

Agenda item 3

For decision – Whether to ask Somerset Council to remove the Weymouth Road residents parking

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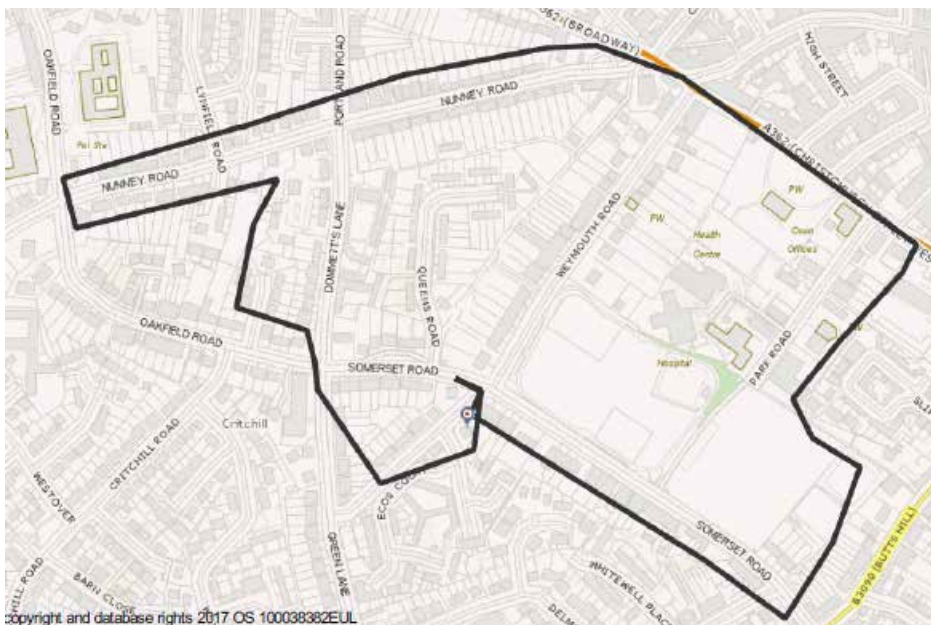
Summary

The residents' parking scheme is popular with some residents of Weymouth Road and unpopular with many more in neighbouring streets because people who had previously parked on Weymouth Road now park in neighbouring streets. A similar residents parking scheme on neighbouring streets is not supported by residents. The recommendation of the report is to ask Somerset Council to revoke the residents permit scheme and remove the parking meters if FTC agree Somerset Council has indicated that if FTC does this, they will revoke the scheme as, in their view, this is a local issue.

Background

In 2018, Somerset Council received a petition from residents in Weymouth Road to improve parking, traffic management and highway safety, calling for the introduction of a residents' parking permit scheme.

Consultation was carried out by Somerset Council in the wider area as below. The purpose of the consultation was to establish the problems being experienced with parking and the level of support for introducing some form of change.



Residents across the wider consultation were included to address any potential concerns regarding displacement from Weymouth Road, where the petition originated.

Following the final consultation resident permit restrictions were only implemented in Weymouth Road as residents of Weymouth Road from Somerset Road to Christchurch

Street West supported the proposal. The level of support from residents of Weymouth Road was:

Location	Properties	Responses		Problem /Support		Yes % of Responses
		Number	Rate	Yes	No	
Weymouth Road	62	43	69%	39	4	91%

