

Old Town Parking Survey

2019

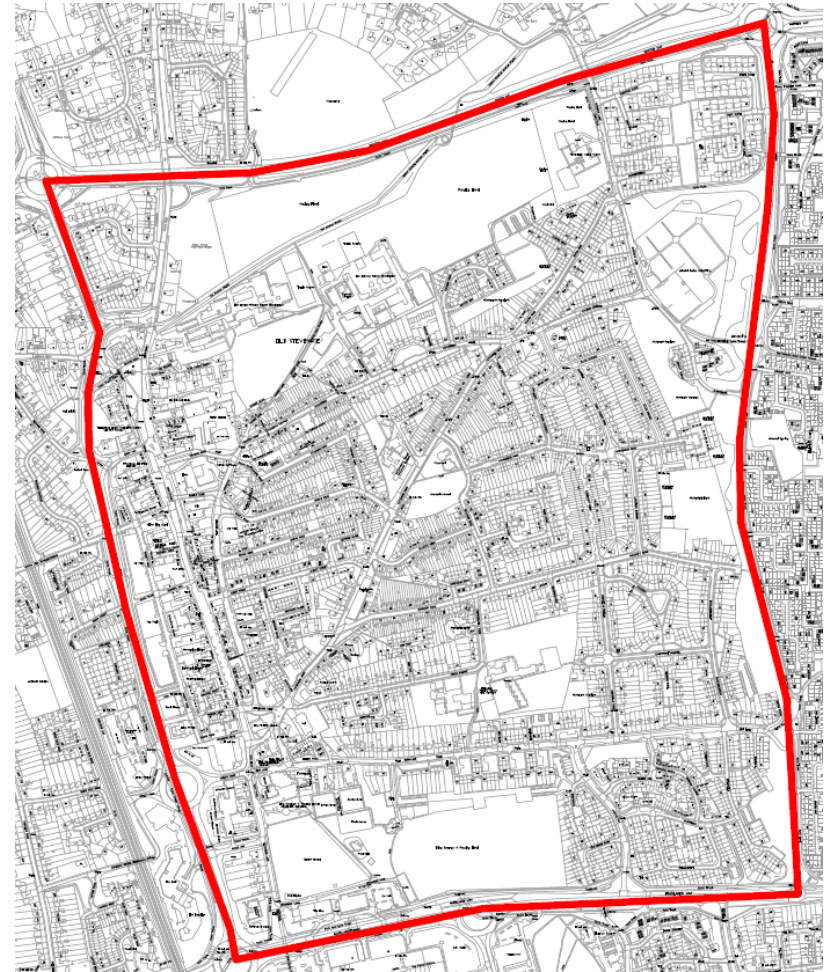
Headline findings

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Background

- Previous survey showed strong demand for permit parking in Albert Street, Basils Road, Grove Road, Southend Close, Stanmore Road and Victoria Close to address parking pressure due to commuters working locally or travelling to the railway station.
- New survey undertaken to confirm if this is still the case in this area and find out residents views on how a scheme should work.
- A wide surrounding area was also surveyed to:
 - capture any change in opinion; and
 - allow potential displacement concerns to be considered.



Background continued

- 3,573 properties were surveyed in total, with 614 replying (17%).
- The same area as before showed strong support for permit parking controls, together with the southern end of Walkern Road up to The Twitchell.
- In this area, 221 out of 451 properties replied (49%).
- Outside of this area, 393 out of 3,122 properties replied (13%). This is insufficient to draw any firm conclusions, but in itself suggests that residents are in general not severely concerned or experiencing significant difficulties.
- The following pages summarise responses from within the Potential Permit Parking Area (PPPA), in three “cuts”:
 - all responses (221);
 - responses from properties that do not have any off street parking (164); and
 - responses from properties that have more vehicles than they have off street parking (139).
- Other considerations around pursuing a scheme here are then set out.

What we asked

- Resident or business
- Number of vehicles and how much off-road parking they have
- For or against permit parking in their street
- What days permits should be in force
- What times permits should be in force
- For or against offering virtual parking permits
- For or against offering a limited number of permits to businesses based within the area
- Thoughts on Business permits
- For or against verge and footway parking prohibition
- Thoughts on if/where other yellow lines may be needed

Map of potential PPA and responses

- Map removed to protect personal data as shading showed how individual households had replied to the survey.

