Divisions affected: Thame

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – 27TH JANUARY 2023

THAME - PROPOSED PAY AND DISPLAY, RESIDENTS PARKING, TRADER PERMITS AND NO WAITING AT ANY TIMERESTRICTIONS

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. The Cabinet Member for Highway Management is RECOMMENDED to:
 - a. Approve the proposals as advertised proposals for changes to no waiting restrictions, taxi bays, street trader bays and trader permits.
 - b. Approve amendment of the proposals for permit holder bays as follows:
 - i. Park Street, Nelson Street and North Street (except outside the Library) are introduced as permit holder only bays.
 - ii. Current plans for permit holder bays or Pay and Display and permit holders are amended for High Street (plan 1), Upper High Street (including. outside the war memorial) to be introduced as dual purpose bays retaining the current 2-hour limit (non-permit holders) and including exemptions for permit holders.
 - c. Approval to put ON HOLD proposals for the introduction of Paid parking bays in central Thame to allow further work on linking plans with emerging transport and movement strategies. To be undertaken in discussion with the Town Council and be completed within a 6-month period.
 - d. To approve inclusion of properties No.80, 81, 81a and 83 in permit eligibility for the Thame central area.

Executive summary

- In November 2021, the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions transferred from Thames Valley Police to Oxfordshire County Council. At launch, a number of local concerns were made about enforcement of historic restrictions which did not cater for the needs of local residents and businesses.
- 3. In response, officers committed with Councillors to undertake a review of the existing restrictions in the centre of Thame, alongside wider plans to introduce areas of paid parking to support the operation and funding of the civil enforcement operations.

- 4. The county council's parking team have worked closely with local councillors and the town council to bring forward a package of proposals to rationalise existing restrictions and introduce new measures which will help increase the turnover of parking whilst giving options for residential parking.
- 5. The proposals subject to the public consultation include:
 - Introduction of Pay and Display Bays on High Street, Cornmarket and Upper High Street to allow for more effective enforcement and encourage the turnover of parking spaces. 1st 30 mins in any 24-hour period would be free and the paid parking does not include the main car parks on High Street and Upper High Street which would remain free of charges.
 - Introduction of permit holder only bays on Lower High Street, North Street, sections of Upper High Street and Park Street.
 - Removal of waiting restrictions on North Street (west side) to allow informal parking arrangements to remain.
 - New Street Trader bay in Upper High Street car park and extension of taxi bays on High Street

Financial Implications

6. There are existing agreements in place with South and Vale District Councils to fund the paid parking element of the proposals (e.g. pay and display machines) as part of the set up costs for the new Special Enforcement Area for South Oxfordshire. The other elements will be funded through S106 contributions. There are no additional pressures on existing budgets from the proposals.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

7. A full equality and climate impact assessment has been undertaken and can be viewed in **Annex 5**. No implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of the proposals.

Sustainability Implications

8. The proposals would help facilitate walking and cycling and the safe movement of traffic.

Formal Consultation

9. Formal consultation was carried out between 8th September 22 and 14th October 22. A notice was published in the Oxford Times newspaper and an email was sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the

Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, South Oxfordshire District Council, Thame Town Council, and the local County Councillors. Letters were sent to approximately 2822 premises and street notices were also placed on site.

10. In response to the formal consultation period, a total of 299 responses have been received via an online survey. A further 22 responses were received via email. The responses are shown in **Annex 6** (separate document), and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Analysis of Feedback

- 11. The summary tables in **Annex 2**, set out the overall expressions for support, objection or whether concerns were raised for each element of the proposals.
- 12. Based on online questionnaires, the largest proportion of respondents was based in Thame: a total of 81%, with respondents from those visiting from other areas making up the remaining 19%.
- 13. In response to the public consultation 22 email responses were also received to the proposals. The comments from these have been included in the summary comments in **Annexes 3 & 4**. Typically email responses cover general views of the proposals and therefore it was not possible to assign an expression against each individual element of the scheme. Where comments have been generally fore against the proposals these have been documented, 3 were in favour (14%), 12 raised concerns (54%), and 7 wholly objected (32%) to the proposals.

