

Divisions affected: *Jericho & Osney*

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – 8 DECEMBER 2022

OXFORD: WALTON STREET – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO PARKING RESTRICTIONS TO ENABLE PERMANENT ‘SAFE SEATING’ AREAS

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member for Highway Management is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the permanent suspension of waiting, parking and loading restrictions on Walton Street at the following locations in order to accommodate outdoor seating areas adjacent to current hospitality businesses, but with the arrangements being periodically reviewed taking account of any changes in use of the adjacent premises.
 - a) northeast side - from a point 90 metres southeast of the south-eastern kerblines of St Bernard's Road south-eastwards for a distance of 16 metres, in place of the existing 1-hour parking places – permit holders exempt,
 - b) northeast side - from a point 30 metres southeast of the south-eastern kerblines of Observatory Street, south-eastwards for a distance of 7 metres, in place of the existing 1-hour parking places.

Executive summary

2. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation on the proposal - as shown in **Annex 1** - to make permanent the provisions of a current Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, which was made under the Traffic Orders Procedure (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 which suspended waiting, parking and loading on Walton Street, to help facilitate the continued safe use in part of the road, of tables and chairs by the adjacent retail hospitality businesses.

Financial Implications

3. Funding for consultation on the proposal has been provided by Oxford City Council; if approved no additional works will be required as the measures are currently in place under the provisions of the current Temporary Traffic Regulation Order.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

4. No specific equality and inclusion implications have been identified. A consultation response noted that for one of the hospitality business, customers standing on the footway were served directly from the premises, leading to occasional congestion of the footway. It should however be noted that this situation would arise irrespective of a decision on the proposals.

Sustainability Implications

5. While the proposals have no direct sustainability implications, as noted by several respondents the current outdoor seating areas are judged to help place making of the street, encouraging local residents to enjoy nearby amenities.

Consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 20 October and 18 November 2022. A notice was published in the Oxford Times newspaper, and an email sent to statutory consultees & key-stakeholders, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, countywide transport, access & disabled peoples user groups, local business groups, Oxford City Council, the local City Cllrs, and the local County Councillors representing the St Margaret's, University Parks, and the Jericho & Osney divisions. Letters were also sent directly to approx. 235 adjacent properties, and street notices placed on site in the immediate vicinity.
7. Thirty two responses were received via the online survey during the course of the formal consultation, and these are summarised in the table below:

Proposal	Object	Concerns	Support	No opinion/ objection	Total
Parking amendments to facilitate 'safe' seating	12 (38%)	2 (6%)	18 (56%)	0	32

8. Additionally, five emails were received, comprising of a non-objection from Thames Valley Police, two objections, one raising concerns, and one City Cllr supporting.
9. The full responses are shown at **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are also available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer response to objections/concerns

10. The main ground for objection was the loss of parking places (a total of 4) that were previously available for short stay waiting , with three of the places also being available at all times for resident permit holders to park for any length of time in an area that has significant parking pressures, with it being noted that the use of the outdoor seating areas in the winter is low, and that the arrangements also have led to increased levels of illegal parking and loading resulting in obstruction and hazard to other road users including pedal cyclists.
11. Noting these concerns it is accepted that the use of the outdoor seating is lower in the autumn and winter months but it is not considered viable taking account of costs to both the county council and the hospitality businesses to make the current arrangements operate only seasonally.
12. Balancing the competing considerations of providing parking places for residents, the businesses and their customers, and the benefits of the current arrangements to the users of the hospitality business and the wider street environment is not straightforward but noting the overall majority of responses are in favour of the proposals, and that the experience of the current temporary arrangements has not pointed to any specific issues that likely be very materially affected by the relatively small number of parking places now occupied by the seating, it is recommended that the proposals are approved as advertised, but that the arrangements are monitored taking account of any changes in the use of adjacent premises.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes
Annexe 1: Consultation Plan
Annexe 2: Consultation responses

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ANNEX 2

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection - but ask as this is to become a permanent measure what level of mitigation is going to be included to stop motorist from deliberately driving into this area.
(2) Local City Cllr	Support – the seating areas have had a hugely positive impact on the local area and community, and it would be brilliant for it to remain permanent.
(3) Local City Cllr	Support – I live just around the corner from these areas. We regularly have a coffee in the Mamma Mia area. It makes the street much more "people friendly" and I am sure must be an encouragement to people to come to the area.
(4) Member of public, (Oxford, St Bernard's Road)	<p>Object – It is abundantly clear that these proposals have little to do with the safe use of the road. They are an element of the implementation of an ideologically driven policy to ban motor vehicles as creators of CO2, as quickly as possible, by whatever means and regardless of the human and social consequences.</p> <p>There is little point in my observing that the physical layout of Walton Street is significantly different from that of a Parisian Boulevard. The narrow pavements with uneven paving already present serious challenges of convenience and safety to those pedestrians who are encumbered or incapacitated. Adding a few tables, either on the pavement or on the road, does not transform Walton Street as a leisure location, but seriously reduces its usefulness as a walkway.</p> <p>If there is a serious wish on the part of planners to increase the attractiveness of Walton Street in this respect, I suggest that they consider the plaza in front of the Blavatnick School.</p>
(5) Local group/organisation, (Oxford, Plantation Road)	<p>Object - It provides a small benefit to a few outlets at the cost of parking - which does greater harm to other businesses and residents/visitors.</p> <p>Pavements are for pedestrians, roads are for transport. Neither are appropriate locations for seating for businesses.</p>

