

PETITION REQUESTING PARKING AT ST. ANSELM'S ROAD [HAYES TOWN] REVERT TO DISABLED PARKING.

Cabinet Member	Councillor Jonathan Bianco
Cabinet Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport
Officer Contact	Hayley Thomas – Place Directorate
Papers with report	Appendices A-C

HEADLINES

Summary	To inform the Cabinet Member that a petition has been received asking that the Council revert the existing parking in St. Anselm's Road to disabled parking.
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the Council objective of <i>Our People</i> . The request can be considered as part of the Council's annual programme of road safety initiatives.
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations within this report.
Relevant Select Committee	Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee
Relevant Ward	Hayes Town

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport:

- 1) meets with petitioners and listens to their request for the Council to revert the parking at St. Anselm's Road to a disabled car park;
- 2) notes that the current layout provides a generous allocation of both disabled and Pay & Display parking along with improved direct access from the high street rather than a convoluted route through nearby residential streets;
- 3) notes the informal and statutory consultation already undertaken by the Council and the positive feedback received as part of this;
- 4) notes the views of a local Ward Councillor, the Parish Priest and a member of the local business community, each referenced in the body of this report;

- 5) notes the high levels of parking enforcement activity described in the body of this report; and
- 6) subject to the outcome of the above, considers if he either:
 - (a) wishes officers to carry out a review of the amendments to the parking and access arrangements in St. Anselm's Road with residents of St. Anselm's Road, Nield Road and Walter Close and report back to him; or alternatively
 - (b) wishes to take no further action at this stage but to keep the matter under review.

Reasons for recommendations

The Petition Hearing will provide a valuable opportunity to hear directly from the petitioners of their concerns and suggestions.

Alternative options considered / risk management

None at this stage.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. A petition with 53 signatures signed by residents of Nield Road, St. Anselm's Road and Walters Close, has been submitted to the Council under the following heading:

"We the undersigned hereby humbly petition the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport to consider and review the use of the above facility and revert it's use as a disabled car park as it originally was. The present use of the facility for pay and display has created a series of problems for residents in this neighbourhood causing serious congestion; uncontrolled misuse of the entire area, including parking in the middle of the road and on double yellow lines; blocking residents' driveways; abuse of the area by drug dealers and users amidst antisocial behaviour; playing loud music through the night and making it difficult or impossible for service vehicles to enter and exit destinations. Ambulances and rubbish collection vehicles are typical examples.

Because of the congestion, accidents have happened here before and more are bound to happen if action is not taken, more are likely to happen. And the Fire Access Barrier at the entrance of St. Anselm's should be closed again as its opening has led to uncontrolled traffic, amid additional congestion. Significantly, no resident supports the status quo. None of those who support it resides here, it's a non-resident agenda and charter."

2. Hayes Town Centre has undergone significant improvements to transform the area, making it more attractive to shoppers and visitors. The Council successfully secured £6m funding from Transport for London's 'Major Scheme Fund' to implement a series of improvements which included new paving, street lighting, opening Station Road through

to traffic (including buses), planting semi-mature trees, more safe and convenient crossings and the installation of the 'Gold Disc' canopy replacing the redundant bandstand.