Proposed introduction of $2\frac{1}{2}$ - hour paid parking bays in central Thame:

- 14. Overall, over 60% of responses objected to the introduction of paid parking bays in the central area of Thame. The most common reasons cited were that parking charges would be bad for local businesses and the local economy in general. Concerns were raised that the introduction of charges would lead to users shopping elsewhere and put pressure on existing free parking.
- 15. A high number of respondents objected to the introduction of parking charges on the basis that parking should remain free in Thame. Some made a point that this would be a pre cursor to introducing parking charges on the main car parks in Thame.
- 16. The third most popular reason for objecting to this element of the proposals was concerns of displacement into other areas of Thame, as users and local employees tried to avoid paying the parking charges.
- 17. A total of 43 respondents felt that the scheme including the Pay and Display element was too bureaucratic, where users would be forced to display parking ticket. Many felt that this element would lead to confusion and fines handed out, especially around the element of free parking for the first 30 minutes.

- 18. Other concerns raised, included a view that the scheme was simply being promoted to generate revenue for the council. Furthermore, the machines themselves would be a blight on the street scene and not in keeping with their environment.
- 19. A total of 14% of respondents from the on-line survey were in support of the introduction of paid parking bays. Some of the comments received felt that it would help with turn-over of spaces and reduce unnecessary journeys by car for short trips.

Officer response:

- 20. When considering options to manage on-street parking, there is often concern about the impact that this can have on the economy of town centres and that any increase in the types of control may discourage visitors to the town centre and reduce trade for businesses. However, there is no direct evidence that this is the case and careful kerbside management has proven to support parking for local retail centres in Oxfordshire including Abingdon, Wallingford and Henley-on-Thames.
- 21. The potential displacement of any new parking control is a legitimate concern, and the proposals have included restrictions over a wider area to mitigate this. If the proposals are introduced, further consideration for additional restrictions could be considered if problems occur.
- 22. The proposed paid parking in Thame constitutes a total of 29% of the total onstreet parking available. Therefore 71% would still remain free for users.
- 23. With the concerns raised by businesses, users and the town council that the proposed introduction of paid parking bays would not benefit the town, a measured approach would be to put the proposals on hold in order to allow further discussions with the Town Council. Specifically, this would allow time to review how this element of the plan links with emerging transport strategies, including the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and measure the impacts of the other elements of the proposals.

Proposed introduction of permit holder parking:

- 24. The feedback on the proposed introduction of resident and visitor permits was positive overall, with a majority of 30.8% of the on-line responses in support of the proposals.
- 25. A total of 125 comments were positive towards residents' permits being introduced and included that it was fair that parking for residents should be prioritised. A number of responses felt that this proposal was need especially around North Street and Park Street to give residents certainty and to allow enforcement without the fear of receiving parking fines.

- 26. From the on-line surveys a number of concerns and suggestions were raised, with the most comments relating to the potential displacement into other roads through the restrictions being introduced. A number of respondents felt that East Street and Wellington Street should also be included in the proposals.
- 27. A total of 53 comments were received, which concluded that the scheme to introduce parking permits was not needed, as the status quo works and its and additional burden and cost of families. A further 20 comments stated that residents should have to pay to park and if permits are introduced, they should free.
- 28. A concern for 11 respondents was that resident permit schemes are too restrictive and impact on larger families who have more than 2 vehicles and would therefore be limited on where to park their vehicles.

Officer response:

- 29. The proposals brought forward for residential permits in the central area of Thame aim to formalise the existing permits issued by the Town Council into the Traffic Regulation Orders. A change has been made to where they can be used to allow alternatives when Markets operate in the Upper High Street Car Park.
- 30. For new proposed permit areas, in North Street, Park Street, Nelson Street and High Street, the standard permit zone rules have been applied. These work well in other areas and cater for the majority of users, whilst still applying some controls to avoid abuse and zones being oversubscribed. A basic principle is the costs to operate permit schemes must be met by the users who benefit from preferential parking and the charges are set by our cabinet annually to cover the costs to run the schemes.
- 31. Currently enforcement of 2-hour bays has been suspended for bays located on North Street, Park Street and High Street. This is due to the fact that residents have historically parked in these bays. The proposals will allow residents to legitimately park in these areas and enforcement to resume.
- 32. Potential displacement is always a concern with any proposal to restrict parking, however future consideration could be given to existing controls into other roads to mitigate the impact.

