

ST ALBANS CITY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Christine Trill, Strategic Director for Community and Place Delivery
Councillor Helen Campbell, Chair for Public Realm and Lead Councillor
for Parking.

DATE: 13/01/2025.

REPORT TITLE: St Albans and Harpenden Free to Paid Bays - Traffic Regulation Order
Modifications Decision Report.

WARD/S: Various.

CONTACT OFFICER: Des Crehan, Infrastructure Manager.

TRAFFIC ORDER TITLE: THE ST ALBANS CITY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL
(CONTROL OF PARKING) ORDER 2023 (AMENDMENT No.4)
PAID PARKING PLACES ORDER 2025.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Council's Strategic Director for Community and Place Delivery and the Chair of the Public Realm Committee with the background and results of the representations made relating to the recent St Albans and Harpenden Free to Paid Bays Traffic Regulation Order Modifications.

2. Background

2.1 After the initial consultation for the conversion of Limited Waiting Bays to Paid Parking Bays held between 18 July and 15 August 2024, St Albans City and District Council proposed the following modifications in line with Section (14) of The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 (the "regulations"):

- Change the start of controlled hours from 08:30 to 09:00 in Harpenden.
- Remove two twenty-minute free parking sessions and replace with one 30-minute free session per day.
- Chargeable parking periods will be made available in 30-minute sessions.
- Postpone the decision on York Road and Clarence Road Limited Waiting Bays until the wider review of parking in Zone P which will be on the 25/26 workplan.
- Convert five bays in Leyton Green to resident bays (Zone LA) to relieve parking stress.¹

2.2 In accordance with Sub-section (3) and (4) of the regulations, persons likely to be affected by the modifications were given the opportunity of making representations in relation to them.

2.3 The public were able to make representations relating to these proposed modifications between 11 November and 01 December 2024. Representations could only be made in

¹ Due to an error in our mapping system, the modification maps appear to have captured an additional 2 bays on Leyton Green. As clearly stated in the modification literature and correspondence, only 5 bays are being converted to resident parking bay for Zone LA. This error will be corrected in the Made Order.



relation to the modifications listed above either online, by email or post. The details of how to make representations were published online and notifications placed on-street.

2.4 This document summarises the comments that were received in response to these modifications.

3. Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that the Council’s Director for Community and Place Delivery, in consultation with the Council’s Lead Councillor for Public Realm, agree in proceeding to make the Traffic Regulation Order to the above modifications in line with Section (14) of The Local Authorities’ Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

4. Report Sign Off

Strategic Director for Community & Place Delivery	Lead Councillor for Public Realm
Name: Christine Traill	Name: Helen Campbell
Date: 24 January 2025	Date: 27 January 2025
Signature: 	Signature: 
<u>Cross out below as appropriate;</u>	<u>Cross out below as appropriate;</u>
Agree to Make Traffic Regulation Order X	Agree to Make Traffic Regulation Orders
Agree to Abandon Scheme	Agree to Abandon Scheme

Appendix A- Summary of Representations to the Modifications

1. The modification survey consisted of the following parts:

- **Part 1 - Relation to St Albans City and District:** Respondents provided information on their relationship (resident, visitor, commuter, business, stakeholder group or other) to St Albans City and District.
- **Part 2 - Feedback Category:** Respondents indicated what they were providing feedback on, including parking, financial concerns, environmental issues, access, traffic, safety, disturbance, or other areas.
- **Part 3 – Level of Support:** Respondents expressed their level of support for the proposed modifications by selecting from the following options: wholly support, partly support, wholly object, partly object, or neutral.
- **Part 4 - Feedback on proposals:** Respondents commented on the proposed modifications in an open question.

1.1 In total, 584 individual responses were received. This includes 135 online survey responses, 447 email responses and 1 written response. Of the 135 total online responses, 124 indicated they were St Albans and Harpenden residents, which represents 0.08% of the St Albans City and District population².

1.2 For Part 4, the responses to the open question in the survey were analysed by assigning each response to one or more themes that encompassed the sentiments expressed. These themes were then assigned to the relevant modification. For email responses that did not follow the structure of the survey and therefore did not respond directly to proposal-specific questions, responses were manually assigned to the relevant modification(s).

