

**Report to:** Cabinet  
**Date of meeting:** 2 December 2013  
**Report of:** Head of Regeneration & Development  
**Title:** Controlled Parking Zones – high level review

## 1.0 **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Council introduced its first Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in 1997. In 2007 a review of the key operating parameters was carried out to determine if residents and businesses were content with the way in which the scheme operated. The results, which were intended to set the direction for the operation of the CPZs and the Parking Service for the subsequent 10 years were reported to Cabinet. A small number of changes were made to the design of the scheme but generally residents indicated satisfaction with the operating parameters current at the time. .
- 1.2 In 2012 following representations from a number of Members representing Wards containing CPZ zones, it was decided to repeat the high level review carried out in 2007 to see if the attitudes of residents towards the way in which the CPZs operated had changed and to see if there was support for any amendments to the key operating parameters.
- 1.3 Consultation was carried out with residents and businesses across the CPZ areas during summer 2013. A suite of questionnaires was developed which were customised to reflect the types of CPZ areas which currently operate. In addition a separate questionnaire was developed for businesses within the CPZs. The content of the questionnaires was agreed with the Elected Mayor and Portfolio Holder and were distributed in July. The consultation exercise closed in September and the results of the responses received have been collated in to a report by JMP who have been engaged by the Council to assist in delivering this project.
- 1.4 In addition to the outputs from the questionnaire, the views of the Parking Service have been sought to identify any operational issues it believes requires amendment to improve the operation of the scheme or give clarity in relation to the day to day running of the service.

## 2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the following amendments to the current CPZ scheme:-
- 2.2 That the Council develops and publishes proposals of its intention to introduce 'full' Monday to Saturday residents parking restrictions in controlled parking zone M/N, to supplement the current Match Day restrictions, that the necessary consultations with regard to the proposals be carried out and that subject to continued community

support and the satisfactory resolution of any statutory objections received, the scheme be implemented.

- 2.3 That Kelmscott Crescent, Kelmscott Close and King Georges Avenue remain outside the CPZ areas
- 2.4 That the Council develops and publishes proposals of its intention to introduce a new controlled parking zone for The Larches, Oxhey, that the necessary consultations with regard to the proposal be carried out and that subject to continued community support and the satisfactory resolution of any statutory objections received the scheme be implemented
- 2.5 That Cabinet acknowledges the revision of zone operating hours in zone E in response to the changed parking pressures arising from the opening of the Met Quarter restaurant development.
- 2.6 That a review of the zone boundaries of Zones E, G, L and T be undertaken to determine if any improvements can be made to benefit residents.
- 2.7 That opportunities to increase short stay parking (1 hour maximum stay) in the vicinity of shops and service sector premises be assessed. Where sites are identified that can provide short stay parking opportunity without notable detrimental impact on the availability of residents' parking bays, action be taken to introduce such bays.
- 2.8 That consideration be given to increasing enforcement of parking controls around schools at the start and end of the school day including an assessment of potential increased costs and that a report on options in this regard be prepared for consideration by the Portfolio Holder for decision.
- 2.9 That Hertfordshire County Council be made aware of the concern expressed by businesses in relation to the impact of congestion such that their views can be taken account of in relation to the County Council's congestion strategy.
- 2.10 That opportunities to introduce a commercially sustainable car club scheme be explored and that a report on the options be prepared for consideration by the Portfolio Holder for decision.
- 2.11 That the current CPZ controls in relation to operating hours and days (with the exception of Zone E), numbers of permits per household, numbers of visitors vouchers per household (with the exception of zone E) and restrictions on the size of vehicles eligible for permits remain unchanged.

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**3.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL**

3.1 Following concerns raised by Members of some Wards regarding the operating parameters of the existing Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) within the Borough a consultation has been carried out with residents and businesses within the CPZs seeking their views on the current controls. Views were also sought from identified areas adjacent to, but outside, the existing CPZs to determine if there was community support for those areas to be considered for inclusion into the CPZ areas. This was essentially a repeat of the exercise carried out in 2007 on the tenth anniversary of the introduction of the first CPZ in the Borough.

3.2 Because of the size of the project, the Council engaged one of its Framework Consultants, JMP Consultants Ltd, to carry out the consultation.

3.3 The detail of the questionnaires was developed in consultation with the Elected Mayor and Portfolio Holder and sought views on the following issues:-

- Days and hours of operation of the zones
- Zone boundaries
- Number of permits
- Number of visitor vouchers
- Size of vehicles eligible for permits

In addition, views were sought from residents on the principle of introducing variable rates for permit charges based on the level of CO2 emissions for the vehicle for which the permit was sought as a means of encouraging residents to choose less polluting vehicles as a mechanism for incrementally improving air quality in the Borough. Members will already be familiar with the system already operated by the DVLA in relation to Vehicle Excise Duty (car tax).