3. In connection with the arrival of Crossrail at Hayes and Harlington station, the Council secured an additional £2.6m funding through Transport for London and developer Section 106 contributions to extend the town centre scheme to include the area around the new station building, which included the remainder of Station Road, creating a station arrival experience in Blyth Road with drop off and pick up spaces, upgrades to Hayes and Harlington station underpass and a planned implementation of a boardwalk extension at Botwell Bridge.
4. The location of St. Anselm's Road is indicated on Appendix A; it is a one-way residential road which links with Nield Road in both the northwest and southwest. St. Anselm's Road also has a small spur road linking to Station Road and provides access to Walter Close, the HESA Medical Centre and St. Anselm's Church. This is the area which the petition relates to and is highlighted in red on Appendix A. Whilst the petitioners refer to this area as a 'car park' it is in fact part of the public highway.
5. Prior to the improvement works, this area chiefly comprised 12 dedicated disabled parking spaces and an emergency access gate located at its junction with Station Road. As part of the improvements scheme a request was received to convert these spaces to Pay & Display parking to increase the provision of and ready access to these spaces within the town centre. Ward councillors and other local groups were very supportive of ensuring that such parking capacity was available in close proximity to the heart of the town centre and that this was accessible, flexible and practical.
6. A comparison of other town centres within the Borough showed that Hayes had a very generous provision of on-street disabled parking, with ten bays in addition to 12 in St. Anselm's Road (Uxbridge and Ruislip town centres both have ten).
7. In consultation with the Hayes Town Centre Stakeholder Working Group, which included representatives of the Hayes Town Partnership, Hayes Town Business Forum and local councillors of the former Botwell and Townfield wards, a proposal was developed to retain six of the existing disabled parking spaces and convert the remaining six into ten Pay & Display parking places. This was implemented with an experimental traffic order, which received no objections at the time and was duly formalised as part of the town centre improvements.
8. In addition to amendments to the parking, a request was also received to review the access arrangements to this section of St. Anselm's Road. The positioning of the emergency access gate at the junction of Station Road meant that the only way to access both the 'Pay & Display' and disabled parking spaces was a convoluted route through nearby residential roads. It was important that the gate was retained to prevent potential 'rat running' through these residential roads and for this reason, a proposal was developed to relocate the emergency access gate to allow access to these parking spaces directly from the high street, as shown on the plan attached as Appendix B.
9. The proposals were also reviewed by members of the Council's Traffic Liaison Group which includes representatives of each of the emergency services as well as Transport

for London and local bus operators. No concerns were raised by any of the members on technical grounds.

10. Informal consultation was carried out with residents directly affected by the proposals, with a plan, questionnaire and covering letter delivered to 20 properties. The two options available for access were to keep the existing access arrangements or relocation of the emergency access gate as per Appendix B. A small majority supported the relocation of the access gate; therefore, in consultation with the local Ward Councillors and the Cabinet Member at the time, it was agreed to progress the proposals to statutory consultation.
11. As part of the statutory consultation, there were also proposals included to upgrade the existing 'At Any Time' waiting restrictions to 'No Loading At Any Time' as a number of reports had been received by the Council's Parking Enforcement Team regarding parking and loading on the current restrictions which restricted vehicular movements in this area. As the Cabinet Member will be aware, holders of Blue Badges are able to park on double yellow lines and, whilst the vast majority of such drivers are law-abiding, a minority may be tempted to park in places which are obstructive, and in such cases 'no loading' blips may need to be considered, as in this case, to tackle inconsiderate parking practices.
12. Statutory consultation for the proposed amendments in St. Anselm's Road took place between 4 and 25 November 2020. Street notices were erected on site and public notices were advertised in the local newspaper and the Council's website. In addition, and in-line with Government legislation on statutory consultation during COVID-19 lockdowns at the time, letters detailing the proposals were delivered to residents and businesses that were directly affected by the proposals inviting them to comment on and/or object to the proposals.
13. During the statutory consultation, there were a total of 16 responses received, only one of which objected to the proposals from a resident of Walter Close. All responses from residents of St. Anselm's Road and Nield Road supported the proposals. Support for the proposals was also received from the Hayes Town Partnership, Hayes Town Business Forum and St. Anselm's Church.
14. All responses were reported to the Cabinet Member to consider on 4 March 2021, and approval was given to proceed with the proposed amendments. The proposals attached as Appendix C were implemented in April 2021.
15. A review of the accident data for the area, dating back to the start of 2016, showed only one incident in early 2016 prior to the improvement works taking place. This involved a vehicle colliding with a pedestrian at the junction of Station Road causing slight injuries. At the time the incident took place, the emergency access gate would have been in the earlier position. There was limited information provided about the incident and it is likely that a vehicle was using this junction as a turning point prior to the collision.
16. Local Ward Councillors were consulted on the petition, and one responded:

"The parking layout should stay as it is. Many people who have tried parking in this area have complained to us as Cllrs, that they have been harassed by a couple of residents when they try to park. One was approached by a male who was quite abusive to him

when he was trying to park. The local police approve of the current scheme, as do the other emergency services and the local priest Fr Mathew from St Anselm's church, which is directly next to the parking area. We consider that the current layout is most acceptable, for shoppers, those using the Health Centre and also the Church. The only concern we have is that sometimes people park in the disabled bays without displaying a blue badge. But that is something for parking enforcement to keep an eye on."

At the invitation of the Ward Councillor, the local Parish Priest at St. Anselm's, who is also a resident, kindly shared his thoughts on the matter.

