation with a view to implementing a scheme in early 2014.

3.8 CPZ Investigation Zone E

Officers have been asked to investigate the existing parking layout within the Controlled Parking Zone E (the area within the Ring Road covering Smith Street/Granville Road off the High Street).

The area is currently a fully controlled zone including match day restrictions. Since the

opening of the Met Quarter development residents have raised concerns with Ward Councillors over indiscriminate, inappropriate parking and at times obstructive parking. These incidents mainly occur outside the enforcement hours that the CPZ currently operates.

Any changes to the existing layout of the current parking bays will need to consider access for deliveries to the new restaurants. There are time limits imposed in relation to delivery vehicles servicing the restaurants (not allowed before 7am or after 9pm Mon to Fri; before 8am or after 1pm on Saturdays; prohibited on Sundays and Bank Holidays) but outside these times it is available for use both for servicing/ deliveries.

The servicing assessment submitted with the planning application suggests a 'worst case' of seven vans and two HGV deliveries a day plus two commercial refuse collections per week. This is in addition to the WBC domestic collections that will be servicing the flats. The exception to the above is the retail unit on the corner of High Street and Kings Street (the entrance to the old Barclays Bank). This has no rear access to the service yard and the loading bay in King Street has been provided for it to use.

Early investigations have indicated that there is scope to introduce some additional residents' bays in this area. Some care will be needed in taking forward extra bays on Smith Street between King Street and the service yard access to ensure they do not block access for delivery vehicles. The transport statement submitted with the application indicates that this should not be a problem for bays on the west side (opposite the development) but makes no comment in relation to bays on the east side. Further checks in this area will need to be made before firm proposals are taken forward in this regard.

The Portfolio Holder has agreed that no physical works are planned in advance of the outcome of the Controlled Parking Zone Area Wide Review however, the study will provide the background for any changes and an opportunity for residents to express their views.

3.9 Controlled Parking Zones - Area Wide Review

There are currently five Full Controlled Parking Zones, seven Full Controlled Parking Zones with Match Day Restrictions, one Zone where Match Day Only Restrictions apply and the Cassiobury Zone V which operates Mon – Fri between 10.30am – 2.30pm (1st September to 30th June).

The Council has appointed consultants to produce a range of questions and organise consultation with residents within the existing Controlled Parking Zones across the Borough.

The questions are aimed at seeking the residents' views on how the current CPZ operates and in particular the hours of enforcement. The questions are currently being formulating and these will be presented to the Portfolio Holder for consideration before the questionnaire is then hand delivered to all residents and businesses.

The Controlled Parking Zone Area Wide Review study will enable the Council to analyse the views and recommendations of the residents and businesses and where

possible look to improve parking opportunities.

Phase one of the review will be presented to Cabinet in the middle of the year.

3.9.1 Radlett Road Estate (including Link Road)

Officers have been asked to investigate and deliver a scheme to manage and to prevent obstructive parking on the Radlett Road Estate and incorporate parking restrictions along Link Road in to the scheme. The restrictions proposed will deter commuters from parking in these roads.

Consultants were appointed in December 2012 to deliver the study. Their commission is at the present limited to delivering stage 1 of the project which consists of site and parking beat surveys and initial consultation with residents. The brief also requires the development of the residents questionnaire which will include a section for residents parking issues / concerns to be noted plus highlight broad options for parking management on the Estate.

Initial survey work was completed a few weeks ago. The scheme now includes the two areas within the Estate which are managed by the Watford Community Housing Trust and Places For People. Confirmation that the Housing Trusts wanted their residents to be included in the questionnaire was received in the middle of February.

The questionnaire has now been agreed in principle with the Portfolio Holder and our intention now is for final checks to be made and then the questionnaire will be mailed out to individual properties by the first week of March.

The survey results will be analysed and discussed with the Ward Councillors and Portfolio Holder. If the community supports parking control in the stage 1 consultation then the option is available to extend the brief to cover option development, consultation and hold an exhibition.

3.9.2 Oxhey (Cedar Road and Kingsfield Road /Court)

During 2011 the Borough Council carried out a consultation across the Oxhey Ward seeking residents' views on the need for parking controls to address parking difficulties in the area.

The outcome of the consultation did not support the introduction of area-wide controls to address commuter parking issues. However, the Council decided to pursue small-scale changes to improve both parking opportunity in the vicinity of local shops and amend the extent of yellow line controls at junctions. This work is currently on-going.

In early 2012 residents of properties in the Cedar Road / Kingsfield Road / Kingsfield Court area petitioned the Council requesting that the Council re-visit the possibility of some form of Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in their roads to address commuter parking associated with Bushey Station. This was subsequently discussed at an open forum public meeting in June 2012 where it became clear that there were split views on the need and desirability of such a scheme.

Following the meeting, it was decided that further investigations were required and to

assess the level of support.

Following discussions with the Ward Councillors a questionnaire was produced which included a range of parking options. This was distributed to the residents in the above roads in January 2013. In addition an exhibition was held inviting residents to comment on the proposals.

The consultation period has now closed and the views and recommendations are currently being analysed. A further meeting to review the results will be held with Ward Councillors in the middle March.