Views were also sought in relation to the principle of the Council developing a car share or car pool scheme. Such a scheme would encourage occasional car users to consider not purchasing a car that would occupy scarce kerb side space in exchange for access to a maintained vehicle on occasions where a car was required.

3.4 A total of 5 questionnaires were produced, covering the main areas as outlined above, but customised to suit the differing residential areas to which they were circulated. The survey types were as follows:-

- |    |                                                       |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Q1 | To identified areas outside existing CPZ area         |
| Q2 | To existing full zone areas (Mon to Sat 8am – 6:30pm) |
| Q3 | To existing full zone + match day control areas       |
| Q4 | To match day only zone areas                          |
| Q5 | To businesses within existing zone areas              |

- 3.5 Questionnaires were distributed in July with response requested by mid-August. Recipients were provided with a FREEPOST postage paid envelope to return their questionnaires. An alternative electronic response route via surveymonkey was also made available.
- 3.6 Because of distribution difficulties the return date was extended until mid September and a number of roads were re-circulated with the questionnaire to guarantee that delivery had taken place.
- 3.7 Analysis of the returned information was carried out by JMP and a summary along with recommendations presented in report form the Council by JMP. A copy of that report is found at Appendix A to this report. The amount of data collected is such that it is not intended to repeat the detailed contained within the JMP report in this covering Cabinet Report. Specific comment will be made on key issues however and specifically on those that relate to the recommendations. To assist Members a copy of the Council's current CPZ Leaflet showing zone locations and setting out current criteria for the operation of the zones can be found at Appendix B.
- 3.8 **Zone M/N**  
Zone M/N is located in West Watford, principally in Vicarage and Holywell Wards although one side of Mildred Avenue is located in Park Ward. In the 2007 consultation the zone opted to remain as match day only and it is now the only match day only zone remaining in the Borough. Match day controls operate only when there is a match at Vicarage Road Stadium. On Mondays to Fridays they operate between 8am and 10 pm; on Saturdays and Bank Holidays they operate from 8am to 6:30pm and on Sundays they operate between 8am and 6:30pm.
- 3.9 A petition from residents of zone M/N was received earlier this year requesting that the zone adopts full zone status as well as match day controls. The Consultation carried out by JMP confirms this view. The response rate was just above 25% and of these 60% were in favour of the zone gaining full zone coverage in addition to the current match day only controls. On this basis it is recommended that the Council pursues the introduction of full zone controls in addition to match day in zone M/N.
- 3.10 **Areas currently outside existing CPZs**  
In discussion with the Portfolio Holder and the Elected Mayor it was agreed to circulate residents within identified areas with a questionnaire (Q1) seeking views on the potential inclusion of their area within a CPZ. The areas circulated were as follows:-
- Kelmscott Crescent/ Kelmscott Close (Holywell Ward)
  - King Georges Ave (Holywell Ward)
- The overall response rate was just under 26%. Of these 38% supported inclusion whilst 59% rejected it. On this basis it is recommended that none of the above roads be taken forward for inclusion within the CPZs
- 3.11 **The Larches, Oxhey**  
Early in 2012 a petition was received signed by all households in The Larches, Oxhey requesting that the Council introduce controls to protect the road from non-residents parking. The road consists of 26 properties and its location close to Bushey Arches

and Bushey railway station leaves it susceptible to non-resident parking. A meeting with the Chairman of the Residents' Association confirmed that there was a desire for a residents' permit scheme in the road. Consequently it is recommended that the Council pursues the introduction of a CPZ in The Larches. Because of the lack of parking opportunity for residential properties within the Borough located on Aldenham Road in the vicinity of The Larches it is recommended as part of the detailed scheme design that consideration be given to widening the eligibility for permits to adjacent residential properties which otherwise lack parking opportunity.

### 3.12 **Zone E**

Zone E consists of four roads (King Street, Smith Street, The Crescent and Granville Road) located in Central Ward inside the ring road close to the recently opened Met Quarter restaurant development. It was intended to review the operations of zone E (currently full zone + match day) as part of the exercise that is the subject of this report. As a result of the pressure on parking within zone E arising from the popularity of the Met Quarter and at the request of Central Ward Members with the support of the Divisional Member, the review of zone E was fast tracked and it became clear that there was support for zone E operating hours to be amended to provide protection for residents parking in to the evening and also at the weekends. Consequently a proposal to revise the hours of operation of the zone to 8am to 10 pm every day has been developed and at the time of writing of his report is subject to the Statutory Consultation period. Subject to any objections received being addressed it is hoped to introduce the revised operating hours of zone E before Christmas. Cabinet is asked to note this development in relation to the overall CPZ review.