Proposed introduction of Trader and Street Trader permits:

- 33. The majority of respondents (nearly 50%) stated that they had no opinion of for the proposals to introduce Street Trader and general trader permits.
- 34. For the respondents that did provide an option the majority were in support, with comments that formalising the existing street trader bay would given them certainty and allow better enforcement.

35. Some concerns were raised about trader permits being available for use over a 24-hour period. There were also concerns that they could be abused and that it's not clear on where they will be used and by whom.

Officer response:

- 36. The proposals include plans to formalise an existing system of traders permits issued to local businesses where works are being undertaken at their premises. These permits are currently charged for and administered by the Town Council. Under proposals this arrangement will continue but the particulars and conditions of use will be included within the traffic regulation orders for Thame.
- 37. A street trader (kebab van) currently operates from the Upper High Street car park and utilises and area next to the Citizen's Advice building. During the hours of operation the vehicle is at present parking on double yellow lines with no exemptions in the order for the restrictions in place. The proposals to formalise this area for a street traders bay, will allow the street traders vehicle to park legitimately and allow enforcement where non-permitted vehicles park within the bay.

Proposed changes to No waiting at anytime restrictions:

- 38. The proposals include the removal and rationalisation of some sections of No waiting at anytime restrictions (Double Yellow Lines) to make it clearer on where parking is allowed and where enforcement will take place. An example is on the East side of North Street where vehicles have typically parked on a banked area of hardstanding, behind double yellow lines. Technically these areas would be enforced, so removing lines allows the status quo to continue.
- 39. In response to the consultation, the majority of respondents (28.6%) objected to this element of the proposal stating that it would cause obstructions, congestion or that it was not needed and the authority should leave things as they are. However, many referred to elements when it was clear they had not studied the plans.

Officer response:

40. The proposed changes to no waiting at anytime restrictions (double yellow lines) are required to allow effective enforcement to take place and to make it clear where parking is permitted.

Proposed extension of Taxi Parking Bays:

- 41. Following a request from the district council to extend the current taxi rank on Cornmarket, proposals have been included to increase the existing bays by 1 space.
- 42. The response from the on-line survey was not in favour of the proposals with a majority of 35.5% in objection. Common responses included that the

- existing bays were currently underutilised, and it would be a reduction of value parking spaces for retail users.
- 43. Other comments were made (10 in total) that the current taxi bays would be better located away from their current location, with the Cattle Market and adjacent to the Town Council commonly suggested.
- 44. To counter the objections 37 comments were received which supporting the proposals, citing that currently the taxis sometimes are forced to double park and that they provide a valuable service to the community.

Officer response:

- 45. The proposals include a single space and mitigates the impact where taxis maybe attempt to double park or wait outside the bay. This is important to reduce the impact on the flow of traffic and bus reliability.
- 46. The identified demand has been submitted by the district council on who work with taxi companies

Statutory consultee responses

- 47. Thames Valley Police expressed no objections.
- 48. Thame Town Council have confirmed that their Planning & Environment Committee considered the consultation at a meeting on the 18th October 2022. The following formal response was agreed:

"Overall Members felt that the proposals were a disservice to the town and not fit for purpose, as there appeared to be a focus on income generation rather than solutions which would benefit residents, businesses, and visitors.

Whilst some proposals were welcome and it was recognised that action was needed to address resident's parking, Members had concern regarding the permit holder proposals. In order to encourage a higher turnover of vehicles, it was suggested that some of the proposed permit holders only zones (purple hatched area) be changed to pay and display with permit holders exempt (yellow hatched area) to allow greater flexibility. Members were unsure if permits applied only to residents, or whether businesses could also apply for permits for their staff. Members also suggested residents' permits would be more beneficial if the restrictions applied overnight rather than during the daytime, although it was noted that this would mainly benefit residents who work standard daytime hours and would be harder for OCC to enforce. It was felt that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) should have consulted with residents first, rather than applying a 'one size fits all' approach in Thame, which may make issues worse.

