

I have lived in Leigh Woods for more than 10 years with my family. Our house has one off street parking space and we have 2 cars, so on street parking is essential for us.

Today I ask the Executive to either discontinue the plans for a Leigh Woods parking scheme entirely or to substantially modify the proposed scheme so that 1/3rd of the bays are available for residents and their visitors, 1/3rd for all day parking and 1/3rd for short term visitors, such as dog walkers, members of church groups etc.

I do not make the request to discontinue the plans for a parking scheme lightly. But any new scheme must be an improvement on the current situation – if it is not, we should just leave it as is. This is not about a preference for less commuter parking. It is about allowing residents to get on with their daily lives. We and our visitors must be able to park. It should also allow access for all to this beautiful area. And Leigh Woods is very small - there is no overflow parking available elsewhere.

Unfortunately, the proposed scheme makes the current situation worse for those residents who need on street parking as it prioritises commuter parking over parking for residents, their visitors and other short-term parking needs.

Currently (pre-Covid), there would typically be 50-60 cars parked on the road overnight but by 9am this increases to more than 300, most being commuters who park all day. Consequently, it is often very challenging to park on the road within working hours Monday-Friday. We are frequently forced to park our 2nd car in front of our off-road space ie blocking the first car as no other space is available. We would not be able to do this under the current scheme as vehicles may only park in marked bays. We also park both of our cars on the road overnight when expecting visitors, eg elderly parents or contractors, so they can park close to the house. This too would no longer be possible as permits are allocated to cars not households, so we would have to choose which car can be parked on the street - the other cannot then park on the street without paying. And all our visitors will no longer be able to use our off-road space so will have to find and pay for parking.

The current scheme proposes 245 designated parking bays. 184 are “all day commuter” parking. As the number of designated “all day” bays is less than the number of commuter cars which currently use the area and the “all day” charge proposed is both substantially less than Bristol charges and not significantly higher than the “park and ride” scheme, it is reasonable to assume these will be completely filled every day.

This leaves just over 60 spaces for the whole of Leigh Woods to accommodate residents, visitors and tradespeople. I have no idea how this has been calculated as sufficient. For example, a nearby house is currently undergoing a large building project and regularly has up to 9 vans. And every resident (even if they have ample off-street parking) can purchase 1 parking permit. Whereas we, with only one-off road parking space, can also only purchase one permit. There are only 6 resident spaces within 150m of my house. This is clearly not going to be adequate.

What are we to do if all bays are full? Please think about this simple but fundamental question as you consider the report today. It is simply unreasonable to propose a scheme which does not provide adequate on street parking for residents and their visitors.

Many consultation responses have raised this issue - see para 3.2.1 of today's report:

“Representatives of the residents have been engaged with the Council for several years to help develop a scheme. The representatives have expressed strong views about the need for short stay parking areas within the scheme.” Unfortunately, the report then makes no attempt to address the fundamental question of on street parking for residents and visitors, simply admitting that “permits do not guarantee a space” and then dismissing the idea of short stay bays eg para 3.2.1: ***“Officers are concerned that given the small size of the area, a mix of long and short stay bays would be confusing for users and lead to fines being issued to people who inadvertently buy a long stay ticket but park in a short stay bay.”*** Surely this could be overcome by designating more bays as resident or short stay only?

More generally, I would also remind the Executive of how unpopular the proposed schemes are:

- In 2019, the NSC consultation drew 202 responses – 114 of these (56%) were objections.
- In February and March this year, there was a 2nd consultation – over 240 responses. Appendix 1 to today's report shows a clear majority of respondents objecting to the proposed charges, hours of operation and permit fees but omits the following responses:
 - Do you think the resident only bays are in the correct places? 136 against, 51 in favour
 - Do you think the planned double yellow lines are sufficient and in the correct places? 123 against, 69 in favour
 - The introduction of parking charges, yellow lines and a residents' permit scheme will manage the parking availability for both visitors and residents. All day parking will still be available in the pay and display bays. Do you think this is a fair balance? 165 no, 57 yes
 - Do you consider the draft terms and conditions to be fair? 123 no, 56 yes

Both NSC consultations have received large responses – in each case, a clear majority raising objections. There are pages and pages of negative comments – no free parking anywhere for anyone at any time (not for residents, visitors, people going to church etc); covering this beautiful conservation area with double yellow lines, marked bays and parking meters; the 2 permit limit, failing to take into account households with adult children etc etc

If NSC cannot deliver a scheme which is resident centric and has at least 2/3rds of the designated parking bays for residents and short stay visitors (ie not permitting parking throughout the working day), then I urge the Executive to decide that the current scheme proposals should not be continued (other than a few double yellow lines where needed for safety). We have all learnt to live with the current situation, however reluctantly.

Thank you