<p>(6) Member of public, (Oxford, Walton Street)</p>	<p>Object - As a resident of Walton Street, I noticed an increased litter as well as noise as a result of these outdoor seating arrangement and would like to see them gone sooner rather than later. JC seems to handle the litter quite well but frequently their costumers place themselves on the pavement rather than the designated outdoor seating bay. If you try to tell them the costumers turn aggressive and rude, JC staff again is however very good and apologetic if you instead ask them to ensure their costumers are not blocking the pavement.</p>
<p>(7) Member of public, (Oxford, Rutherway)</p>	<p>Object - The tables and chairs should go and the parking should be reinstated. The tables and chairs down observatory road are often hardly used, especially in the evening, like the ones outside the Standard - they are taking up valuable, already limited parking in Jericho.</p>
<p>(8) Member of public, (Oxford, Merrivale Square)</p>	<p>Object - During the Autumn and Winter months these outdoor areas are not required or desirable, while the need to park cars is increased as older people and sick/disabled persons are less able to walk to the local facilities. These parking bays should be Summer only.</p>
<p>(9) Member of public, (Oxford, Albert Street)</p>	<p>Object - As a Jericho resident who pays an ever increasing annual fee for a Resident parking permit, which includes guest permits, the decrease in the number of parking spaces available impacts on the social and economic life on me and others in the area. IF there were also a propionate reduction in the Resident Parking Permit fee, then I might consider this proposal more favourably. In addition, I have noticed an increase in the amount of litter and broken bottles on Walton Street as a result of the cafe tables.</p>
<p>(10) Member of public, (Oxford, Merrivale Square)</p>	<p>Object - It takes away safe parking and encourages illegal parking on double yellow lines.</p>
<p>(11) Member of public, (Oxford, Farndon)</p>	<p>Object - Parking to take my aging & frail family members to Jerricho (cinema or chemist or doctors) is already hard enough.</p>

(12) Member of public, (Oxford, Godstow)	Object - Restrictions will further harm access and reduce customers to the existing businesses and have a significant impact for visiting the GO surgery etc.
(13) Member of public, (Oxford, Plantation Road)	Object - Generally speaking I can see the benefit to local businesses, and the changes mostly do not impinge on local residents, with one exception. This is the coffee shop next to Mamma Mia pizzeria. The pavement here is very narrow, and unlike all the other businesses who serve their customers at tables that do not obstruct the pavement, the coffee shop serves all its customers at the door. The customers gather, talk, generally mill around both while ordering their coffee and often while drinking it as well. As a result the pavement is often blocked and passers by find themselves obliged to step into the road. This does not seem acceptable to me.
(14) Local business, (Oxford, Warnborough)	Object - Mama Mia Pizza have taken up all the parking for seating along the stretch near to their premises. As a result delivery vehicles are forced to park on the double yellow lines blocking the visibility for vehicles coming out of Adelaide street. On quite a few occasions I've seen cyclists come close to being knocked off their bikes and vehicles collide with other vehicles as a result of the reduced visibility.
(15) Member of public, (Oxford, Walton Street)	Object - There has always been an issue with non residents using the residents spaces outside our block of 4 terraced houses when using the shop, restaurant or take away opposite. The loss of the other nearby parking spaces to restaurant seating has made matters more difficult and we frequently have to drive around for ten minutes or more to find parking. Sometimes in the evening this is impossible and we are forced to leave car temporarily on double yellow lines until a space appears. This is particularly galling when in cooler or wet weather no-one is sitting at the tables.
(16) Member of public, (Oxford, Walton Street)	Object – 1 Residents parking is severely limited already and a constant problem when we wish park. 2 Sometimes we have no option but to park illegally on double yellow lines.

	<p>3 It is very frustrating to see that the outdoor seating is often not used.</p> <p>4 For those, like us who are retired and now experiencing mobility issues it is only going to get more difficult to park near to our property.</p> <p>5 Whilst we understood the rationale in the covid period to help hospitality businesses, it does not seem reasonable now to continue</p>
(37) Member of public, (Oxford, Walton Street)	<p>Object - I strongly object to the seating in the parking bays outside the restaurant. The tables take up limited parking spaces, especially in the evenings when usually no one is seated in these seats. We often have to drive around for 15 minutes looking for Resident parking spaces. They are also a bit of an eye sore. These seats are not used very much except in the good summer weather, and I would have thought, not very pleasant to sit at on a busy road like Walton Street.</p> <p>I hope that this seating area will be removed as soon as possible.</p>
(36) Member of public, (Oxford, Observatory Street)	<p>Concerns – As a resident of the south side of Observatory Street I am concerned about the tables and chairs in my street. Will there be a consultation process for that area?</p>
(17) Member of public, (Oxford, Rutherway)	<p>Concerns - Fine in the summer when people want to sit outside but a waste of very limited parking space in the winter when no-one uses the seats.</p>
(18) Local business, (Oxford, Walton Street)	<p>Concerns - Parking is too expensive and there are not enough spaces. I have a business right on walton street but have no space to have outdoor seating.</p>
(19) Local business, (Oxford, Walton Street)	<p>Support - A survey of 54 Jericho businesses was carried out earlier this year which said, "Year round outdoor seating had an overall negative sentiment across all groups of just over 50% and a 35% agreement sentiment. The most likely beneficiaries of this - the hospitality sector - were broadly in line with this, with a disagreement sentiment of 44% and an agreement sentiment of 34%.</p>