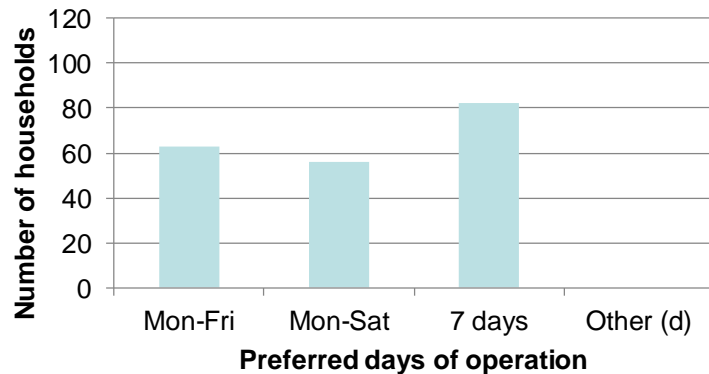
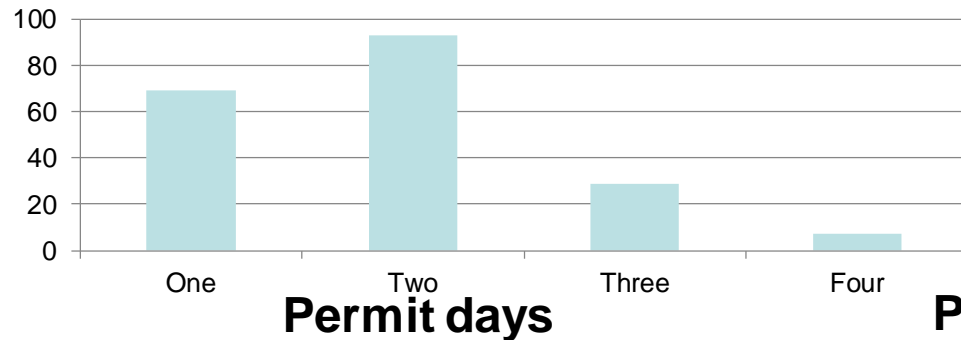
Green – “yes”
to permits

Pink – “no” to
permits

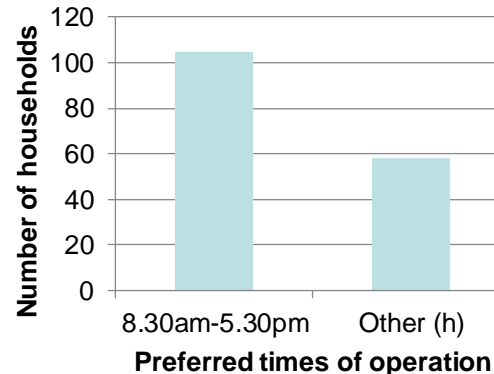
Overview – all responses from PPPA

Number of properties in PPPA	Number of responses	Number of cars	Number parked on street	Maximum possible parked off street
451	225	266	206	85

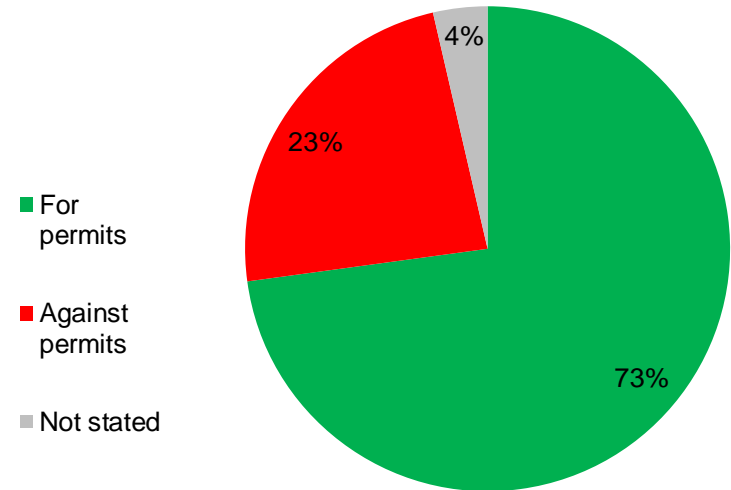
How many residents permits should be allowed per household?



