

Individual Executive Decision Notice Cabinet (Resources) Panel

Report title	Transportation Network - Traffic Regulation Orders - Wednesfield Town Centre (On-Street and Car Parks)	
Decision designation	GREEN	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change	
Wards affected	Wednesfield South;	
Accountable Director	Ross Cook, Director of City Housing and Environment	
Originating service	Transportation Service	
Accountable employee	Author name	Nick Broomhall
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Report to be/has been considered by	N/A	

Summary

This report seeks to agree the implementation of measures to improve safety, encourage sustainable travel, contribute to the effective management of the highway network for all road users and support the economy of Wednesfield Town Centre.

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

- That the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of City Housing and Environment.
1. Approves the recommended action to implement waiting, loading and stopping restrictions to parts of High Street, Church Street, Graiseley Lane, Alfred Squire Road, Nicholls Fold, Woodhouse Fold, Well Lane and Rookery Street in response to comments received during public consultation and implement as shown on plan T3/1339 – 01A appended to this report.

2. Approves the recommended action to implement a parking stay limits and charging regime on the following Council controlled car parks in Wednesfield: Woodhouse Fold, Alfred Squire Road, Well Lane and The Library car park as shown on plan T3/1339 – 03 appended to this report.
3. Authorises the Director of Governance to implement the relevant traffic regulation orders and revoke existing traffic regulation orders where specified.
4. That the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Housing and City Environment and the Director of Finance, approve the recommended fees and charges for Wednesfield Town Centre to take effect as soon as possible.

Signature
Name of Cabinet Member

Date:

Signature
Name of Director

Date:

Signature
Name of Cabinet Member

Date:

Signature
Name of Director

Date:

1.0 Background

- 1.1 All Council run car parks in Wednesfield Town Centre are currently free of charge with unlimited period of stay.
- 1.2 Concerns have been raised by traders regarding increased levels of long stay parking on Council controlled car parks in Wednesfield Town Centre effecting availability of spaces for customers and visitors of the town centre.
- 1.3 New Cross Hospital situated within walking distance of the town centre attracts high numbers of staff and patients daily. New Cross, as with all NHS hospital sites, operate a charging regime for staff and patients on their car parks. This leads to migration of parking to off-site locations.
- 1.4 In 2017, a City Council permit parking scheme was introduced on a number of roads in the vicinity of New Cross Hospital that were suffering from high levels of on-street parking. The introduction of this scheme appears to have led to a secondary migration of hospital parking onto car parks in Wednesfield Town Centre, effecting availability of parking for shoppers.
- 1.5 Additionally, nearby Bentley Bridge Retail Park, has introduced a maximum three hour stay on their car parks. This has resulted in further parking migration to the unrestricted City Council town centre car parks.
- 1.6 Parking surveys undertaken on Wednesfield Town Centre Car Parks showed significant levels of long stay (all day) parking, strongly supporting the concerns about town centre car parks being used by hospital and retail park workers/visitors.

2.0 Proposed Changes

- 2.1 In response to the concerns and subsequent survey results that showed that 32% of parking bays in the five, council operated town centre car parks were occupied by the same vehicles for more than five hours a day. A holistic review of parking in Wednesfield Town Centre was then undertaken in consultation with Local Ward Councillors and Wednesfield Town Centre Traders. The review considered both on-street and off-street parking with a primary objective of supporting the local town centre economy by deterring significant levels of long stay parking on Council operated car parks in Wednesfield.
- 2.2 The review identified a number of key changes required to parking in Wednesfield Town Centre as follows in order to support the town centre economy by freeing up parking for visitors and shoppers:
 1. Up to 3 hours Free Parking
 2. Long and Short Stay Car Parks identified
 3. Charges introduced for over 3 hours stay on all car parks

4. Discounted permit scheme for workers/residents of the town centre
- 2.3 Key changes to on-street parking restrictions as shown on plan T3/1339 – 01A appended to this report:
 1. Increased length of stay from 30 minutes to 1 hour in time limited bays
 2. Increased on-street disabled bay provision
 3. Introduction of double yellow lines in Nicholls Fold to ensure access for deliveries
 4. New time limited bays on bays in Woodhouse Fold
 - 2.4 In February 2021, proposals for introducing time limits and charges on car parks and changes to on-street parking in Wednesfield Town Centre were formally advertised (as shown on plans T3 1139 – 03 and T3 1139 – 01A appended to this report). Letters were delivered to 80 properties in the town centre, notices posted on streets affected and the proposals were advertised in the Express and Star newspaper. Furthermore, the proposals were presented and discussed and endorsed at Wednesfield Traders Association meetings.
 - 2.5 Two representations were received during the formal consultation period.
 - 2.6 The first, from a local business, requested information about permit parking charges and processes for applying for permits. The organisation concerns have now confirmed that they have no objections to the proposals.
 - 2.7 The second representation was from an individual who works park time in the town centre. the initial enquiry again asked for details about permit parking charges and processes. Subsequently, the individual confirmed that they wished to object to the proposals stating that they currently do not pay to park and that they would not be able to afford to pay the permit parking fee and requested that permits were free to workers.
 - 2.8 In response to the request to make permits free, the Council are under significant financial pressures. Parking schemes such as the one proposed in Wednesfield Town Centre will require significant levels of resource to manage and enforce. The scheme has been designed to be self-financing, such that it will not put additional strain on Council finances.
 - 2.9 Given the overwhelming support received from the Wednesfield Town Centre Traders Association, and the need to support the vitality and economy of Wednesfield Town Centre it is recommended that the remaining objection is overruled and that the proposed Traffic Regulation Orders pertaining to on-street and off street (Car Parks) parking are implemented as shown on Plans T3/1339 – 01A and T3/1339 – 03 respectively.

