



<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>28 June 2016</b>
<b>Part:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	Parking Arrangements from January 2017 and associated Traffic Regulation Orders
<b>Contact:</b>	Cllr Graeme Elliot, Portfolio Holder Finance & Resources  Andrew Marsh, Innovation & Improvement Officer  James Deane, Corporate Director (Finance & Operations)
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To seek authority to formally consult upon proposals to make a new Traffic Regulation Order to facilitate changes to parking following the move to The Forum in January 2017, and to approve proposed changes to parking regulations in Moor End Road and Wood Lane End car parks.
<b>Recommendations</b>	It is recommended that Cabinet approve: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The parking arrangements, following the move to the Forum in January 2017, as set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report;</li> <li>2. The groups of designated users who will be entitled to apply for a parking permit as set out in paragraph 5.3;</li> <li>3. The charge for permits as set out in paragraph 5.4;</li> <li>4. The commencement of a formal consultation for a Traffic Regulation Order (Borough of Dacorum (Off-Street Parking Places) (Hemel Hempstead) Order 2016) to amend current parking arrangements within the Watergardens North and South car parks, Moor End Road and Wood Lane End car parks as set out in paragraphs 4.4 and 9.1-9.4 of the report;</li> </ol>

	<p>5. Delegating authority to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources to consider the consultation responses received pursuant to recommendation 4, and to decide whether to make the Traffic Regulation Order or discontinue the order; and,</p> <p>6. Revoking the relevant parts of the existing Dacorum off-street Traffic Regulation Order.</p>
Corporate Objectives:	<p>Providing this parking will keep Hemel Hempstead town centre a clean, safe and enjoyable environment by preventing increased on-street parking following the loss of spaces around the Civic Centre.</p> <p>These changes will contribute to a modern and efficient Council by ensuring that key users are able to access the Forum building as required, essential car users returning from off-site visits are able to find parking, and the Council is able to recruit and retain the staff it needs to provide a high quality service to residents.</p>
Implications:  'Value For Money Implications'	<p>Not implementing this Traffic Regulation Order could cause displacement parking on roads around the town centre. Failure to provide parking could impact upon the Council's ability to recruit and retain staff.</p> <p>Implementing this Traffic Regulation Order should not cause any displacement of the public. The resurfacing works have been brought forward to make the necessary work less disruptive, they do not add any additional cost.</p> <p>These works are necessary, and will be awarded on the basis of a competitive tendering process.</p>
Risk Implications	<p>There is a small risk to the Council of displacement to public parking as a result of the proposed order, however research shows that there should be enough capacity to deal with the additional permit holder parking use.</p> <p>There is a greater risk that some Council staff who are required to work off-site at times will be unable to find parking spaces on the top deck of the Water Garden North car park when they return, however there is enough capacity that this is unlikely to occur often.</p>
Health And Safety Implications	<p>There will be an increased number of people walking from the Water Gardens North car park across Combe Street to the Forum but this does not raise any particular health and safety concerns as adequate crossing points are available</p>

	Occasional use of the Water Gardens North car park during the evening. Additional lighting and CCTV will be installed to address the safety concerns around increased evening use.
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments	<p><b>Monitoring Officer:</b></p> <p>Comments have been incorporated into the report.</p> <p><b>S.151 Officer</b></p> <p>Based on the count data within the report, the proposal to create a permit area for designated users within the Water Gardens North car park will not displace public parking and will not therefore result in a loss of income for the Council.</p>
Consultees:	<p>The following stakeholders will be consulted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hertfordshire Constabulary</li> <li>• Hertfordshire Highways – Traffic Order Manager</li> <li>• The public via site notices and a public notice in the Hemel Hempstead Gazette</li> </ul>
Background papers:	None

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 As the Council moves from the Civic Centre to the Forum building in January 2017 there will be a loss of almost all staff, councillor, contractor and other key user parking. (For the purposes of this report these users will be termed “designated users”.) There will be fewer than 30 spaces available at The Forum, which will be prioritised for disabled and civic vehicle parking. On busy days there are currently around 230 designated users parked at the Civic Centre and proposals are required to provide parking for these users.
- 1.2. The Water Gardens North car park has been identified as the ideal place to relocate parking for designated users. Research suggests that the car park can absorb the additional demand arising from the designated users without displacing the current public users. It is recommended that permits are made valid for designated users only on the underused upper deck in order to minimise disruption to public users.
- 1.3. As per the approved Capital Programme, resurfacing works will be undertaken to the car park in 2016, while there is still the capacity to move public users around within the car park rather than displacing them to alternative sites.
- 1.4. It is recommended that parking in the Water Gardens South car park be limited to a maximum two hour stay. This will provide additional parking opportunities for shoppers and will counterbalance the proposed provision of long stay parking on the lower deck of Water Gardens North car park.