Permit times



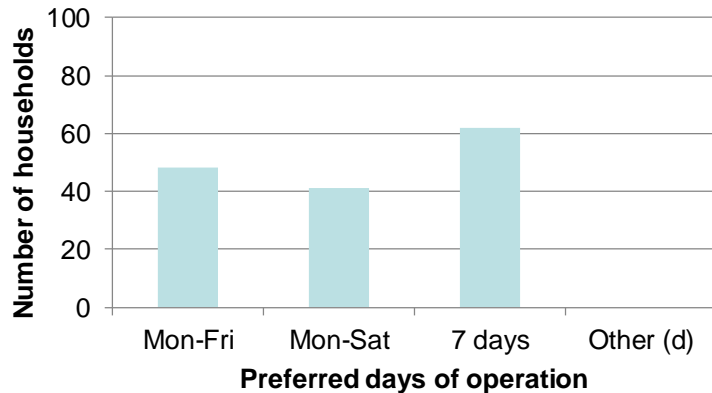
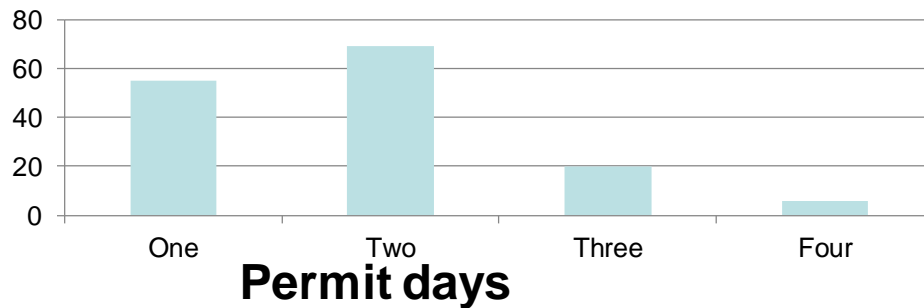
Permit support



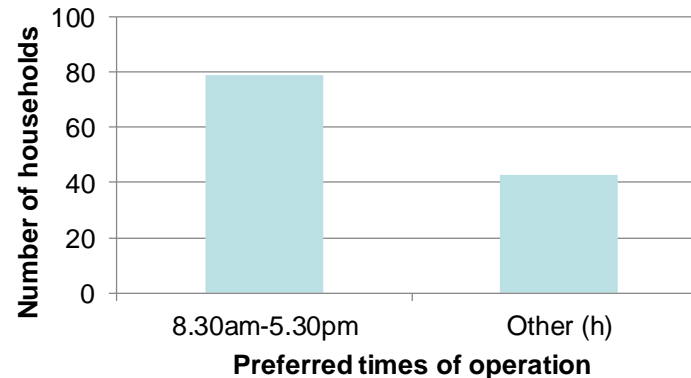
Overview – responses from properties with no off-street parking in PPPA

Number of properties in PPPA	Number of responses	Number of cars	Number parked on street	Maximum possible parked off street
451	167	189	189	0

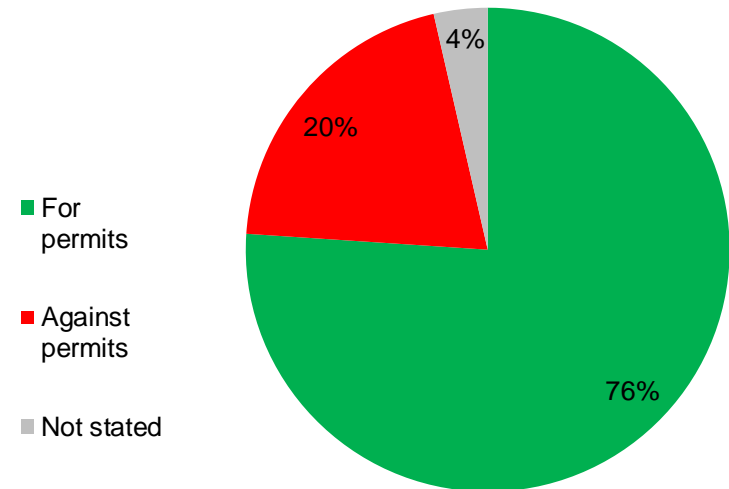
How many residents permits should be allowed per household?



