

WEYBRIDGE PARKING PROJECT 2017/18 CLARIFICATION AND UPDATE AT 30 JUNE 2018



The detailed review and appended Proposal option issued in December 2017 was itself simply an advisory document; no more, no less, and certainly not a panacea!

Its only objectives were to:

- be the catalyst that shakes Elmbridge into action, in conjunction with Surrey, to find a workable solution to the long-standing and widely-acknowledged parking problems throughout Weybridge; problems that successive Surrey Annual Reviews alone have failed to solve.
- provide the vital data necessary to identify the causes, and quantify the extent, of the problems as guidance for the authorities when working towards a solution; data that neither authority had accumulated themselves, nor shown any intention of doing so any time soon.
- have its data accepted by councillors from both authorities as a starting point for further investigatory work.
- provide a basic solution for further testing and development by authority experts, to include further consultation with businesses, residents and schools, in the creation of a cohesive Parking Plan for Weybridge.

Society and WTBG partnership achievements at 30 June 2018:

- Completed a detailed assessment of parking in Weybridge.
- Quantified the parking problems in Weybridge with hard data from two of the main stakeholders, namely businesses (including schools) and residents.
- Identified commuter parking as the main cause of congestion in residential roads.
- Considered the impact of parking and ways that could address the combined needs of the main stakeholders (including shoppers) to make Weybridge a thriving and pleasant place to work, live and shop.
- Highlighted critical factors, key dependencies and implementation considerations.
- At a launch meeting in February with Borough and County councillors, the partnership:
 - Gained the acceptance, and the taking forward to the newly-formed SCC/EBC Joint Executive Committee, of the valuable findings set out in the Proposal.
 - Requested that parking be seriously considered as a key component of any redevelopment of the hospital site.
 - Received the undertaking of Cllr. Andrew Davis, the then Elmbridge Cabinet Member for Highways, to lead a feasibility study for completion by 30 June into the potential expansion of the five main existing car parks to meet at least part of the identified shortfall.
 - Agreed with Borough and County councillors that further work, to include supplementing the data obtained and conducting traffic management surveys, should be carried out by both authorities working together to create a Parking Plan for Weybridge that addresses the needs of all stakeholders.
- Persuaded the new Council that the expense planned by the previous administration for the resurfacing and provision of improved technology in existing Weybridge car parks be deferred until at least the feasibility study has been completed.
- Created an online ePetition, calling for Elmbridge and Surrey to work together to find a solution. This was deemed prudent at a time when the initiative was less likely to gain favour with the Elmbridge administration. It will remain open until 31 July as planned, but the intended Town centre presence to canvass additional signatures is now considered unnecessary due to the greater support and cooperation being shown by the new Council since May.

Thanks to all who have added their name to an online system designed to encourage local democracy, but which provides a far from ideal user-friendly experience.



Key conclusions from the partnership's initiative are that:

- More work is required by experts in the provision of a fully-considered Parking Plan for Weybridge that accommodates the minimum of 725 additional off-street parking spaces required by commuters.
- Businesses should be encouraged to use public car parks by the creation of controlled parking zones (CPZs) around the main retail centres, which zones should combine residents-only parking with limited-time parking for other visitors.
- Short-term charges and season ticket costs for public car parks must be more attractive.
- Additional off-street space and CPZs must be implemented simultaneously to offer an alternative for commuters, who should also be given the opportunity of parking further away at no cost - the survey indicated 800m would be acceptable to most.
- In future, all planning applications that have inadequate off-street parking should be refused.

Developments since 30 June 2018 include:

- The deadline for the promised feasibility study was missed. A 2-month delay ensued after the February meeting, and then officers were not briefed as they should have been. The new Cabinet Member is now trying to pick up the pieces, but such an unnecessary delay has caused a severe drag on the momentum that the initiative had built up over the past 6 months.
- The circular zones used for expediency in the Proposal will be amended to better reflect official boundaries, so enabling roads in which residents suffer greatest inconvenience to be included.

Additional steps identified to develop the final Parking Plan:

- Identify the needs of Weybridge schools around drop-off and pick-up times.
- Quantify the impact on residential parking that results from the evening trade of restaurants, bars and eventual new cinema.
- Consult with businesses over payment for parking in car parks, the option of season tickets, and affordable parking rates.
- SCC/EBC to assess the viability of a Park and Ride scheme from Brooklands to work in tandem with the proposed access improvements into Weybridge.

When considering future actions, the following should be of prime importance:

- **A second meeting with councillors** is being arranged for September, when the delay caused by the feasibility study will be tackled, and the following important points raised for future reference.
- Residents in roads used as "rat runs" and/or with limited off-street space, should not be disadvantaged. Any road must be given adequate opportunity to opt out of a CPZ.
- It will be important that businesses "buy into" the cost implications arising from the provision of additional off-street facilities.
- Residents must also "buy into" the concept of CPZs, and the purchasing of a parking permit in exchange for a marked improvement in convenience.

**Reported by Weybridge Society Transport Panel
July 17th 2018**