## **2. Options for parking at The Forum**

### 2.1. Construction of a new car park

There is no suitable land within the required proximity to The Forum to make this a viable option.

### 2.2. Consolidate designated user parking and public parking in Water Gardens North car park

Water Gardens North, between Leighton Buzzard Road and Waterhouse Street has enough capacity to accommodate all current public users and all designated users even on the busiest weekdays. This option preserves existing parking arrangements, involves relatively minor cost, and allows some small additional revenue to be raised through the sale of permits.

This is the recommended option for Cabinet.

### 2.3. Do not replace existing designated user parking

Removal of all designated user parking would likely displace over two hundred vehicles onto neighbouring streets which could have a negative impact on the locality. In addition, the removal of free or subsidised parking would likely result in recruitment and retention difficulties for the Council. This view is shared by neighbouring local authorities, all of whom provide free or subsidised parking for designated users.

## **3. Public and designated user parking demand**

### 3.1. Counting Method

The following data is based on a series of six counts between 4 May and 17 May 2016. It covers each weekday and a range of times from 10am to 4pm. There were no holidays or special events over this period that would be expected to distort the general levels of parking demand.

### 3.2. Water Gardens car park *capacity*

Water Gardens South (short stay): 91 spaces

Water Gardens North, lower deck (short stay): 311 spaces

Water Gardens North, upper deck (mixed short and long stay): 311 spaces

Total spaces: 713

### 3.3. Current public usage at the Water Gardens

The highest total number of cars counted in all Water Gardens car parks was 354 on Tuesday 17 May, 11-11.30am. This means that at the period of highest demand there remained 359 unused spaces within the Water Gardens car parks.

The lowest number of cars counted in all Water Gardens car parks was 248 on Monday 16 May, 3.30-4pm. This means that at the period of lowest demand there remained 465 unused spaces within the Water Gardens car parks.

### 3.4. Designated User parking

The highest number of cars parked around the Civic Centre was 233 on Tuesday 17 May, 11.30am-12 noon.

This means that within the testing period, even at the period of peak public demand at the Water Gardens car park there remained sufficient spare capacity (359 spaces) to absorb the peak demand from designated users at the Civic Centre (233).

## 4. Options for allocating Water Gardens parking to Designated Users

### 4.1. Limit use of the top deck to designated users only on weekdays

This option would still allow enough public parking for all current users on the lower deck. However, based on count data, this option would ringfence more spaces than are required for designated users, and therefore represent an unnecessary limiting of flexibility in periods of exceptional public demand.

### 4.3. Unreserved parking

This would allow designated user permit holders and the public to use any spaces they want within the car park. It allows for full use of all spaces if there was exceptional demand. However, there is a risk that designated users may crowd out spaces on the lower deck which are most convenient for short term stay for shopping in the town centre.

### 4.4. Unreserved parking, with permit holders restricted to the upper deck

This option would allow the public to park anywhere on either deck, but would restrict designated users to the upper deck. In practice this will mean little change to public parking patterns as most people already choose to park on the lower deck. This allows full use of the car park, and prevents staff blocking out the more convenient lower deck throughout the day.

This recommendation does not guarantee designated users a space on the upper deck. However, the count data, and the current public preference for parking on the lower deck when possible, suggests that in the majority of cases there will be sufficient spaces for designated users on the upper deck.

This is the recommended option for Cabinet.

## **5. Allocation of spaces**

### **5.1. Long- and short-stay parking**

It is recommended that there be no allocated long- or short-stay spaces within the Water Gardens North car park, but that the public be able to pay to stay for any length of time in any space. This will not disrupt public commuters who use long-stay parking as they tend to arrive much earlier than most shoppers.

There is a risk that long-stay users will block the most convenient spaces for shopping, however with relatively few long-stay users this is unlikely to be a major issue. Parking behaviours will be reviewed following the changes and will be reviewed if necessary.