Permit times



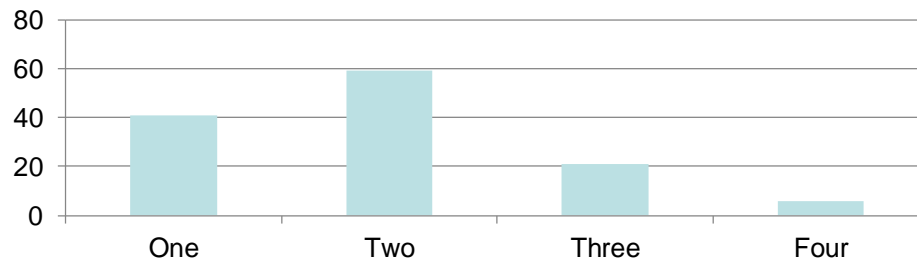
Permit support



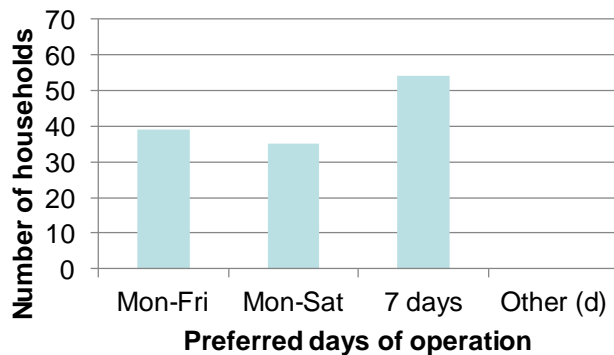
Overview – responses from properties that would need a permit for one or more cars in PPPA

Number of properties in PPPA	Number of responses	Number of cars	Number parked on street	Maximum possible parked off street
451	142	222	205	16

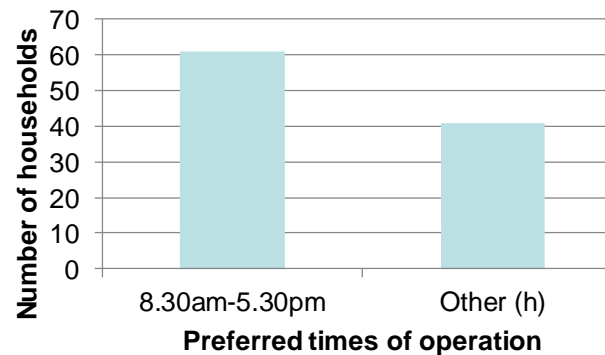
How many residents permits should be allowed per household?