There is also a need for a more holistic and coordinated view, that considers wider issues relating to active travel, particularly given OCC are due to be publishing a walking and cycling infrastructure plan, as well as parking

requirements for businesses and from surrounding areas. It was noted that a shared electric vehicle hire club had just launched in Thame and Haddenham, but this would only go so far to address the lack of parking spaces for a growing town.

Overall, it was felt that the proposals were a cost inconvenience for the people of Thame without actually addressing the issues our town faces. Whilst some income generation was needed to cover the costs of enforcing the double yellow lines, it was felt that OCC would generate a lot of income for little benefit to the people of Thame."

- 49. Representatives of stagecoach have responded to confirm that they have no observations or representations.
- 50.Local County Councillor Kate Gregory has responded to confirm that she supports the introduction of residential parking permits, however does not support the introduction of pay and display charges in Thame.
- 51.Local County Councillor Nigel Champken-Woods has responded to confirm that:

"I am very pleased the Residents Parking system is to go ahead residents in Park street have been calling for this for at least 20 years!

I have reservations about the pay and Display.

I find the observations from Thame Town Council a little confusing but this was only discussed at a Planning and Environment Meeting not by the whole Council."

Bill Cotton

Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes Annex 1a-d: Consultation Plan

Annex 2: Summary of online & paper responses Annex 3: Summary of objections/concerns received Annex 4: Summary of supportive comments received

