

# **Newmarket On-Street Parking Investigation**

## **Final Report**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) appointed Suffolk Highways (SH) in October 2013 to investigate residential on-street parking issues within the town. The investigation was specifically aimed at analysing two areas adjacent to the town centre where the majority of concerns originate. The two areas identified were labelled the All Saints Road area to the south-east of the High Street and the Rowley Drive area to the north-west.

### **1.2 Targeted Areas**

The All Saints Road area was the larger of the two areas and incorporated approximately 1150 properties and businesses. The perimeter of this area spanned the southern side of the High Street, Moulton Rd, Old Station Road, All Saints Road, The Granary and The Avenue, please refer to Appendix A.

The Rowley Drive area incorporated approximately 550 properties and businesses. This area included a perimeter of Fred Archer Way, Exeter Road, the Icewell Hill estate, Rowley Drive, Black Bear Lane and Fitzroy Street, please refer to Appendix A.

(Note. Both the target areas were later refined during the consultation process.)

## **Consultation Stage 1**

### **2.1 Letter Drop**

To gauge public opinion 1650 letters were hand delivered to all residents within the targeted areas in January 2014. Within each letter there was a covering letter inviting recipients to express their parking concerns, a plan of the targeted area, a simple questionnaire and a pre-paid envelope. The letter drop was advertised in the local press and recipients were also asked to visit the consultations page on the Suffolk County Council website.

### **2.2 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire (Appendix B) included the following, answers were categorised where appropriate:

- Name and address (at recipients discretion)
- How many cars or motor vehicles are used by your household?
- Do you have any off-street parking facilities?  
- If yes, how many off street spaces do you have access to?
- Do you have problems parking in the street? (not necessarily outside your house)
- If you have answered yes above, please could you indicate the days of the week and, if relevant, the times of the day that you experience parking problems.
- A comments section.

A deadline of 7 March 2014 was set for questionnaire returns.

### **3. Questionnaire Results**

#### **3.1 All Saints Road Area Responses**

There was a total of 310 questionnaires returned from the 1128 delivered, giving the All Saints Road area an overall response rate of 27.5%.

Each response was categorised into street name, answers were collated into a spread sheet and all comments were summarised. Please refer to Appendix C to view the spread sheet summary table.

Responses by street were somewhat dependant on residential numbers, a handful of individual streets responded in numbers, for example, All Saints Road, The Avenue, Lisburn Rd, Old Station Rd and Park Lane, each had 24 or more respondents. These large streets are the main routes through the area, and as a result these residents consistently experience problems with on-street parking (with the exception of The Avenue - 41%).

- Over the entire area the number of cars per households was 1.43
- The percentage of households who do not have access to off-street parking was 56%.
- As a result the average no. of households who experience problems parking in their street was 68%.

Many of the individual streets (11 of the 27) returned 5 or less questionnaires making it hard to clarify any issue on an individual street basis. As the data obtained from the questionnaires was limited to the pre-selected categories many residents felt their frustrations were best expressed in the comments section.

### 3.2 All Saints Road Area Comments

The comments section produced a variety of opinions, like the questionnaire it proved difficult to clarify street specific issues due to the proportional turn out of individual streets and the subjective issues that affected each resident. Instead, there were a number of generic themes that respondents raised throughout the All Saints Road area:

- Strong emphasis on problems resulting from the introduction of charges for the public car parks.
- Town workers/shoppers avoiding charges and parking in residential areas (too expensive for daily use).
- Public car parks are not being utilised (they should be cheaper or free for residents)
- Private car parks too expensive (currently £300 per annum)
- Problems can be at any time; Workers/Shoppers (daytime), Residents (evenings)
- Migration of residential parking from neighbouring streets
- Elderly/Disabled/Young families can be forced to park a distance from home
- Divided opinion on a neighbourhood parking scheme - usually with a strong emphasis on cost
- If residents do approve of a neighbourhood parking scheme they expect permits at a reasonable fee (some expect free permits).
- Limited Spaces - even if the scheme was introduced there are too many cars for the number of spaces available.
- Dangerous parking - junctions, bends, pavement, both sides of the road (narrow streets), potentially blocking emergencies.
- Unsociable/Disrespectful parking - blocking driveways & entrances, inefficient parking, parking in turning bays, no space for deliveries or tradesmen.
- No enforcement of current restrictions
- Excessive existing restrictions (at specific locations) - suggests single yellows after 6pm etc.
- New housing developments with no new designated parking
- Residents are conscious and wish to support the local economy.

### **3.3 Rowley Drive Area Responses**

There were a total of 101 questionnaires returned from the 536 delivered in the Rowley Drive target area, a response rate of only 18.8%.

Again, each response was categorised into street name, answers were collated into a spreadsheet and all comments were summarised. Please refer to Appendix D to view the summary table.

The most respondents to the questionnaire came from: Exeter Road, Falmouth Street, Fitzroy Street, Lowther Street and Mill Hill. The majority of these roads contain terraced housing with limited on-street parking and this is reflected in the number of responses.

- Over the entire area the number of cars per households was exactly the same as the All Saints Road area - 1.43.
- The percentage of households who do not have access to off-street parking was slightly lower at 54.5%.
- Similarly, the average no. of households who experience problems parking in their street was 67%.

All of the 3 leading questions resulted in remarkably similar outcomes across both the target areas. This highlights the overall frustration felt by many residents close to Newmarket town centre.