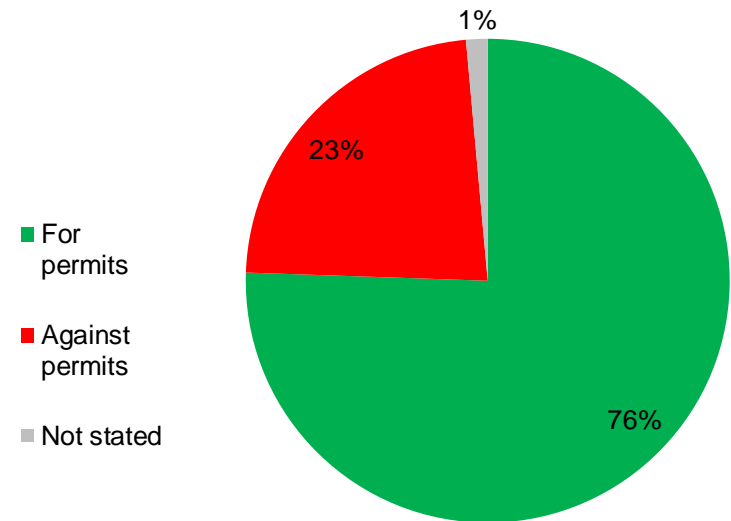
Permit days



Permit times



Permit support



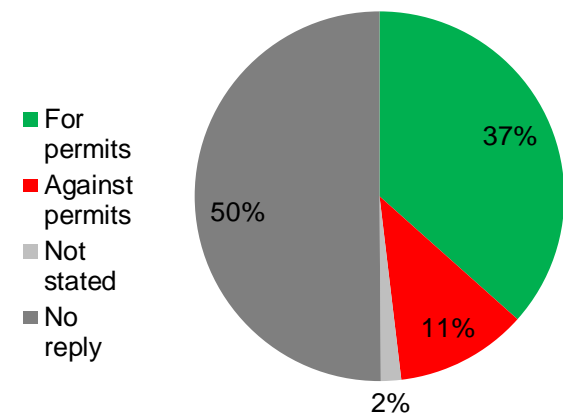
Street by street support for permits

Street	Responses	In favour of permits	Opposed to permits	Not stated	Proportion in favour
Albert Street	35	25	10	0	71%
Basils Road	40	30	9	1	75%
Church Lane	9	7	2	0	78%
Grove Road	33	25	4	4	76%
Southend Close	27	25	1	1	93%
Stanmore Road	45	22	21	2	49%
Victoria Close	8	6	2	0	75%
Walkern Road	28	25	3	0	89%
Total	225	165	52	8	73%

Is it justified? Residents' views

- Around three quarters of responses from within the PPPA were in favour, and half of households responded, demonstrating a high level of support for permit parking controls.
- However, given the 49% response rate we only have directly expressed support from 36% of addresses.
- In response to the previous survey over 100 responses from this area indicated concern about “long stay parking” with comments commonly suggesting this is due to non-resident parking. It is likely that residents are aware of the general nature of parking in their street.
- Some residents suggest that parking pressure derives from local levels of car ownership as much as non-resident parking. They also suggest that although limited there is generally parking available, albeit this may be less convenient than some residents would prefer.
- Depending on the number of permits allowed per household, the PPPA could restrain rates of residential parking as well as addressing non-resident parking.

Permit support including non-responses



Is it justified? Observational evidence

- Registration surveys are prohibitively expensive, and allow only informed guesswork as to the origin and parking purpose of each vehicle. While their reliability improves with repetition, even a one day survey conducted by an external company would cost approximately £6,500 though subsequent days would be slightly cheaper. The total budget allocation for all implementation works is £12,000 all of which would be needed to meet the costs of advertising, IT implementation, signs and lines, etc.
- Observations made on site visits found greater parking availability within the PPPA in the early morning and in the evening or at night than during the working day.
- At the last census, whilst car ownership in Stevenage as a whole averaged 1.21 cars/vans per household, in the Old Town ward it averaged 1.15. Adjusting this based on the most recent figures (2017), available at a regional level, taking the East of England figures car ownership would have increased around 5.8%, equating to 1.23 vehicles per household in Old Town and 1.28 in Stevenage as a whole. It would be expected that the ownership rate would be slightly lower in the PPPA given the nature of properties, which is corroborated by survey responses suggesting a vehicle ownership rate of 1.20 within the PPPA.

Is it justified? Observational evidence continued

- A car/van ownership rate of around 1.20-1.25 vehicles per household would not occupy the full parking capacity of the streets within the PPPA, however each street within the area is at times fully occupied or close to. This suggests the source of parking pressure is non-residential.
- Businesses responding to the survey reported 46 vehicles, and did not have private parking for 39 of these, whilst 25 of the 41 businesses to reply did not indicate how many vehicles they cause to be parked whether for business purposes or by commuting staff. Many businesses simply did not reply, and one business that did not complete the survey but did write in to give views detailed that its staff parked 26 vehicles within the PPPA daily. It therefore seems likely that residents are correct and commuter or business vehicles are the source of a noticeable portion of the parking pressure they experience.