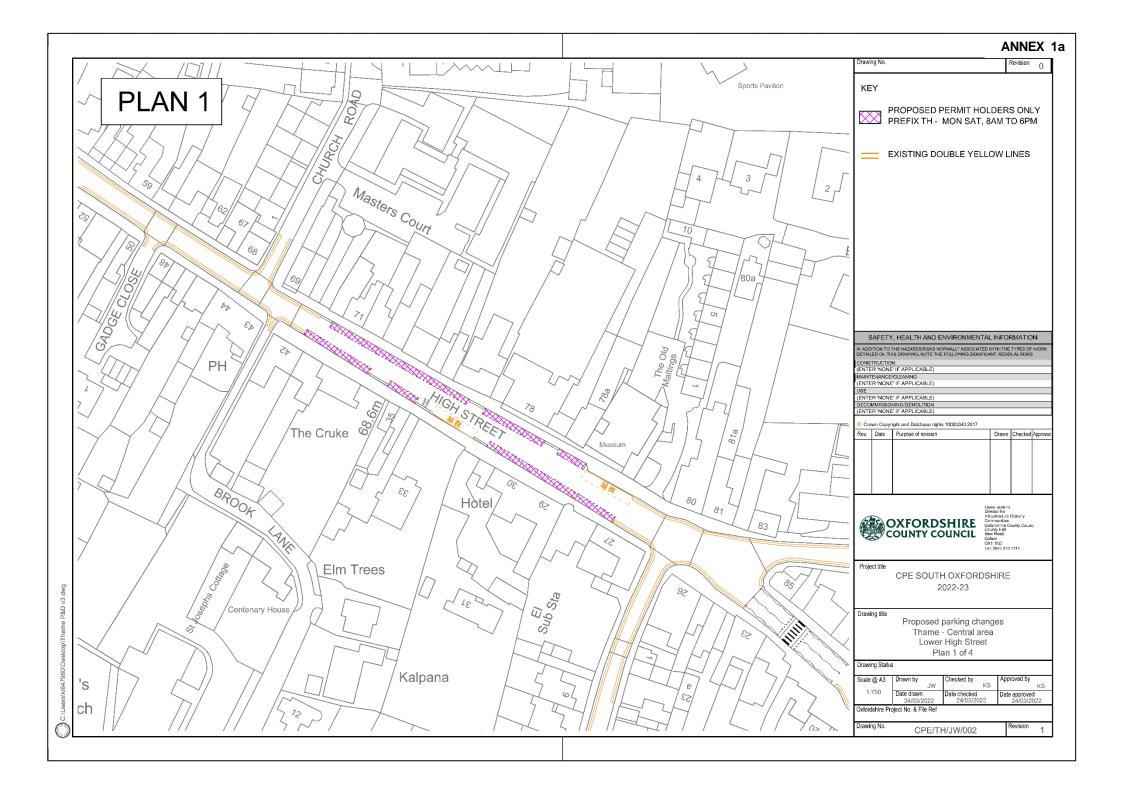
Annex 5: Equality impact assessment

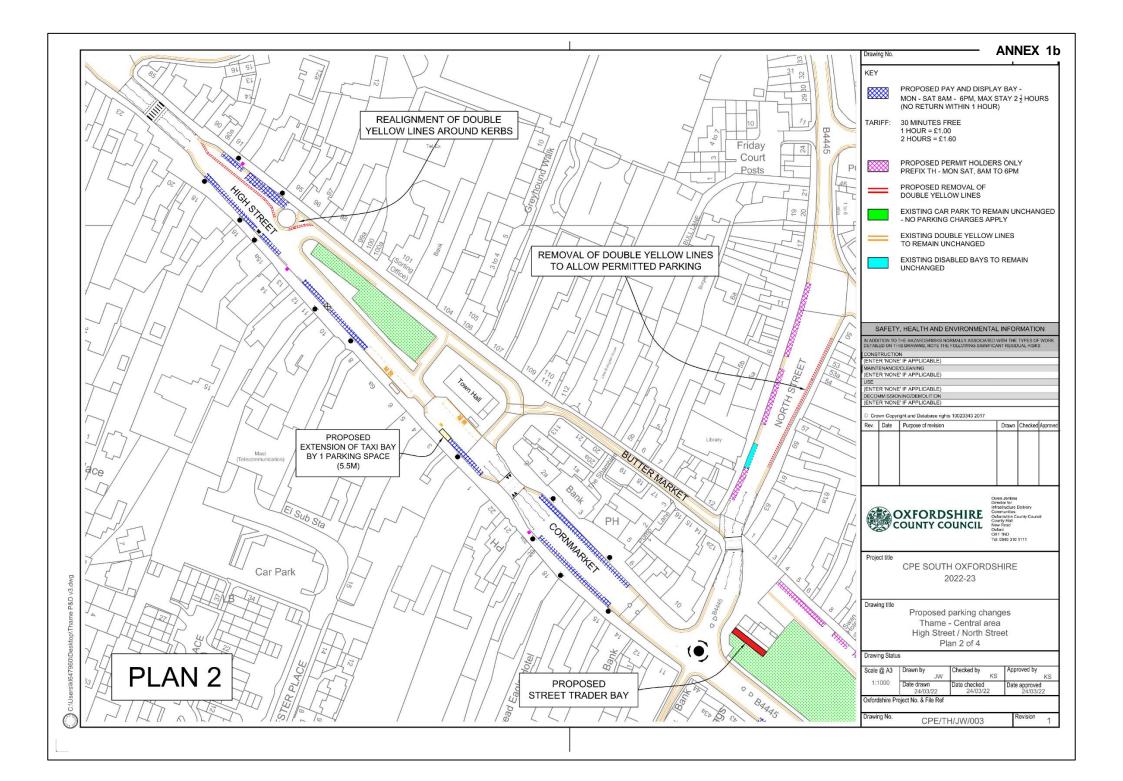
Annex 6 (additional document): Consultation responses