### **3.4 Rowley Drive Area Comments**

Again, the comments section of the questionnaire produced a variety of opinions, making it difficult to clarify street specific issues from the number of respondents. The generic themes that respondents raised throughout the Rowley Drive area were exactly the same as the All Saints Road area with the exception of:

- There is a problem with visitors parking in the neighbourhood.
- Businesses require parking for their customers.
- If a neighbourhood parking scheme was introduced, permits would need adequate enforcement.
- Individuals believe each household should be limited to 2 permits.

- The local garage park serviced cars in the road
- Road Markings to the horse walk and crossing have faded
- People desire further consultation before any scheme is implemented

## **4. Post Consultation**

### **4.1 Meeting with Councillors**

The results and summaries obtained from the questionnaires were sent to local councillors prior to a meeting at The Memorial Hall on 20<sup>th</sup> June. The consensus at the meeting was that Suffolk Highways should carry out a public engagement session to meet with the public in a suitable local venue. It was also apparent that some of the roads should be removed from the study area.

### **4.2 Refined All Saints Road Target Area**

Due to the investigation targeting residential concerns the main roads connecting the town centre the High Street, The Avenue, Old Station Road and Moulton Road were removed from the target area.

In addition, the new developments Granary Road, Malt Close and Barley Close were removed as they were built with their own off-street parking.

For the revised All Saints Road Area, please refer to Appendix E.

### **4.3 Refined Rowley Drive Target Areas**

The Rowley Drive area was split into two separate areas to the north-west of the town centre.

Fred Archer Way, Mill Hill and the Icewell Hill estate were removed from the target areas.

The new main target area had a periphery of Lowther Street, Fitzroy Street, Black Bear Lane and Churchill Court.

The remaining target area was Exeter Road.

For the revised Rowley Drive area, please refer to Appendix E.



## **5. Consultation Stage 2**

### **5.1 Drop-In Session**

A public drop-in session was held at King Edward VII Memorial Hall on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014, between 12pm - 7pm. This event was advertised in the local press, uploaded onto the Suffolk County Council website and letters were sent out to all affected residents.

Residents were given the freedom to express their opinions and recommendation outside the confinements of the questionnaire. At the end of the drop-in session, 75 separate residential addresses and several local councillors had attended. For all the views expressed in the drop-in session please refer to Appendix F.

The most frequent themes throughout the drop-in session were as follows:

- Again, the introduction of car park charging caused the on-street parking issues.
- Resulting in all-day time parking from commuters & shopping.
- Although this investigation was not gauging support for/against a neighbourhood parking scheme, many residents assumed this to be the case, of this cohort 28% were in favour of such a scheme and 19% against
- Many issues were considered local to a particular street, for example, a local garage leaving serviced cars on Exeter Road.

## **6. Consultation Overview**

### **6.1 Residential Concerns**

- The general consensus was that the problems originate from the introduction of parking charges in the public car parks.
- The main frustrations are from long-term town workers consistently avoiding parking charges, and not with shoppers parking on a short-term basis.
- The existing car parks, both public and private, are not being fully utilised.
- There was generally a lack of wide spread support for a neighbourhood parking scheme in any area, with a particular emphasis on cost.
- Cars are being parked dangerously, for example on junctions.
- Cars are being parking disrespectfully, for example, blocking driveways.
- The current parking restrictions are not being reinforced.

### **6.2 Possible Implementation**

- Issues relating to residential overnight parking could be addressed by changing the car park hours of operation from 8am - 9am.
- Following a review of the pocket car parks the cost of an annual space will be reduced to £150 inc. VAT on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2015. This will also be able to be paid by monthly instalments.
- The signing to both the All Saints Road (long stay) and the Rous Road (short stay) car parks can be improved, especially in the knowledge that many visitors are expected to visit the town following the opening of the Home of Horse Racing Museum.
- Safety issue expressed by many residents needs to be addressed. No waiting at any time (double yellows lines) should be implemented on the most dangerous junctions.
- Request Police enforcement of existing restrictions to improve parking culture in the town.
- Residents who do have access to off-street parking would desire the introduction of H-bar markings adjacent to the dropped kerb to protect access/egress to their driveways.
- Work with SCC Development Management to ensure that parking issues are privately funded when new developments are proposed in the town centre.
- Special consideration of Horse Races Events and the Tattersall sales and their impact on the town. More signing for out of town parking options and consideration of park and ride for special events.
- FHDC parking services are currently reviewing their car parking strategy and are looking to propose their recommendation to the council cabinet in December 2015.

## 7. Summary

### 7.1 Recommendations

- In the knowledge that FHDC parking services are to recommend new car parking charges in December 2015, any future impact of these changes will need to be reviewed prior to any actions to alleviate the on-street parking issues.
- The Home of Horse Racing Museum is due to open in spring 2016. There have been forecasts into the amount of visitor the museum will receive each year, the current estimate is an additional 20,000 car parking acts each year. Forest Heath District Council are of the opinion that with small amendments to the traffic regulation orders and new directional signs across the town, sufficient capacity exists to accommodate this amount of visitors. However, the potential issues to on-street parking from visitors to Newmarket cannot be accurately gauged until the museum opens.
- If FHDC do try to address on-street parking issues, those residents and businesses affected will need to be clearly consulted on the proposals, any actions that were to be implemented would have to be formed from conclusive feedback. Any proposals must not migrate the problem to another part of the town centre.

## Appendices

<b>Appendix A:</b>	Targeted areas (original)
<b>Appendix B:</b>	Questionnaire delivered to affected residents
<b>Appendix C:</b>	All Saints Road area - summary of questionnaire responses
<b>Appendix D:</b>	Rowley Drive area - summary of questionnaire responses
<b>Appendix E:</b>	Refined target area
<b>Appendix F:</b>	Drop-in Session: summary of issues raised