Other considerations

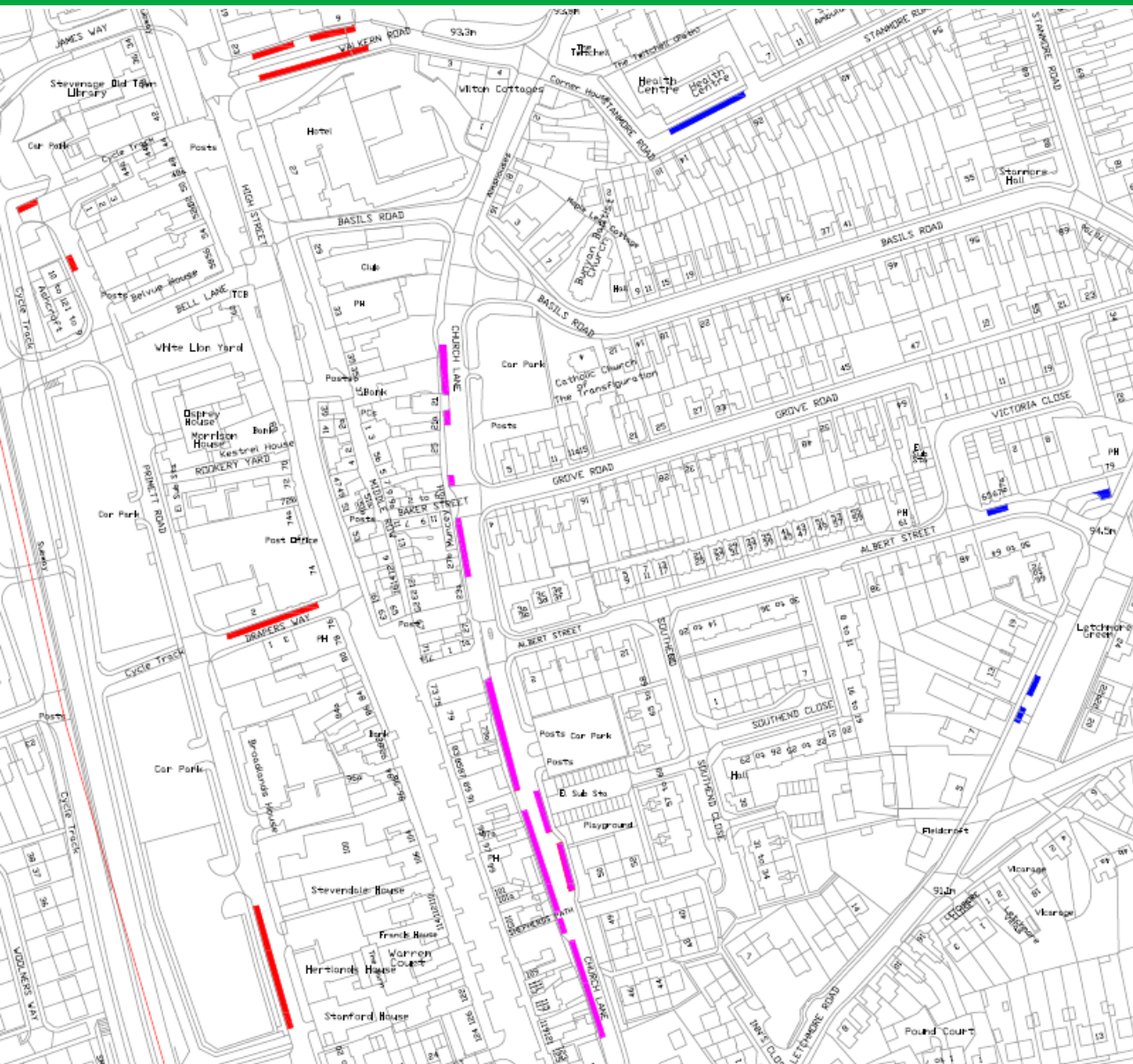
If this PPPA is implemented, consideration will need to be given for some groups other than residents within the area that favours controls. This would include:

- consideration for residents in the High Street, Middle Row etc. (approximately 56 households, potentially about 68 cars based on estimated rates of car ownership) to be able to park, as this area would remove the closest unrestricted parking to their homes. Providing for these addresses could mean allowing them some form of permits, whether to park in the entire PPPA or as an exemption from the limited waiting bays in Church Lane, and adding similar bays: in Walkern Road between Church Lane and the High Street; in place of a single yellow line in Drapers Way; in other locations;
- noting that if these streets were included in the previous calculations, both the support and the response rate would fall. Of 319 addresses in these streets, 8 were in favour of permits and 17 were against (32%/68% of responses; 2.5%/5.3% of addresses);
- facilitating custom at small businesses within the PPA such as the corner shop and fish and chip shop in Albert Street (e.g. providing limited waiting parking bays nearby within the PPA);