3.9.3 High Road Leavesden Parking Consultation

A request was received in 2012 to investigate obstructive parking around Leavesden Green JMI School, High Road, Leavesden.

The Portfolio Holder has agreed that due to safety concerns within the proximity of the School that the area be investigated with a view to introducing parking controls to address concerns.

Draft consultation documents have been agreed with the Ward Councillor which outline the officers recommendations for parking restrictions. Informal consultation with residents is planned to be held in late March / early April with a view to advertising a traffic order.

4.0 PROJECTS

4.1 Under s115 of the Highways Act

The Borough Council can undertake works on the highway where they are providing an amenity.

4.2 Car Park Refurbishment Projects – Radlett Road Timberlake car park and Watford Business Park car park

The Radlett Road Timberlake car park is a site which has been identified within the Resources and Corporate Plan projects 2011-15 as a site which could potentially have charges introduced to regulate use and generate income.

There are currently 56 spaces within the car park. Historically the Radlett Road (Timberlake) car park has been underused. More recently parking levels have increased. Council observations indicate that of the 56 spaces available to the public around 90% are occupied (Mon-Fri).

Vehicles are now parking all day. Casual observation suggests that the parking is associated with the near by industrial estate. At weekends the Community and Leisure department has been encouraging Watford Rugby Club to use the car park as an alternative to parking along the grass verges within Radlett Road. The car park is also being promoted as a strategic place to park for visitors to the Colne Valley Linear Park.

The purpose of the parking fee between the hours of 10am and 4pm would be to generate some income to off set the Council's operating cost in providing the car park whilst still maintaining a healthy period during the evenings and weekends for those visitors engaged in leisure activities.

A further consideration for introducing charges in the car park is the need to manage the car park to prevent obstructive and inappropriate parking. Two separate projects in terms of introducing waiting restrictions to a number of the surrounding roads have been agreed by the Council. Parking restrictions in Link Road and on roads within the Radlett Road estate including along Radlett Road itself are currently being consulted on. The restrictions proposed will deter commuters from parking in these roads.

A scheme to refurbish the car park, introduce dedicated disabled bays, provide infrastructure to enable electric vehicles to charge, upgrade the lighting levels and refresh the markings has been agreed with the Portfolio Holder.

The refurbishment works for Radlett Road Timberlake car park are planned to commence in June 2013.

Following concerns raised regarding access in and to the Watford Business Park, Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) highways team has been working with Watford Borough Council to look to improved access and develop an effective parking management scheme to prevent obstructive parking within the business park.

Proposals have been drafted which include improved pedestrian, cycle and bus access on Caxton Way and Greenhill Crescent.

It is anticipated that the proposals will bring benefits to the businesses now and into the future. These proposals have been designed with the knowledge of the proposed new station at Ascot Road as part of the Croxley Rail Link scheme and other nearby developments. A decision on the Croxley Rail Link Transport and Works Act Order application is expected in the Spring of 2013.

Positive management of the Watford Business Park car park is consistent with the broader objectives of the Estate wide scheme being promoted and developed by HCC/ WBC Property Team.

A scheme to refurbish the Business Park car park has been designed and approved by the Portfolio Holder. The refurbishment works will involve remarking the bays, introducing dedicated disabled bays, providing a pay and display machine and to provide infrastructure to enable electric vehicles to charge.

The refurbishment works are planned to be undertaken towards the end of 2013 and will coincide with HCC's on-road improvement measures.

4.3 Listed Tombs Restoration – Heritage Lottery Bid

After a positive pre-application response, the Borough Council have submitted a full application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to help restore a number of chest tombs in St Mary's Churchyard. The memorial structures include a range of locally and

nationally listed tombs that reflect key people who helped shape the development of Watford during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It is hoped that the Council will receive £80k towards to the repair of the memorial structures and for carrying out other improvements that will make their history more accessible. Wider plans include a series of educational talks, workshops, leaflets and new signage. As well as ensuring that the tombs are no longer at risk of further degradation, the project will help to enhance the popular green space that sits in the heart of the town centre. If funding is approved, enhancement works will take place during the summer.

4.4 Grand Union Canal Towpath Enhancement Partnership Project

In mid July 2013 the Inland Waterways Association National Festival is being held at Cassiobury Park. The Waterways Festival is an annual event organised and operated by volunteers from the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) and is their largest event in the year. This organisation campaigns for the conservation, use, maintenance, restoration and development of the Inland Waterways in Britain.

The Grand Union Canal passes along the Western Arm of Cassiobury Park separating it from the West Herts Golf Course and Whippendell Woods. The canal, which links Birmingham to the river Thames in London is a peaceful and shady location adjacent to the sometimes busy Cassiobury Park and is described in The Shell Book of Inland Waterways as “one of the loveliest sections of a canal so near a town anywhere in Britain”.

The festival is a wonderful opportunity to showcase what Watford can offer, attracting new visitors and income into the area, as well as highlighting the importance of the canal and the rich history of Cassiobury park itself.