	<p>However, when this question was asked about outdoor seating during the warmer months, sentiment changed, overall disagreement sentiments fell to 29%, with the hospitality sector agreement sentiment remaining broadly the same with more moving into neither agree nor disagree. Looking at this it may be this is a 'good neighbour' feeling with those unable to benefit directly feeling more neutral for themselves but supportive for others, but preferring the spaces were better used for parking".</p>
(20) Local business, (Oxford, Walton Street)	Support - Fantastic for local area
(21) Member of public, (Oxford, Plater Drive)	Support - The replacement of a few parking spots with additional outdoor seating has brought such a wonderful beneficial atmosphere to this section of Walton Street. It shows in a very clear way that the streets are for people to enjoy safely and encourages more use of the businesses they're near. This fits exactly with the county council mandates for livable streets, and to do anything else that returns prioritization to cars would run completely counter to that. It's unthinkable.
(22) Member of public, (Oxford)	Support - Tables are good to eat with friends and socialise
(23) Member of public, (Oxford, Plater Drive)	Support - The outside dining space is a nice addition to the amenity of Walton Street
(24) Member of public, (Oxford, Plater Drive)	Support - Restaurants have complied with government mandated shutdowns over the past two years and should be allowed to make up for lost business.
(25) Member of public, (Oxford, Merton Court)	Support - It's been lovely having the seating - much more of a social atmosphere and good to sit outside with people Gives a buzz to Jericho
(26) Member of public, (Oxford, St Bernard's Road)	Support - we desperately need the whole area round where these chairs are to become a pedestrian only area. north Walton street was awful during the period of the south Walton street closure, when all 2500 extra cars per day left Jericho via north Walton street, and perhaps 1000 extra cars per day came in... south Walton street is the arterial highway for Jericho, and shutting it displaces traffic north... any measures (eg bus gates/zebra) that decreases the

	<p>outflow of traffic from south Walton street increases the traffic in north Walton street and south Walton manor... so I would like the safe seating to extend all the way across the north Walton street, so creating a pedestrian zone.. this would secure the economic future of the area, especially the restaurants, which are going to be massively threatened by the pedestrianisation of broad street.. so please, pedestrianise the whole of north Walton street</p>
(27) Member of public, (Oxford , Squitchey Lane)	<p>Support - I think it's a great idea for local businesses to have extra seating it will create a brilliant community vibe</p>
(28) Member of public, (Oxford, Richards Lane)	<p>Support - I would like to see Oxford become a car free; and bike and pedestrian friendly city.</p>
(29) Member of public, (Oxford, St Bernard's Road)	<p>Support - Tables and outdoor seating have been a great change to the local provision. I am a resident in the area and support this provision, as well as better air quality which is made possible by the proposals. The proposal is also necessary to ensure the safety and air quality for users of the outdoor seating.</p>
(30) Member of public, (Oxford, Observatory Street)	<p>Support - I support the amendments as they make Walton Street a better place to enjoy, shop and meet others. I also strongly object to the amount of traffic that flows through the side streets to Walton Street without controls as anti-social, environmentally damaging and incompatible with plans to make Oxford a more pedestrian/cyclist friendly place by reducing car and van movements. You should now take this further and make Walton Street traffic free by introducing blocks to restrict North-south traffic and to stop the continuous rat-running down Observatory and St Bernard's and other east-west streets.</p>
(31) Member of public, (Oxford, Walton Street)	<p>Support - I live on Walton Street and encourage footfall but not heavy traffic. I want to see small business thrive and in Covid world think outdoor seating would be great.</p>
(32) Rather not say, (Oxford, Walton Street)	<p>Support - Support local businesses along this stretch on Walton Street. Make this part of the road more pedestrian friendly</p>

<p>(33) Member of public, (Oxford, Walton Street)</p>	<p>Support - As a close neighbour to one of the schemes I would like to SUPPORT MAKING THE SCHEME PERMANENT. The proposal enhances the area and creates a good amenity for the community.</p>
<p>(34) Member of public, (Oxford, Kingston Road)</p>	<p>Support - As a resident, I have thoroughly enjoyed the new outdoor areas of restaurants on Walton Street.</p>
<p>(35) Member of public, (Oxford, Kingston Road)</p>	<p>Support - I like the way it has been working as a temporary arrangement and think it would be beneficial to continue.</p>