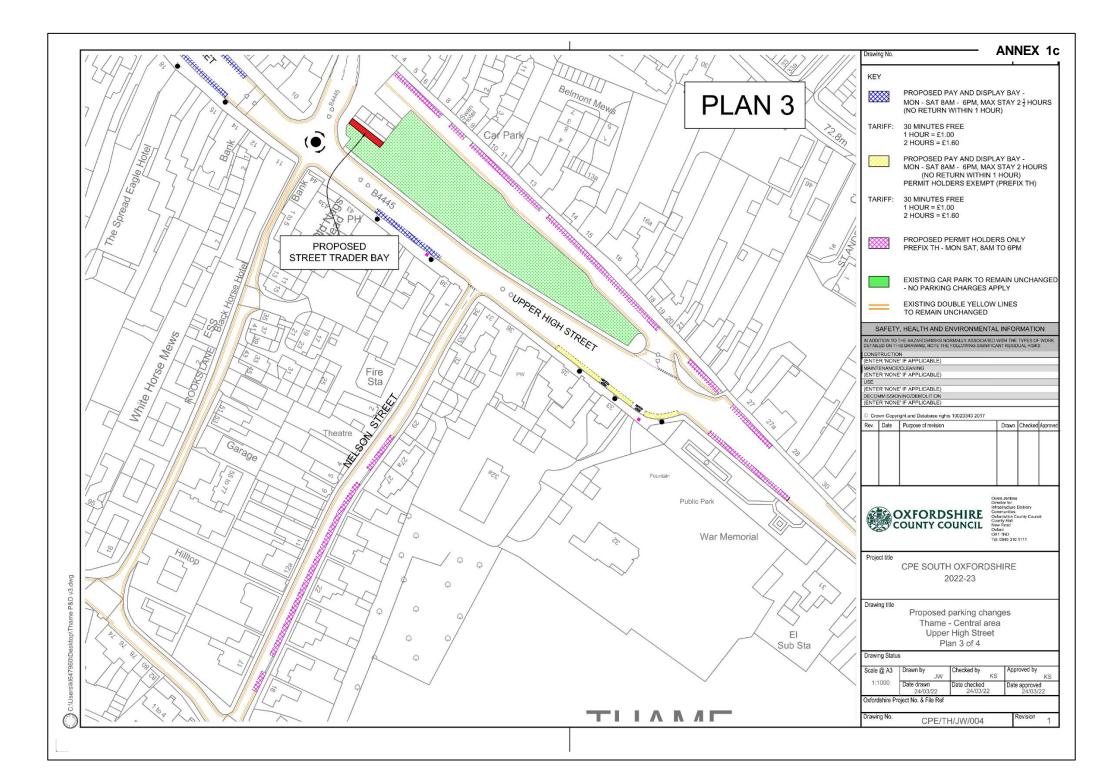
Contact Officers: Tim Shickle tim.shickle@oxfordshire.gov.uk

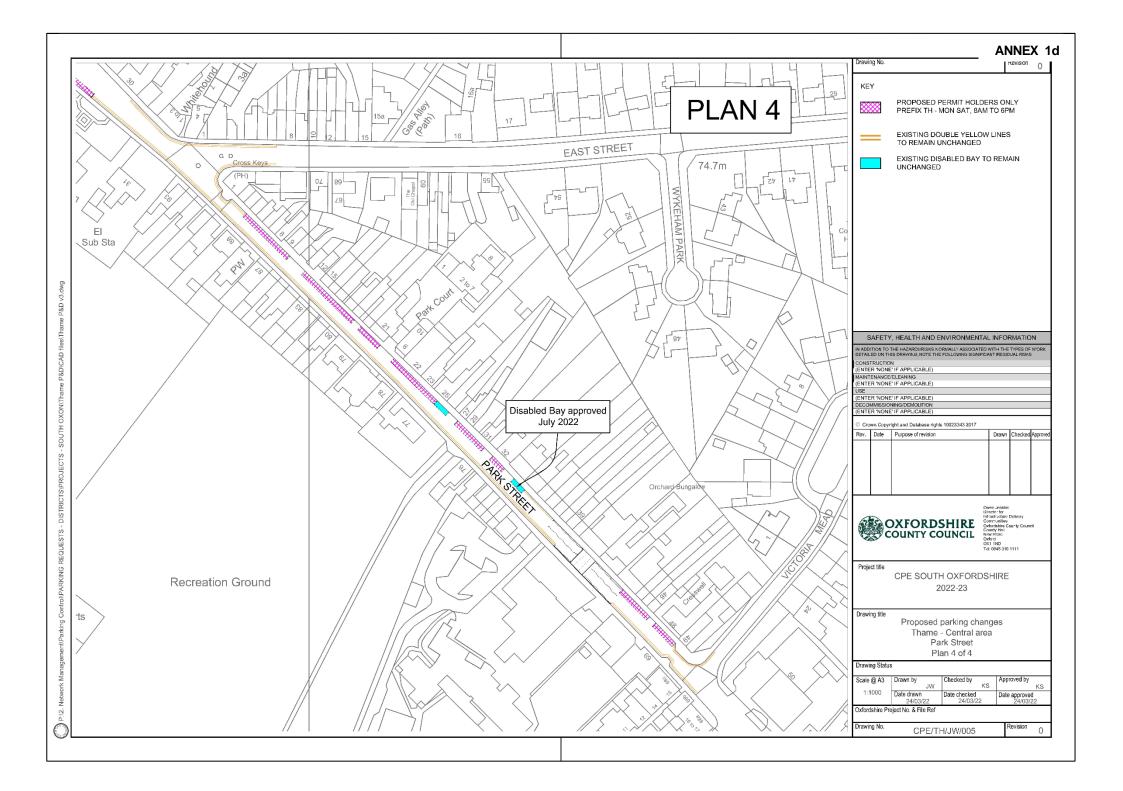
Jim Whiting james.whiting@oxfordshire.gov.uk