Other considerations continued

- ensuring patients could still access the Health Centre in Stanmore Road (e.g. providing limited waiting parking bays nearby within the PPA – but n.b. nearby carpark and off street parking at surgery, plus Blue Badge Holders can park for 3 hours within PPA);
- rather than limited waiting bays in certain locations, time limited parking could be allowed throughout the area e.g. for 2 hours with permits then enabling residents/their visitors to park for longer;
- the Health Centre also expressed concerns about the impact on their staff “all of whom drive to work as they live some distance from the surgery and this would make parking for them also extremely difficult, if not impossible”;
- Austin’s funeral directors expressed concerns that a neighbouring Permit Parking Area would “lead to significant practical and operational issues” at their premises in Letchmore Road. This would relate to both staff parking, and to parking for bereaved families; the latter of which could be supported by limited waiting parking bays on Letchmore Road near to these premises;
- 25 of 57 properties in Alleyns Road (44%) responded to the consultation, and 20 of the responses (80%) were in favour of permit parking controls (35% of properties). This would not form a contiguous logical unit with the other streets in favour of permit parking controls, and anecdotally parking pressure in this street is at present residential rather than commuter driven. It could be added to the PPPA as a separate enclave, but the case for doing so is unproven.

Possible limited waiting and shared use bay locations



Blue – potential new limited waiting bays

Red – potential new “shared use” bays (limited waiting except for permit holders)

Pink - potential change of existing limited waiting to “shared use” bays (limited waiting except for permit holders)

Business views

Some businesses within and adjacent to the PPPA would be dissatisfied due to reduced parking convenience for their staff and potentially customers – though the area is well provided with short stay parking.

Of four responses from within the PPPA indicating they were from a business, three were in favour.

Of 31 responses from businesses in the general High Street area, nine were in favour of permit parking controls; of those nine, two were opposed to businesses being entitled to parking permits.

Comments from businesses include:

- “If the vehicle is the same size as a car then business owners should be allowed to park. If larger than a car - (for example there are big removal vans parked in our street blocking car view and light) then they should park elsewhere. ” - Business in PPPA
- “I believe a lot of this parking is for the train station therefore do not see an issue allowing local business to park down these roads.” - Business in High Street

Business views continued

- “Business is tough. Its important to encourage people to be able to work in the town & that means being able to park without massive costs, whilst enabling consumers to be able to park too. These parking issues are a contributor to people internet shopping.” - Business in High Street
- “Charges as per residents but at premium £100 first, £150 2nd, £200 3rd, etc.” – Business in High Street
- “Outside our shop it is free parking which is great for the consumer but then is full by 8am with commuters taking advantage of free parking. Better control for businesses is a must.” - Business in High Street
- “The existing car parks should be made available to people working in businesses in the High Street & Old Town at a reduced cost or preferable free of charge on proof of employment.” - Business in Rookery Yard
- “We would like to see more free parking in the area for our employees and visitors. We feel that there is a particular shortage of disabled parking spaces. ” - Business in Primett Road
- “Businesses are capable of using existing car parks - could reduce charges!!” - Business in Drapers Way

Residents' views on Businesses

203 households in the PPPA responded to the question about whether business permits should be allowed, with 54 (27%) in favour.

Some of these made comments about business permits being needed for things such as loading/unloading (which would not need a permit) or carrying out works for a resident (which would be provided for by the resident supplying their workmen a Visitor Voucher).

Comments from residents included:

- “Businesses should be afforded the same rights as a residence in the street .. i.e. only businesses with property in the street can apply and be entitled to the same number of permits as a residence.”
- “None- there is adequate parking in Church Lane”
- “Obviously people working in the High Street need to be able to park nearby. What is happening now is people who commute by train to London are parking around the residential roads for the whole day & walking over to the station!”
- “Old Town business operators only.”

Residents' views on Businesses cont.

- “Give businesses free places in paid car parks.”
- “No. Residents and visitors only.”
- “Just for the shops on Albert Street”
- “1 x car per business - no commercial vehicles/vans”
- “I am agreeable to temporary business permits where tradesmen need to attend residential properties in the street but not for parking in general.”
- “Visitors permits should be allowed for vehicles doing domestic work, e.g. bathroom/kitchen fitters. Permanent business vehicles shouldn't be allowed as this is causing issues.”
- “Local car parks are constantly empty. Businesses could be given concessions to use these. ”
- “Max 5% of available spaces if any to be given to business.”
- “Proof of business. Business short stay / long stay permits available, vehicle size limit restrictions. Non-commuter parking only, 3/4 vehicles.”