### 3.13 **Zone Boundaries; zones E, G, L & T**

Residents were asked to comment on the boundaries of their current zones. This question had been developed in response to representations from Members and residents regarding the constraints that zone boundaries apply to residents in seeking a parking space in particularly dense zones with limited parking opportunity. This is particularly relevant to zone G which covers an area to the west of Exchange Road including Merton Road, Addiscome Road and Fearnley Street. The options available to adjust zone boundaries is limited however there may be some scope to revise inter-zone boundaries or combine zones to relieve pressure for permit holders seeking to park during operating hours. The exercise is complicated by virtue of the differing controls that apply (for instance a full zone adjacent to a full zone + match day) but in view of the desire for a review being expressed by the majority of respondents in zones E, G, L and T it is recommended that a review of the boundaries of these named zones be carried out to see if any benefit for residents can be won by adjustment of some of the zone boundaries.

### 3.14 **Short stay parking adjacent to shops**

Opinions on the desirability of increasing the amount of short stay shared use pay and display bays close to shops is split. Overall the support for and against increasing such provision is identical at 38% of all those who responded. Responses from businesses however, unsurprisingly showed 77% supported increased provision and in light of this it is recommended that opportunities to increase short stay provision in the vicinity of shops and service sector premises be explored and action be taken on opportunities identified through this exercise that could be introduced without notable detrimental impact on residents parking opportunity.

3.15 Specific requests have been received from retailers in Whippendell Road in West Watford for enhanced parking opportunity for customers close to the shops. Previous studies by Hertfordshire County Council preclude the introduction of new bays on Whippendell Road itself as this would significantly narrow the carriageway resulting in unacceptable road safety and traffic flow implications. Opportunities may be available in the side streets off Whippendell Road and there are currently a number of examples of shared use bays already in such locations where short stay parking can take place. Permit holders can use these bays without any time limit but visitors can park for up to 2 hours by payment at a pay and display machine. Current charges are set at 20p for each 12 minute increment. This equates to a charge of £1 per hour with a maximum stay of 2 hours and it is recommended that any new short stay parking within the CPZ areas give due regard to the current charging regime.

### 3.16 **Enhanced enforcement around schools**

47% of all respondents supported the principle of greater enforcement of parking restrictions around schools. Although this is less than half the respondents, as only 21% did not support the principle, it is recommended that the options for increasing enforcement around schools is explored and a report presented to the Portfolio Holder for decision in due course. Any option to increase school enforcement will be either by redeploying Civil Enforcement Officers from other duties or by increasing the establishment. The latter course of action will have financial repercussions which will be reported as a consideration as part of the report to the Portfolio Holder.

### 3.17 **Congestion**

Over half the businesses that responded stated that parking congestion caused access issues to their premises. The recommendation highlighted in paragraph 2.7 will help address issues for customers where local circumstances allow however general problems of congestion due to high volumes of traffic seeking to access in to or through Watford remain. Addressing this issue is beyond the scope of this report however planning policies to address issues of congestion by the management of parking supply along with the County Council's policies on congestion management by encouragement of modal shift and the removal of obstructive parking to aid traffic flow will assist. On occasions however, such policies can be perceived to be detrimental to businesses where parking opportunity close to business premises is removed. This highlights the complexity of traffic, access and parking issues which exhibit themselves in Watford and many other dense urban areas across the Country.

### 3.18 **Car club**

Although the majority of respondents did not support the principle of developing a car club, it is recommended that this idea be pursued to see if a commercially viable scheme can be developed in the town. The responses indicate that up to 20% of residents would consider using a car club. A 20% reduction in parking demand in residential areas would make a very significant impact on general congestion and would help balance demand and availability of parking space. The comments in relation to parking congestion in the Borough from businesses highlights the issue of limited road space and expanding demand both for parking and movement. Provision of a car club may enable numbers residents and visitors to the Borough to forgo ownership and/ or use of their own vehicle releasing capacity for others or to reduce congestion generally. Whilst overall impact may be low, a successful club could form part of a network of measures which collectively could deliver a measurable positive impact.