January 2023









ANNEX 2

a. Summary of total online questionnaires received.

Proposal	Support	% Support	Object	% Object	Concerns	% Concerns	No opinion	% No opinion	Total
Scheme in general.	51	17.1	158	52.8	83	27.8	7	2.3	299
Existing Waiting Restrictions to be removed'	64	21.4	85	28.4	78	26.1	72	24.1	299
Paid parking bays	42	14.0	183	61.2	54	18.1	20	6.7	299
Residents Permit Holder only parking areas	92	30.8	88	29.4	63	21.1	56	18.7	299
Formalised Street Traders only Bay'	85	28.4	42	14.0	32	10.7	140	46.8	299
Extension of the existing No Stopping except taxis bay	58	19.4	106	35.5	36	12.0	99	33.1	299
24 hour permits	71	23.7	49	16.4	30	10.0	149	49.8	299
Residents and Visitors` Parking Permits'	101	33.8	73	24.4	65	21.7	60	20.1	299

b. Summary of all online questionnaires received for Thame residents only.

Proposal	Support	% Support	Object	% Object	Concerns	% Concerns	No opinion	% No opinion	Total
Scheme in general.	48	19.7	119	48.8	71	29.1	6	2.5	244
Existing Waiting Restrictions to be removed'	56	23.0	64	26.2	65	26.6	59	24.2	244
Paid parking bays	37	15.2	138	56.6	49	20.1	20	8.2	244
Residents Permit Holder only parking areas	82	33.6	68	27.9	53	21.7	41	16.8	244
Formalised Street Traders only Bay'	76	31.1	32	13.1	27	11.1	109	44.7	244
Extension of the existing No Stopping except taxis bay	48	19.7	84	34.4	28	11.5	84	34.4	244
24 hour permits	62	25.4	37	15.2	25	10.2	120	49.2	244
Residents and Visitors` Parking Permits'	85	34.8	57	23.4	58	23.8	44	18.0	244

ANNEX 3 - Summary of comments received – concerns/ objections raised.

Summary	Number of Comments
The introduction of paid parking will be detrimental for local businesses and will drive customers to use other retail centres.	114
The proposed taxi bay is not needed and the current users park where they shouldn't.	90
I object to paying to park, the car parking in Thame should remain free.	65
The current balance of parking for residents, visitors and employees works and doesn't need to change.	53
The proposals will cause displacement into surrounding roads and make existing problems worse.	51
The proposed system is too bureaucratic and complicated for visitors and residents. It's not needed.	43
The proposals are simply being introduced to raise revenue for the council.	35
The proposed 30 minutes free parking is not long enough and too restrictive	32
Residents should not have to pay to park – permits should be free of charge	20
Town centre residents shouldn't expect to have permits, convenient parking. Permit spaces reduce parking for retail users.	17
Pay and display machines are a blight on the street scene and not in keeping with the environment.	12
More enforcement of existing restrictions is needed. Proposals won't work if not enforced.	11
The rules for permits are too restrictive and do not cater for big families or local businesses.	11
The taxi rank should be moved to another location i.e., by the town hall or Cattle market.	10
Under the proposals there are not enough spaces provided for permit holders.	8
The proposed trader permits shouldn't be for 24 hours use.	7
The proposed permit holder bays should be restricted to permit holders at all times.	6
There is no need to remove no waiting restrictions, the current restrictions are fine as they are.	6
Putting permit holder bays in Nelson Street and Upper High Street will be confusing to users	2
Resident permit holders should be able to park in any pay and display bays.	1
The parking subject to removal of waiting restrictions on North Street should become time limited bays	1
North Street permit bays will impact on users of the local library	1

ANNEX 4 - Summary of comments received – in support.