Possible permit uptake and scheme costs

Permit uptake

- The likely permit uptake from survey respondents would be just over 200 permits
- If survey responses are representative of all properties, total uptake could be approximately 400 permits
- The rate of permit uptake from residents who did not respond to the survey is likely to be lower. Overall uptake might therefore be expected to be in the region of 300 permits.

Estimated costs

- Annual administration costs (200 permits): ~£4,000
- Annual enforcement costs: ~£13,000
- Setup costs and implementation: ~£12,000

Possible permit charges

- Given the spread of preferences seen earlier, it is likely that the PPPA should operate six days per week, 8.30am-5.30pm.
- If the charges were the same as in Burymead, and every household bought one set of visitor vouchers but parking permits were only bought by those who responded to the survey for vehicles they had no off-street parking for, this would be likely to return around £22,000, a £5,000 surplus.
- The existing PPA in Burymead operates five days per week. It is likely to be seen as unfair by residents there to charge them the same as Old Town residents for 1/6 less utility. Increasing permit charges in the Old Town proportionally could lead to a £25,000 return and £8,000 surplus, but Old Town residents are likely to be dissatisfied if permit charges are 20% higher than the rates they are aware of in Burymead.
- A review of the first ten months of operation (August 2018-June 2019) suggests that the Burymead PPA makes a small surplus but there is little scope to lower charges in proportion to the differing number of days of operation (i.e. 17%) if it is to remain self-funding in future.
- The option of allowing free time limited parking of up to 2 hours would reduce the likely visitor voucher uptake/consumption, and therefore potential surplus, by an unknown amount. It would also significantly increase the enforcement effort required to uphold the restrictions.

Possible permit charges continued 1

- Charges in Burymead could be lowered, with any resultant shortfall in future years being cross-subsidised by the likely surplus in Old Town, but it is likely that this would be seen as unfair by Old Town residents.
- The offer of Virtual Parking Permits (VPPs) could be used as a solution to differentiate between the two areas. Making VPPs cheaper, but with a virtual permit in Old Town costing the same as a physical permit in Burymead, would mean that costs were “as advertised” to residents whilst there was a fairness in different charges for different durations of enforcement. See table on next page.
- Though the likely uptake of each option cannot be known, offering a lower rate to customers purchasing virtual products would be matched to an SBC saving on controlled stationery and postage so the bottom line should not be affected.
- Of 203 households within the PPPA that responded to the question on Virtual Permits, 162 (80%) were in favour of their being offered.

Possible permit charges continued 2

Permit type	Existing charges in Burymead	Possible new rate for Burymead		Possible rate for Old Town	
		Virtual	Physical	Virtual	Physical
1 st	£56	£52	£56	£56	£60
2 nd	£82	£78	£82	£82	£86
3 rd	£108	£104	£108	£108	£112
4 th	£134	£130	£134	£134	£138
Visitor vouchers	£20	£20	£20	£20	£20
Carer permit (two years)	£15	£0	£0	£0	£0

- These changes would have a minimal effect on the small surplus in Burymead, but increase the likely surplus in Old Town. This surplus would future-proof against future cost increases and help avoid having to raise fees at a later date, and could support sustainable travel improvements in the area such as providing cycle hangers (secure, sheltered communal cycle parking) or infrastructure to allow an electric car club to operate.
- Permit fees also encourage residents to consider their car ownership decision and support modal shift, reflecting the recently declared climate emergency.
- It was agreed previously that if it is financially viable to do so Carer permits should be made cheaper/free.

Decisions for scheme design

- Should we proceed with pursuing this PPPA?
- Are you happy with the area proposed?
 - Should Alleyns Road be included?
- Are you happy with proposed charges?
- How many permits per household?
- Should “High Street area” residents outside the PPPA be allowed permits to park within it?
 - If yes, how many per household?
- Should we put forward limited waiting, exception for permit holders, in Church Lane, Drapers Way, etc.?

Decisions for scheme design cont.

- Should limited waiting bays be implemented near the surgery in Stanmore Road, businesses in Albert Street and Austin's in Letchmore Road? Or limited waiting be allowed throughout the PPA?
- Should businesses within the PPA be allowed permits?
 - If yes, how many?
 - Should the charge for these be the same as for resident permits?
 - Should any special criteria be applied?
 - Should High Street businesses be included?
- Do you have any other design preferences?