

Background details: Cheltenham Parking Scheme expansion

Background

The scheme aligns with GCC's parking policy in its adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP) (Policy PD4.5) for on-street car parking, "...ensuring polices support the local economy, maintain safe and expeditious movement of traffic; use demand management of vehicle parking to discourage commuter parking; whilst aligning with the EV Strategy and Climate Change Strategy..."

The Council had been receiving contact from a number of residents, communities and local members regarding the impact of commuter parking at several locations across the County and specifically adjacent to the existing zone in Cheltenham.

To understand the current parking situation in the county, parking surveys were carried out across Gloucestershire in 2020. The surveys took place across weekdays and Saturdays, with counts being taken during the AM-peak, inter-peak, and PM-peak for each day. This was undertaken for Cheltenham before a UK wide COVID-19 lockdown took place, as well as once restrictions were eased in late May and early June. Whilst we know that some objectors have raised concern about the timing of the June 2020 surveys, we also know that, if anything, Covid impact at the time would have under-estimated the impact from commuters; in effect residents would typically be contending with a worse parking situation than those observed during Covid.

Surveys of Zones A and B, (existing permit parking and unrestricted parking), during the March review (pre-covid) illustrated that occupancy was over 80% on weekdays indicating that commuters and shoppers were competing with residents. The areas to the north and east of the zone showed availability in the weekdays and weekends during the pre-lockdown review and could potentially be faced with absorbing displacement from the areas centrally (south and west).

During the June 2020 surveys, all zones had sufficient spare capacity - a proxy of the base level of resident capacity required as commuter journeys were still heavily reduced during this period.

The public webpage is available at:

[Cheltenham Parking Review \(All Saints\) | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](https://www.engagementhq.com/cheltenham-parking-review-all-saints)

Options consultation Autumn 2021

In autumn 2021, the Council held an options consultation to hear views on parking reviews in Cheltenham (All Saints). The options consultation ran for six weeks from 31st August to 15th October 2021, was widely advertised and allowed for anyone to provide feedback.

A mix of views were given by residents and Councillors in the proposed Cheltenham Zone 15 area some stating there was a parking problem, others saying not in their road, and some citing specific impact from student parking, Cheltenham Football Club, or NHS parking. People also commented on the proposed details of the scheme such as how it will work with visitors; the costs; the impact on the wider area; and a lack of understanding over the TRO and consultation process.

Formal consultation Summer 2022

The formal statutory TRO public consultation ran for six weeks from 4th August to 16th September 2022; this was longer than the minimum of 21 days set out in legislation. Over 6,000 houses were letter dropped, public notices and press releases issued, and social media posts and site notices put up, to inform people of the consultation.

The consultation website was visited over 2,700 times, and provided information about the proposals, as well as an FAQ section which set out answers to commonly asked questions. The council also provided the option to request a hard copy.

All the existing residents in Zones 4, 5, AS and H were consulted in the same way as residents in the 'new' roads, giving them opportunity to comment on any aspect of the scheme. The fact that no significant concerns or objections were raised, about the current zone, its costs, operation times, visitor permits, or the

adjacent expansion of the zone, suggested that the existing zone was operating well and any original concerns or negative perceptions has settled down for these residents.

The proposed zone

The operational proposals are exactly the same as the current zone in place, this helps with continuity and understanding by the public. Many of the issues are covered in the FAQ's

- The zone is 8am to 8 pm and operates 7 days a week and is designed to prevent commuter, shopping or hospital parking.
- Pay and display spaces are provided in every 'central area' street and some limited waiting.
- Limited waiting bays are provided in every street in the 'new zone' with 1, 2 or 4 hrs bays.
- Whilst 8am-8pm, 7 days per week may feel onerous for outer areas, these have the most 4hr bays – therefore a 4hr visit, or in affect, an overnight visit from 4pm one day to 12noon the next day can be accommodated without a permit or visitor voucher.
- In addition many of the outer roads have off-street parking
- 50 visitor vouchers are available to residents, - this was not raised as an ongoing issue for the current zone so would indicate that the total is adequate for the existing zone residents. A single visitor voucher can also be used to park for both days on a weekend.
- 2 permits per household are available to residents – the take up of 2nd permits in the current zone is less than 20% of households; this also wasn't raised as an ongoing concern by current permit holders.