3.0 Proposed Car Park Charges

3.1 The proposed car parking charges would be as follows.

- Charges applicable Monday to Sunday, 8am to 6pm (including Bank Holidays)
- Parking between 6:00pm – 8:00am remains free of charge.

Short Stay

- Up to 3 Hours – Free
- 3 -5 Hours £1.00
- Maximum stay 5 hours / No return within 2 hours.
- No overnight parking
- No permit holder parking allowed

Long Stay

- Up to 3 Hours – Free
- 3 -5 Hours £1.00
- Over 5 hours £3.00
- Disabled Parking up to 3 hours free over 3 hours Parking Charges apply.

- 3.2 It should be noted, the full day parking charge of £3 reflects the parking charges applicable to those offered in the vicinity of New Cross Hospital. This is to deter hospital employees from taking advantage of cheaper parking rates in Wednesfield.
- 3.3 A Seasonal Parking Permit will also be available at a cost of £17.50 per month and will be valid from Monday – Sunday. Permits can be purchased on a quarterly, six monthly or annually basis (not monthly).
- 3.4 It is also proposed that the larger car park in Woodhouse Fold, previously used to accommodate the Market, will be available to use for community events on no more than 6 occasions per calendar year. Applicable on Sundays or Bank holidays and the car parking charges, on this car park only, will be suspended. Dates will be agreed with Parking Services, in advance, giving a minimum of 4 weeks' notice. Community events will firstly require SAG approval.
- 3.5 The payment methods for charges proposed will be via the Ringgo mobile phone app that is used successfully at 18 other car parks within City of Wolverhampton Council portfolio. To facilitate cash payments a Pay and Display machine will be installed on each of the car parks.

4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 4.1 Alternative options to the proposed scheme that have been considered are:
- 4.2 Do Nothing. In this scenario, the long stay parking would continue to affect the availability of parking for customers of the shops and businesses in Wednesfield Town Centre, resulting in a decline in customer numbers and recovery of the town centre post Covid pandemic.
- 4.3 A further alternative scheme was considered which did not introduce any charges but created designated short stay and long stay car parks. This alternative was considered less viable due to the lack of flexibility of use of parking spaces across the town centre, which could lead to an over provision of one type and a under provision of the other. Furthermore, there would be concerns regarding financial viability of the scheme due to limited income and fixed enforcement costs.

5.0 Reasons for decision

- 5.1 The proposals have support of the Wednesfield Traders Association and Local Ward Councillors. There has been just one objection received, which requested permits being provided free of charge, which would not be financially sustainable.
- 5.2 The introduction of the proposed car park and on-street parking regimes will provide improved parking availability for customers and visitors to Wednesfield Town Centre and so contribute to the town centre economy and revitalisation of the high street post Covid 19 and beyond.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 The Traffic Regulation Orders associated with the alterations to on-street and off-street parking regime in Wednesfield Town Centre as detailed in this report are estimated to cost in the region of £12,000. The costs associated with the installation of lines and signs to implement the TRO's on the ground is estimated to be £6,000.
- 6.2 The above costs will be met from existing Transportation Capital Programme budgets.
- 6.3 The £14k costs associated with the provision of RingGo and the Pay and Display machines within car parks will be funded via the existing Car Park revenue budget. The annual cost for on-going equipment maintenance and enforcement of the car parks will be in the region of £12K. Due to the pandemic it is difficult to provide an accurate projection for the income likely to be generated, however, it is anticipated the scheme should be cost neutral.

[SB/10082021/E]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 Under Section 122(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (“the 1984 Act”) the Council, as the traffic authority, has a duty to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway. Section 1(1) of the 1984 Act enables the Council to make a Traffic Regulation Order “where it appears to be expedient to make the order”.
- 7.2 The procedure for making a traffic regulation order under the 1984 Act is contained in the Local Authorities ‘Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England & Wales) Regulations 1996 (SI 1996/2489). There are consultation requirements before an order can be made. The procedure for dealing with any objections received during the consultation period is laid down in the 1996 Regulations and having determined any objections received, the TRO may be brought into force.
- 7.3 Vehicles parked in contravention of TROs can be immobilised (s104) or removed (s99). A person breaching a TRO is guilty of an offence, and liable on summary conviction to a level 3 fine (currently £1000). Alternatively, the individual can be offered a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the Council has adopted the scheme.

[TC/10082021/T]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 Additional disabled parking bays are being proposed on Nicholls Fold and High Street to better serve those with disabilities. The bays will be installed in accordance with Department for Transport recommendations. This will have a positive impact on the ability of disabled persons to access shops and services in the town centre.
- 8.2 The proposed waiting and loading restrictions will also help parents with pushchairs and will safeguard children who are not so safety prone. It will help people in wheelchairs, it will also help keeping people healthy in general by encouraging people to walk.

9.0 All other Implications

- 9.1 The proposed changes to waiting and loading restrictions and car park charging regime will have a positive impact on air quality in Wednesfield Town Centre. The revised restrictions will free up parking for shoppers and visitors who will not need to wait or drive around car parks whilst waiting for a parking space to become available, thus reducing emissions and pollution.

10.0 Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix 1: Plan T3/1339 – 01A (Wednesfield High Street Area On-Street Waiting and Loading Proposals)

10.2 Appendix 2: Plan T3/1339 – 03 (Wednesfield Central Area Proposals – Off-Street Car Parks)