

Forest Hill Society Response to Controlled Parking Zone Consultation for Forest Hill

The Forest Hill Society was formed in 2006 and has around 400 members across SE23 and the surrounding area. Our primary aims are to promote a strong and vibrant high street, a sense of community in the local area, and work to enhance the environment in which our members live and work.

The Forest Hill Society welcomes the consultation on a controlled parking zone for the centre of Forest Hill, however, we have no view in favour or against, and we believe it is right for local residents to have their say through this consultation.

We recognise that there is growing pressure on parking due to the success of a number of attractions in Forest Hill including; the museum, the swimming pool, and the shops in the high street. There are also increasing numbers of commuters going through Forest Hill station, and a small proportion of them will travel to the station by car. This pressure on parking means that it is right for residents to consider a CPZ as an option.

There are a number of points that we wish to make in relation to a CPZ. These points should neither be seen as an endorsement or a rejection of a CPZ, but if there were to be a CPZ we would want it to be right scheme for the area.

Impact on Perry Vale and Honor Oak

The consultation has been restricted to the central section of Forest Hill ward. However, should a CPZ be introduced in this area, there would almost certainly be an impact on residents in Perry Vale and around Honor Oak Park station. Both of these areas already suffer from some commuter parking close to the stations and further parking restrictions west of Forest Hill station is likely to increase pressure to the east of the station, as well as north Devonshire Road.

If a CPZ is introduced in Forest Hill then consideration should be given to including roads between the railway and Sunderland Road, and between Tyson Road and Honor Oak Park. Because the impact is very predictable, consideration to this area must be done at the time of implementation rather than waiting for complaints for residents.

Length of CPZ Restrictions

If a CPZ were to be created in Forest Hill town centre we would favour limiting residential only parking to one or two hours in the morning, rather than for the whole of the day. This would bring the greatest benefits for users of the high street, the pools, and the library.

Parking Restrictions to Improve Traffic Flow

Although outside the scope of this consultation, we would like to remind the council that improvements need to be made to existing parking restrictions, particularly on bus routes. The single-yellow line on the north section of Dartmouth Road creates problems for buses and other

vehicles, particularly on Sunday. We believe that double yellow lines are required for this narrow stretch of road.

The other road where parking causes a problem is Perry Vale, close to the junction with Waldram Place. Extending double yellow lines on at least one side of the road would improve traffic flow and reduce the number of buses that get stuck due to inconsiderate (but legal) parking on this stretch of road.

Parking Signage

Although there are parking signs pointing to the two car parks in Forest Hill town centre, they are badly positioned and ineffective for reasonably well hidden car parks. In the case of Perry Vale car park, one local business have produced their own signage for the car park because their customers were completely unaware of a large empty car park in close proximity to their business.

We would like to see large signs on the approach to Forest Hill town centre from both directions of the south circular and on Dartmouth Road. Such signs should be followed up by further signs directing cars to these two car parks on all approaches to the town centre.

Such an improvement in signage is necessary regardless of the CPZ outcome and we would like any strategy that results from the consultation to include reference to car park signage.



Longer Free Parking in Perry Vale

Perry Vale car park is seriously under-utilised since the imposition of parking charges approximately 10-15 years ago. Prior to that it was full of commuter parking by 8am every morning. These cars have now been spread around residential roads and few commuters pay the full day charge.

Free parking for 30 minutes provides little time for most shopping due to the distance of the car park from the shops. This should be compared with Pearcefield Road car park which allows 2 hours free parking thanks to arrangements with Sainsburys.

At present council revenue from Perry Vale car park must be minimal (mainly fines for people who didn't realise they needed to display a ticket to benefit from free parking). Increasing free parking to 2 hours would be unlikely to impact council revenues, but could increase use of this facility.