Formal Consultation feedback

Around 1,500 consultees responded. We know that some residents will 'ignore' consultation, but we also know that residents who are 'comfortable' with proposals will similarly tend not to respond. Any concerns raised were analysed and where possible many have been accommodated in the changes below.

Objections typically arose from specific roads (Brighton Road, Jersey Avenue, Beechurst Avenue, Keynsham Bank, Victoria Terrace, and All Saints Terrace) within the proposed Zone 15. Specific requests to be removed were also received from: Landor Gardens, the private/unadopted part of Selkirk Close and Eldon Avenue. Any feedback including possible smaller adjustments to the zone were analysed to determine which could be amended within the TRO process and proposals.

Whilst informal contact with County Councillors and Cheltenham Borough Councillors was ongoing their feedback was specifically sought on the proposals and suggested modifications at this stage.

Modifications and formal 'modifications consultation'

The feedback from the formal consultations; feedback from County and District Councillors; analysis of 'layout' comments; and any ad-hoc feedback and comments collected during earlier consultation were all considerations used to decide the 19 modifications presented during the modification's consultation (7th November – 28th November 2022). The modifications in effect proposed that some roads should be removed from the final scheme and some should be kept.

The responses to the modifications (after the November 2022 'modifications consultation') were considered to understand if the overall views of residents of each cul-de-sac had been addressed, by the removal (or inclusion) of the road from the proposed new zone. The feedback from each road was discussed with local councillors - in the context of availability of off-street parking, the clarity of preference from the road, and viewed in the wider context of the scheme objectives. The alignment with the TRO process also needed to be considered as some changes could risk 're-setting' the wider process to the detriment of many residents currently supportive of the expansion due to the daily parking challenges they face. It has also been important to respect the overall process as we know that some residents have claimed to represent the 'views of the road' when this has not been the case.

The residents of all affected cul-de-sacs were sent a letter dated 6th January 2023, updating them on the process post 'modifications consultation', and how we were proposing to proceed with the cul-de-sac roads in the final scheme, this included:

Removing:

All Saints Terrace, Jersey Avenue, Keynsham Bank, Landor Gardens and the private/unadopted part of Selkirk Close. i.e. removing from the final scheme proposals

Retaining:

Beechurst Avenue, Brighton Road, Eldon Avenue, Victoria Terrace. i.e. continuing to include these 'new' roads into the final scheme proposals.

The options, formal consultation and modifications consultation is complex, so it has been important to be thorough and ensure that the development of proposals and modifications were conducted in line with the formal TRO process. We have:

- Engaged in a dialogue with key local stakeholders to tackle specific objections.
- Provided 6 weeks to request modifications during the formal statutory consultation period.
- Presented modifications based on analysis of the formal statutory consultation feedback, providing 3 weeks for feedback to be received.
- Analysed modifications feedback to determine the decision of which roads to remove and whether the 19 listed modifications had been accepted.
- Involved local members in the decisions and kept the Lead Cabinet Member update.
- Presented our proposals on modifications and the removal of roads to the public in January.
- Published the TRO report as formally required.
- Worked hard on the communications throughout the process to secure public understanding.

Following the modifications consultation the detail of the process, consideration of the feedback and selected proposals is required to be published in a formal TRO report. The TRO report was 'made' on the 22nd June. and advertised on the 29th June. This document sets out the overall detail, justification and process that has been followed. [9b4fe2645770905be0bb957519af1e76 Cheltenham TRO Report Full v3 - signed.pdf \(amazonaws.com\)](https://www.amazonaws.com/9b4fe2645770905be0bb957519af1e76/Cheltenham%20TRO%20Report%20Full%20v3%20-%20signed.pdf)

The Council are also committed to reviewing the operation of the new areas once these have settled in and this will be scheduled for Autumn next year. This is good practice for any new zone but will also help to ensure that the days and hours of operation of the zone, its benefit or impact on residents and the operational provisions (vouchers, permits mix of bays) are appropriate for the needs of the area.