### 3.19 **Operating hours**

The survey of preferences in relation to operating hours indicates that with the exception of zone E (see 4.5 above) the preference across all zones is to either stay with the current operating hours (i.e. 8 am to 6:30 pm, Monday to Saturday) or vary them by a maximum of half an hour. The costs of amending all the signing within the zones to accommodate time changes is considerable (approx £40,000 including works, consultancy time and traffic order costs) and consequently it is recommended that with the exception of zone E operating hours remain unchanged.

### 3.20 **Other controls**

Views were also sought on a number of other parameters applied to the CPZs. Full details of the responses are contained in the JMP report attached at Annex A however in summary the issue, current criterion and recommendation are set out in the table below. In all cases listed the recommendation reflects the view expressed in the consultation by respondents.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Current control</b>	<b>recommendation</b>
Number of permits per household	2	No change
Number of visitor vouchers per household per annum (except Zone E)	Total of 400 hrs of 1 or 4 hour vouchers <b>PLUS</b> 15 1-day vouchers <b>PLUS</b> 2 1-week visitor permits	No change
Number of visitor vouchers per household per annum (except Zone E)	Total of 400 hrs of 1 or 4 hour vouchers <b>PLUS</b> 15 1-day vouchers <b>PLUS</b> 2 1-week visitor permits	Total of 620 hrs of 1 or 4 hour vouchers <b>PLUS</b> 18 1-day vouchers <b>PLUS</b> 2 1-week visitor permits
Maximum length of vehicle eligible for a permit	5.25 metres	No change

## 4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

### 4.1 **Financial**

The cost of implementing recommendations 2.2 and 2.4 can be accommodated within existing budgets. Neither have significant on-going revenue implications as revisions to patrol beats can be accommodated within existing staffing levels.

Recommendations 2.6, 2.7, 2.8 and 2.10 if accepted by Cabinet, require additional investigation to identify options which may have both capital and revenue implications which will be reported to the Portfolio Holder for consideration.

4.1.1 The Director of Finance comments that the funding for the CPZ is currently anticipated to run out during 2014/15, which will impact on the Council's general fund budget. There are a number of schemes proposed in this report which are additional to the schemes already identified and these will place further strain on the Council's general fund budget if they are proposed to go ahead.

If the CPZ costs and projects are to be financed through the revenue generated by the

schemes, members need to undertake a review to decide how the currently approved and new proposed schemes in this report are to be funded going forward.

The costs for the new schemes are not known at this stage so further analysis will need to be undertaken to fully understand the implication of the proposals.

#### 4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

The Watford Borough Council, pursuant to arrangements made under Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Government (Arrangements for Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000 with the Hertfordshire County Council, and in exercise of the powers conferred on that County Council under Sections 1, 2(1), 2(2), 4(2) and 32,35, 45,46,46a,49,51,53,55,61,99,100-102 to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (“the Act of 1984”) and of all other enabling powers, and after consulting with the Chief Officer of Police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act of 1984, may make traffic regulation orders and implement proposals to manage parking on public highways and other roads. For some of the recommendations above it will be necessary to implement them via a traffic regulation order which, if objections are received, could lead to a public inquiry.

#### 4.3 **Equalities**

**Watford Borough Council is committed to equality and diversity as an employer, service provider and as a strategic partner. In order to fulfil this commitment and its duties under the Equality Act 2010 it is important to demonstrate how policies, practices and decisions impact on people with different protected characteristics. It is also important to demonstrate that the Council is not discriminating unlawfully when carrying out any of its functions**

A generic Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out for parking schemes which has been considered and approved by the Equalities Working Group. It is available to view on the Council’s website.

#### 4.4

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Overall score
Objection to detailed proposals received through the statutory process	3	2	6
Emerging proposals from additional work have significant revenue implications.	3	4	12
Those risks scoring 9 or above are considered significant and will need specific attention in project management. They will also be added to the service’s Risk Register.			

#### 4.5 **Staffing**

4.5.1 There are no staffing implications from this report

#### 4.6 **Accommodation**

4.6.1 There are no accommodation implications from this report

#### 4.7 **Community Safety**

4.7.1 There are no Community Safety implications from this report

#### 4.8 **Sustainability**



- 4.8.1 Development of a successful car club will be supportive of the Council's aims to improve sustainability. Specifically it could encourage residents and businesses to reduce reliance on the private car for commuting by providing a reliable 'occasional use' alternative that supports the use of public transport, cycling or walking for other journeys which might otherwise be made by private car.

### Appendices

Appendix 1 Watford High Level Parking Review, October 2013 JMP Consultants Ltd

Appendix 2 Controlled Parking Zones – our service to you. April 2013 (Advice leaflet on Watford CPZ extent and operations)

### Background Papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

### File Reference

none