"I'm afraid I cannot support the petition, and it contains several inaccuracies. Whilst several residents are indeed unhappy with the increase in traffic to the car park after it was re-developed (which coincided with the lifting of lockdown), this is far from the view of all residents – including us at St. Anselm's. We have seen a significant drop in anti-social behaviour now that the car park is open from the high street. We've been able to open the side of the church and use it more because of the new layout. We sadly do see some anti-social behaviour which is not limited to the car park – but is spread through much of Hayes Town. However, as a resident of Nield Road, and representing residents at the bottom of St. Anselm Road, we have noticed a significant decline in anti-social behaviour in these roads. We have also noticed that the new arrangement allows for easier access for those with mobility problems to the doctors' surgery. Of course, that can mean that people who are slower to move their cars or who need to manoeuvre more at the entrance to access the disabled spaces can cause short delays to cars accessing the pay and display spaces or the residential spaces. The significantly improved disabled access from the high street would seem to mitigate the short delays it may cause. The residents of the housing to our rear were unhappy with the arrangements prior to this set up, but since the installation of their own security gate are now broadly happy with the access. Although some of them do note how much quieter it was during lockdown! They comment on how much easier it is to be able to exit to the high street rather than through Nield Road and see this as a significant improvement".

The Parish Priest further commented that in his view, *"parking enforcement is robust (or certainly looks and feels that way) and improperly parked vehicles are ticketed quite quickly."*

He concluded: *"to my mind – as a local resident and as the parish priest – the current scheme works well for the majority of people and the proposed change would (as previous consultation, planning and experience have shown us) be a backwards step for all involved. It would not reduce traffic in the car park, it would not reduce anti-social behaviour in the area (indeed it would seem it would increase it in Nield and St. Anselm Road) – but it would make access more difficult for the majority of residents within the scheme and remove significantly improved disabled access for the doctors. It would also make it harder for cars to park short-term and use the local businesses and the foodbank at St. Anselm".*

17. The Cabinet Member will be aware that Parking Enforcement engage the services of 'Civil Enforcement Officers' who patrol the Borough's streets, and they already include the area of interest covered by this petition and report within the scope of their patrols. To date in 2022, 659 penalty charge notices have been issued in this section of St. Anselm's

Road which also includes 210 penalty charge notices issued to vehicles parked in the disabled bays without displaying a valid blue badge.

18. Finally, a representative of the Hayes Town Partnership stated:

“My recollection is that the background to the request from the Hayes Town Business Forum was that while the Town Centre has quite a lot of parking spaces most of the car parks are on the north side of the Town and the only one on the south is in Blyth Road. The Forum highlighted the fact that a large number of disabled spaces had been installed alongside St Anselm’s Church in the past to enable older residents to collect their pensions from the adjoining Post Office, but that usage had declined once this had been relocated to W H Smith’s further down Station Road. It put the case that conversion of some of the spaces for ordinary parking would help redress the imbalance between north and south while retaining sufficient numbers for visitors to the Hesa Primary Care Centre which had taken over the old Post Office space”.

“The Forum also argued that direct access from Station Road would help the businesses in the section of the road between Crown Close and Clayton Road where there is no on-street provision because of the narrowness of the carriageway. A number of the businesses here have struggled because of the lack of parking and this has been a particular problem for eating establishments where customers expect to be able to park nearby. The relocation of the fire gate from Station Road to St Anselm’s Road has definitely assisted these businesses although it is difficult to quantify the benefit because of the impact on trade caused by the pandemic. It is not clear what the second paragraph of the petition is seeking in relation to the gate but I am sure that any proposal to move it back to Station Road would be strongly opposed by the Forum who would be supported by the Hayes Town Partnership”.

19. It is recommended that the Cabinet Member meets with the petitioners, shares with them the detail of what has gone before, discusses their concerns and notes the feedback set out above, and finally considers what further measures, if any, would be appropriate and supported by residents.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

To allow the Cabinet Member to consider the petitioners’ request.

Consultation carried out or required

Informal and statutory consultation carried out with residents of St. Anselm’s Road, Nield Road and Walters Close.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and confirms there are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Legal

Legal Services confirm that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Infrastructure / Asset Management

None at this stage.

Comments from other relevant service areas

None at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Petition received.

TITLE OF ANY APPENDICES

Appendix A - Location plan

Appendix B – St. Anselm’s Road Emergency Access Gate Relocation Plan

Appendix C – St. Anselm’s Road Implementation Plan