Summary	Number of Comments
The introduction of residents parking permits is a sensible idea and needed.	125
The proposed Street Traders bay seems good idea and reasonable to formalise so it can be enforced.	70
The proposed Traders permits are needed and a good idea to support local businesses.	51
The introduction of paid parking will encourage turnover of spaces, and encourage non car travel to Thame.	38
The introduction of additional taxi provision is a good idea as currently they can double park.	37
The removal of waiting restrictions to allow motorists to park legitimately is a good idea and will make it clearer of where users can park.	30



Oxfordshire County Council Equalities Impact Assessment

Thame parking project September 2022

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Communities – Network Management
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Thame Parking Project
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	No – the parking team already operate paid parking and permit zones elsewhere in Oxfordshire
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	The County Council is currently proposing introduce changes to on-street parking in Thame, which is set out with 2 hour parking bays in the Town Centre. Under the proposals paid parking bays would be introduced with exemptions for residents. Residents parking areas are also proposed in surrounding roads to deal with displacement. Existing disabled bays will remain and new Street Trader Bays will be created. The charges, along with better enforcement will ensure the turnover of parking spaces, improving availability for customers of local businesses. Concessions are being made for residents and blue badge holders can continue to park in parking bays without time limits or charges. The proposals will see regulations operate at the same times and days as existing restrictions so there will be no impact on Sunday's. There is still free parking available nearby in Town Centre car parks.
Completed By	Jim Whiting – Parking Manager
Authorised By	Keith Stenning - Head of Service – Network Management
Date of Assessment	5 th September 2022

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	The Town of Thame is served by 2 car parks in the Town Centre which is supported by on-street parking along the main shopping streets. There are also additional car parking options with a long stay car park (cattle market) operated by the district council and a time limited car park associated with a local supermarket. Despite the available parking, the current arrangements require extensive resources to enforce and do not cater for residential parking needs in the central roads, with time limited bays restricting their options.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	The county council's parking team have worked closely with local councillors and the town council to bring forward a package of proposals to rationalise existing restrictions and introduce new measures which will help increase the turnover of parking whilst giving options for residential parking. The proposals subject to the public consultation include: - Introduction of Pay and Display Bays on High Street, Cornmarket and Upper High Street to allow for more effective enforcement and encourage the turnover of parking spaces. 1st 30 mins in any 24-hour period would be free and the paid parking does not include the main car parks on High Street and Upper High Street which would remain free of charges. - Introduction of permit holder only bays on Lower High Street, North Street, sections of Upper High Street and Park Street. - Removal of waiting restrictions on North Street (west side) to allow informal parking arrangements to remain. - New Street Trader bay in Upper High Street car park and extension of taxi bays on High Street.
Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	The proposals have been developed in discussions with local county councillors and has taken into account feedback from residents and businesses.

Alternatives considered / rejected

Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.

Alternatives considered included removing time limited restrictions to allow residents to park without contravening the existing restrictions. However, this would have meant their parking options would have been further limited by town centre workers parking outside their properties.

Not introducing a charge for on-street parking was a consideration, but the benefits outweigh the impacts. Within the design a concession has been made to allow for free parking in the first 30 minutes which does not penalise visitors and residents making very short trips to local retailers.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	\boxtimes						
Disability	\boxtimes						
Gender Reassignment	\boxtimes						
Marriage & Civil Partnership							
Pregnancy & Maternity	\boxtimes						
Race	\boxtimes						
Sex	\boxtimes						
Sexual Orientation	\boxtimes						
Religion or Belief	\boxtimes						

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities							
Armed Forces	\boxtimes						
Carers	\boxtimes						
Areas of deprivation	\boxtimes						

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	\boxtimes						
Other Council Services	\boxtimes						
Providers	\boxtimes						
Social Value ¹	\boxtimes						

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	Next review 27 th July 2023
Person Responsible for	Jim Whiting – Parking Manager
Review	
Authorised By	Keith Stenning – Head of Service, Network Management