It is for this reason that Watford Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Three Rivers Council and the Canal and Rivers Trust (formally British Waterways) have formed a partnership and combined funding with the aim of restoring and constructing new footpaths along the Canal towpath from Lock 77 at Cassiobury Park, northwards through to Grove Mill Lane. The aim will be to encourage further pedestrians usage along the towpath and provide an important link for cyclists.

Phase 1 of the project will commence in mid April and be completed by the beginning of July. In September 2013 phase 2, Grove Mill Lane towards Bridge Road Langlebury, will commence.

The project, which is being client managed by the Borough Council and is currently being advertised through the Hertfordshire Portal seeking potential service providers to construction the new footpaths along the canal towpath.

4.5 Peace Memorial Renovation

The assessment panel of the War Memorials Trust have approved a funding request from Watford Borough Council for renovating the Peace Memorial.

The Grade II Listed Memorial was designed during World War 1 by the local artist

Mary Pownall Bromet and has been a community focal point since it was unveiled in 1928. Over the years the Memorial has deteriorated and both the bronze statues and stone base are in need of specialist cleaning and repair work. The restoration project will involve improvement works to the Memorial and surrounding paving over the course of the next few months.

4.6 Signs and Lines Tender

The Council is currently seeking a contractor to supply and install all street and parking signage and street name plates and to provide and remove road markings to the Council. The Council currently has a requirement in this regard for its Parking Enforcement Service, Car Parks, Parks and grounds maintenance services as well as for street name plates.

The existing Signs and Lines contract expired in 2012 and the Council is currently seeking potential service providers through the Hertfordshire Portal.

4.7 New Bus Shelter Installations

Through a funding opportunity presented to the Council by Hertfordshire County Council new bus shelters are to be installed at five locations within the Borough.

The new non-advertising shelters are proposed for Haines Way, Horseshoe Lane, The Harebreaks, Raphael Drive and Courtlands Drive.

Subject to underground apparatus checks and approval from the Highway Authority, the new shelter are planned to be installed late March / early April.

4.8 Civil Engineering Term Maintenance Contract

The Council is currently seeking a contractor to undertake civil engineering works.

The existing civil engineering contract expired in 2012 and the Council is currently seeking potential service providers through the Hertfordshire Portal.

4.9 Subways Survey Project

The Council is anxious to encourage walking as a viable alternative to the use of the private car and it has recognised that the quality of the subways across the Borough vary considerably. It has decided therefore to commission a project to survey the subways to identify current level of usage and to make an assessment of the environmental quality of the subways so that decisions can be made regarding the targeting of funding for environmental improvements to make the subways more inviting with a view to encouraging greater use.

The Council is currently seeking to appoint a consultant to carry out the survey work on the subways on its behalf. The work required splits in to three sections as follows:-

- Survey of use
- Assessment of physical layout
- Assessment of environmental condition

Through a funding opportunity and partnership working with the County Council the Council has funding available to carry out this project during 2013/ 14.

The survey will commence before the end of March 2013 with a programme length of no more than 3 months from commencement to presentation of a final report.

5.0 PARKING SERVICE UPDATE

5.1 Signs and Lines

The Parking Service have a number of lining and signing works currently outstanding for the 2012/2013 financial year. However, weather permitting it is anticipated that all works will be completed by the end of March 2013.

The area of Courtlands Drive directly outside the Goodwood Parade of Shops has been subject to concerns from Councillors and Local Residents and work will shortly be undertaken to reline the area from the junction with Gammons Lane to the Ashfields Roundabout at the junction with Leavesden High Road. All damaged or faded signage will be removed or replaced, if necessary, ensuring that the Parking Service are able to continue to actively enforce the area and maintain the free flow of traffic in this key link road.

The restrictions in Pinner Road have also been recently reviewed. As a result, all damaged or faded signage has been replaced, unused street furniture removed and all lines, including loading restriction chevrons, will be refreshed shortly.

Similar lining works are due to take place in Metropolitan Station Approach and many parts of Controlled Parking Zone D including Langley Road, Nascot Road, Nascot Street, Stratford Road and Stamford Road to ensure that the residential permit scheme can continue to be enforced fulfilling the Council's commitment to provide a favourable parking opportunity for local residents. The signage regime of this part of the Controlled Parking Zone has not been renewed since its inception and it is the Council's intention to review all signage in the area in the 2013/2014 financial year and replace any damaged or faded signage and remove any redundant street furniture where necessary.

Additional outstanding signage works are due to take place shortly in the High Street, Burton Avenue, Southeron Road, St Albans Road, Queens Road, Elfrida Road, Imperial Way, Colonial Way, Judge Street and Bushey Mill Lane.

The Parking Service also continue to respond as quickly as possible to any emergency works, where posts or signs are reported as unsafe, or isolated locations, where damaged or faded lines and signs can mean that continued enforcement of the restrictions can be problematic.

The Parking Service have additionally co-ordinated the relining of residential roads close to Knutsford JMI School as part of Hertfordshire County Council's 'Safer Routes to School' Programme and continue to offer an advisory vehicular entranceway marking service for local residents, many of which are due to be completed by the end of the current financial year.

Appendices

Appendix A TRO Various Sites

Appendix B TRO Un-Actioned Sites

Background Papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

File Reference

none