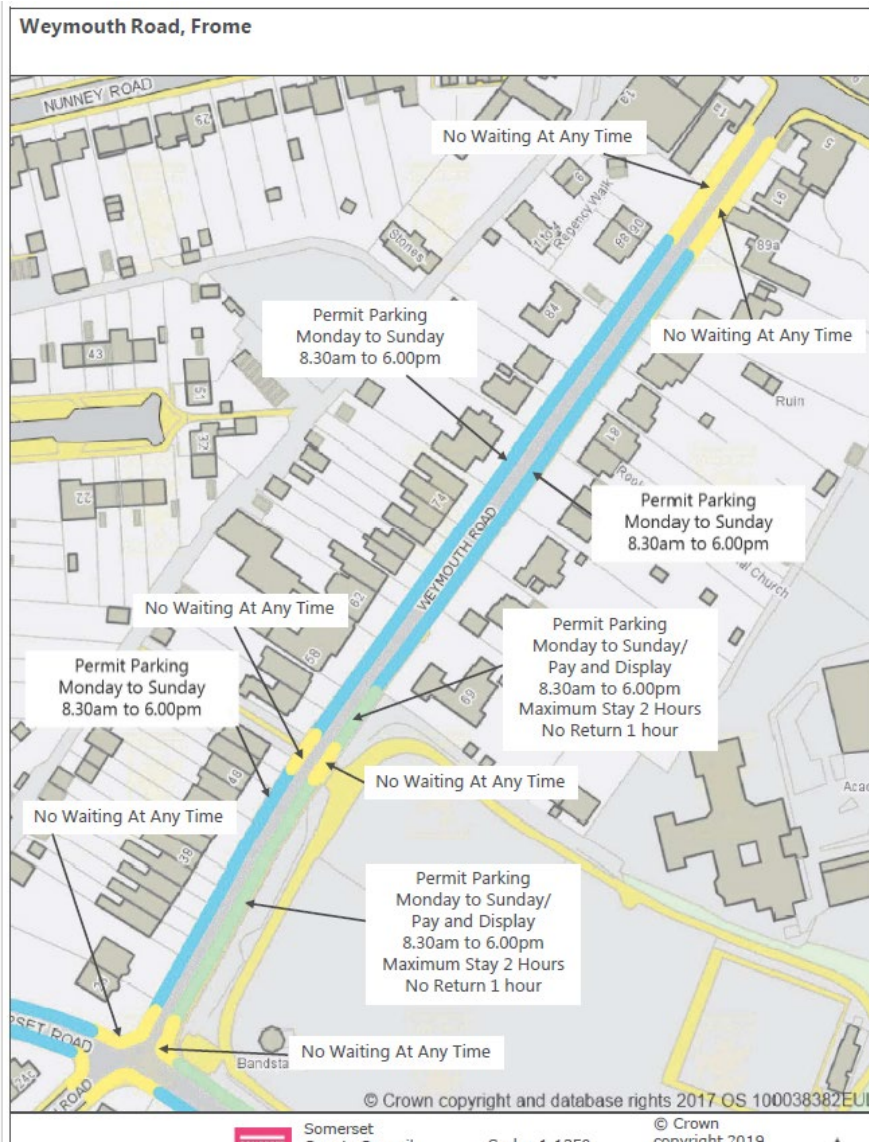
(the above figures are taken from the Somerset Council update report)

There appears to have been no consideration of the views of those on neighbouring streets in the decision to proceed.

As a result of this consultation the resident permit scheme in Weymouth Road which covers both sides between Somerset Road and Christchurch Street West was introduced.

No other roads were included in the permit scheme as the level of response and support from residents was considered insufficient to justify extending the scheme further than Weymouth Road only.

The restrictions apply: Monday to Sunday, 8:30am to 6:00pm. Outside the public park along Weymouth Road, there is an area of shared use parking, this means that residents with a permit may park all day. The public may also park for up to 3 hours subject to the following charge: up to 90 minutes Free – by obtaining a ticket from the machine or using the PayByPhone system. 2 hours £2.00 - 3 hours £3.00



Following the implementation of the scheme, numerous complaints were received from adjoining roads, those complaints included the displacement of parked cars, limited free parking available for residents of Catherine Street, visitors to Victoria Park, the Bowls Club and the Tennis Club. Residents of Somerset Road have said that the displacement impact has resulted in additional cars parking there, higher levels of congestion, concerns about pedestrian safety, particularly during school pick up and drop off times.

In response to the above, Somerset proposed residents parking for the Trinity area and that permits for Weymouth Road be extended to Catherine Street as they have no access to off road parking. There was no support for residents parking in the Trinity area, so this proposal did not go ahead.

Review of Weymouth Road and surrounding Area

As part of the implementation of Weymouth Road scheme it was necessary to undertake a review to seek the views of residents to identify whether the Weymouth Road restrictions should be made permanent. The review covered Weymouth Road and the wider area that was consulted on the original scheme.

The review looked to understand three aspects about the impact of the Weymouth Road scheme covering.

1. Weymouth Road:
2. The Wider Area:
3. Should changes be made and the scheme be made permanent.

Review of Responses

Weymouth Road		
Properties	Responses	Rate
48	31	65%

Beyond Weymouth Road, the level of responses was lower; the majority of the responses considered the situation had deteriorated since the Weymouth Road restrictions and they did not support including their road in a wider scheme.

In summary the responses for the wider area are:

Properties	Responses	Rate	Your Road			Wider Area		Included	
			Worse	Same	Better	Same	Worse	Yes	No
278	59	21%	51	26	1	1	55	12	44

Conclusion

- Residents of Weymouth Road consider the road is better with the restrictions and support the scheme being made permanent.
- Residents of the Trinity area showed no support for a parking scheme.
- Residents of the wider area around Weymouth Road indicated they do not support a parking scheme and acknowledged the parking situation on their street had worsened due to displacement

Cllrs will be aware that the Neighbourhood Parking Group have disputed those figures and have submitted a formal complaint about how the process was carried out. The figures that the Neighbourhood parking group believe to be correct do not support the trigger of 60% or more residents on Weymouth Road being in support of the scheme.

The conclusion by Somerset Council was that the Weymouth Road permit scheme be made permanent and there was no support for a residents parking scheme in the Trinity area. There appears to be little weight given to the displacement impact.

The current scheme

We should not forget that the original request for residents parking was in part around concerns over road safety. There has been conflicting feedback about the impact of the scheme on safety, the majority feel that safety has improved but concern was raised over the speed of the traffic now that the traffic flows have improved.