### **5.2. Disabled parking**

The current number of disabled parking spaces on the lower deck of the Water Gardens will be maintained. Disabled staff, guests and Councillors with Blue Badges will be able to use a number of disabled parking bays within The Forum building or any bay, for any length of time, free of charge in Water Gardens North car park with their Blue Badge displayed in their windscreen.

### **5.3. Designated Users eligible for a permit**

Subject to more detailed work on the impact on parking capacity, it is recommended that the following groups be considered for permits:

- All staff who are mainly based at The Forum
- DBC Councillors
- Contract staff based at the Forum e.g. Customer Services staff
- Staff based at other locations who frequently need to visit the Forum for meetings
- Partners who are based at the Forum, based on their number of full-time equivalent staff

The permit is for use only while working or carrying out official duties. If designated users come into the town centre separately for shopping or other appointments they are expected to use the public car park.

### **5.4. Permit costs**

The cost for an annual permit will be £25, which all designated users will be able to pay through direct deductions to wages or allowances. This will not be pro rated, or refunded if users leave part way through the period.

### **5.5. Access after 6pm**

As with the current opening hours, the car park will be closed to the public after 18:00. However, in order to make parking available for evening meetings at the Council, designated users will have access at all times. The detail around the granting of access is still being worked through, but is likely to make use of existing Council CCTV technology and be activated through the Dacorum ID card. During the time that the Council is closed to the public, designated users will be able to park anywhere in the

car park. There will also be coded access, allowing access to visitors after that time; the Council can change that code at any time if there are security concerns.

## **6. Building and works**

### **6.1. Resurfacing works**

Both decks of the car park would be in need of resurfacing within the next few years even if they remained entirely public. That resurfacing work will be brought forward so that parking can be moved around the car park during the work. Once designated user parking is in place there won't be enough capacity to move parking around for resurfacing. The new surfacing will have a warranty of ten years, but is expected to last considerably longer. The current surfacing was laid in the 1980s.

This approach will minimise disruption, but the top deck of the car park will need to be closed for the duration of the works.

### **6.2. Safety in the car park and walking to The Forum**

The car park is to be fitted with updated CCTV and lighting. There is no pedestrian crossing from the car park to the north side of Combe Street. However it is possible to cross the quieter Waterhouse Street then use the Combe Street crossing further east (next to the Full House).

### **6.3. Timing**

The intention is to effect the changes recommended within this report at the time staff move to The Forum, in January 2017. However, the car parking project will continue to work closely with The Forum project team to ensure that the Water Gardens car park is available for designated users as it is required.

## **7. Alternative transport options**

### **7.1. Cycling**

The Forum building will have more space than the Civic Centre for bicycle storage, and there will be more showers available for use. The Council subscribes to the government's Cycle to Work Scheme, which enables staff to purchase bikes at a discounted price and spread the payments over a 12-month period.

### **7.2. Car sharing**

When designated users are applying for a permit the opportunity will be taken to promote car sharing; designated users who are interested in car sharing will be able to see where others on the scheme travel in from and form their own car sharing arrangements.

## **8. Changes in parking demand**

### **8.1. Increased public demand over Christmas**

Most of the increase is predicted to occur at weekends, outside of the weekday eligibility of designated user parking. As the changes would only come into effect from January there is an opportunity to assess weekday demand this Christmas. With that information officers can determine if there would be a shortage of spaces, and make plans to accommodate seasonal shoppers in December 2017 if necessary.

## **9. Other recommended parking changes**

### **9.1 Water Gardens North Season tickets**

It is proposed to withdraw season tickets on the basis that there are currently no members of the public using this ticket type and removal will simplify our charging structure and process.

### **9.2 Water Gardens South charges**

It is proposed to reduce the maximum stay in Water Gardens South to two hours, which would increase the availability of the most convenient bays for shopping.

The recommended changes to charges are as follows:

	30 minutes	1 hour	2 hours
Current	40p	80p	£1.30
Proposed	50p	£1	£1.60

### **9.3 Moor End Road charges**

It is recommended to introduce a four-hour parking charge in addition to the current all day charge at Moor End car park. This will enable more use of the car park amongst members of the public who don't want a whole day's parking. The recommended four hour charge is £2.50.

### **9.4 Wood Lane End parking allocation**

It is proposed to remove the Electric Car Club bays and replace with electric vehicle only (while charging) bays. This will allow wider use of the electric charging points.

It is also proposed to introduce season tickets at Wood Lane End car park.