To investigate the concerns regarding speed, Somerset Council collected speed data. The analysis of all data collected indicated the maximum mean speed was 29.6 mph. The maximum speeds occurred during the 5am to 6am time period. Outside of this time the mean speed was lower. As such, vehicle speed was not considered a necessary priority measure needing attention.

Before the permit scheme was introduced, there was space for approximately 110 parked cars along Weymouth Road from the junction with Somerset Road to the junction with Christchurch Street West. The permit scheme directs people to park in specific areas identified by the white dashed lines, this provides 90 parking spaces. Prior to the scheme, parking areas were not designated. This year 50 vehicle specific permits have been issued; 5 annual visitor permits with 2,430 daily scratch cards for permit holders' visitors.



Google maps April 2024 with parking bays



Google maps July 2014 without parking bays

Whichever set of figures you look at, it is clear that in the views of the majority of responses, the wider area surrounding Weymouth Road is being negatively impacted by the scheme. In response to the review carried out by Somerset Council, comments were received from the following adjoining roads –

Nunney Road, St Aldhelms Close, Queens Road, Somerset Road, Catherine Street, Nightingale Avenue, The Acorns, Castle Street, Dommetts Lane, Larchfield Close, Sheppards Bartons, Wine Street, High Steet, Critchill Road, Yeomans Lodge, Oakfield Road, Green Lane Close, Stourton Gardens, Catherine Hill, Niashs Street, Milk Street, Eastwood Close, Orchard Street, Stoodley Terrace, Mackintosh View and The Bowls Club/Victoria Park.

Comments were also received from residents of Weymouth Road, this is a mix of comments, some saying the scheme is hugely successful and it has made the road safer, while others saying it has not worked.

[The full list of comments is attached at Appendix 3.1, which can be viewed on the website here.](#)

Discussion

At the Frome Town Council meeting on 10 July, following a presentation from the Neighbourhood Parking Group expressing their concerns about the process and the impact that the scheme has had, Cllrs asked the Town Clerk to write to the Chief Executive of Somerset Council setting out the serious concerns about the robustness of the process and the fairness of the pilot parking scheme on Weymouth Road.

The following response was received from Cllr Richard Wilkins, Lead Member for Transport & Digital.

*“Your suggestion to explore how we can come to a more popular solution is very welcome and Somerset Council is happy to consider revoking **ALL** parking restrictions in Weymouth Road that require the need for a permit or to pay to park.*

As this is a local issue and has very little implication from a traffic management perspective we would request that Frome Town Council leads on the proposed solution with our guidance. Once an agreed way forward has been reached Frome Town Council would need to pass a resolution to enable Somerset Council to go ahead and make the changes”.

The criteria for a residents parking scheme, as set out on the Somerset website is “Our policy is to proceed with a scheme development when the initial consultation response rate is more 60% with most respondents in favour of parking controls”. There is some dispute about whether or not the review hit the 60% support target. However, given the number of representations about the wider impacts of the scheme, it is clear that the scheme needs to be looked at objectively and to consider whether the benefits outweigh the harms for the wider community.

Benefits of the residents parking scheme

- Availability of parking for Weymouth Road residents
- Improved road safety on Weymouth Road (although this is not a universal view)

Harms of the residents parking scheme

- Lack of parking spaces for businesses in Badcox (workers and shoppers)
- Reduced road safety on surrounding roads
- Displacement of parked cars to surrounding roads making residents and visitor parking harder to find
- Making it more difficult for users from across the town to access Victoria Park/Mary Bailey
- Making it more difficult to access the Bowls & Tennis Clubs
- Increased congestion and emissions as people are driving around looking for a space to park
- The cost of a permit and pay to park

The impacts of the scheme have been acknowledged in some of the responses in support of the permit scheme, suggesting that a solution to this would be to extend the scheme to the adjoining roads. This is not believed to be an acceptable solution given the lack of support for it from residents and it would continue to push the displacement problem even further afield. The cost of the permits would exclude some people from the scheme.

It is the requirement for a residents permit and for others to pay to park via the meter that is causing the “harms” identified above.

A solution could be to remove the permit scheme and parking meters and retain the current parking bays and yellow line layout. This would retain what is perhaps a safer arrangement for pedestrians and non-drivers and not have any impact on the speed of drivers. White and yellow lines could be retained.

If it is agreed to remove the restrictions, a Traffic Regulation Order proposing the revocation of the restrictions would need to be advertised by Somerset Council. Steve Deakin, Parking Services Manager has confirmed that if the decision is to remove the permit scheme, Somerset Council will refund the unused permits for the date the scheme ceases.

This proposal would be unpopular with some residents of Weymouth Road and popular with many residents of neighbouring streets as the impact of displacement would be removed.

Recommendation

Approve the proposal in the report and to request that Somerset Council retain the parking areas and yellow and white line arrangements on Weymouth Road and remove the residents permit scheme and the parking meters.