2. Summary of Online Survey Representations to the Modifications Demographics/Categories/Support

The most popular feedback category among respondents was 'Parking' with 132 responses (98%), followed by 'Financial' with 36 responses (27%) and 'Access' with 16 responses (12%). Figure 1 below summarises the feedback category of the online survey.

² Office for National Statistics, (2022). How life has changed in St Albans : Census 2021. [How life has changed in St Albans: Census 2021 \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandcare/articles/how-life-has-changed-in-st-albans-census-2021)

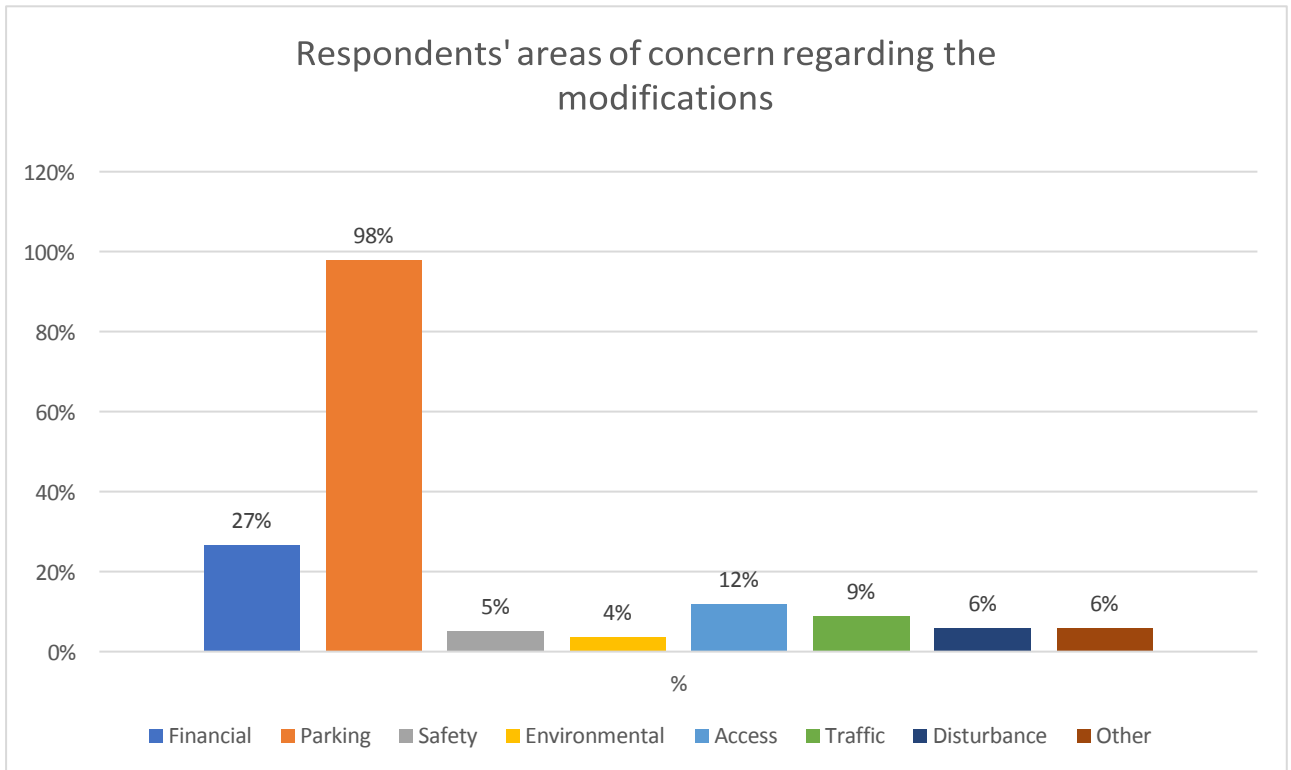


Figure 1: Respondents' area of concern regarding the modifications.

3. Levels of Support

Out of the 135 respondents to the online survey, 129 (96%) stated they wholly objected to the conversion of free parking bays, while 4 (3%) partly objected. Additionally, 2 (1.5%) respondents wholly supported the conversion, 0 respondents were in part support, neutral or part objection regarding the modifications. Figure 2 summarises these levels of support below.

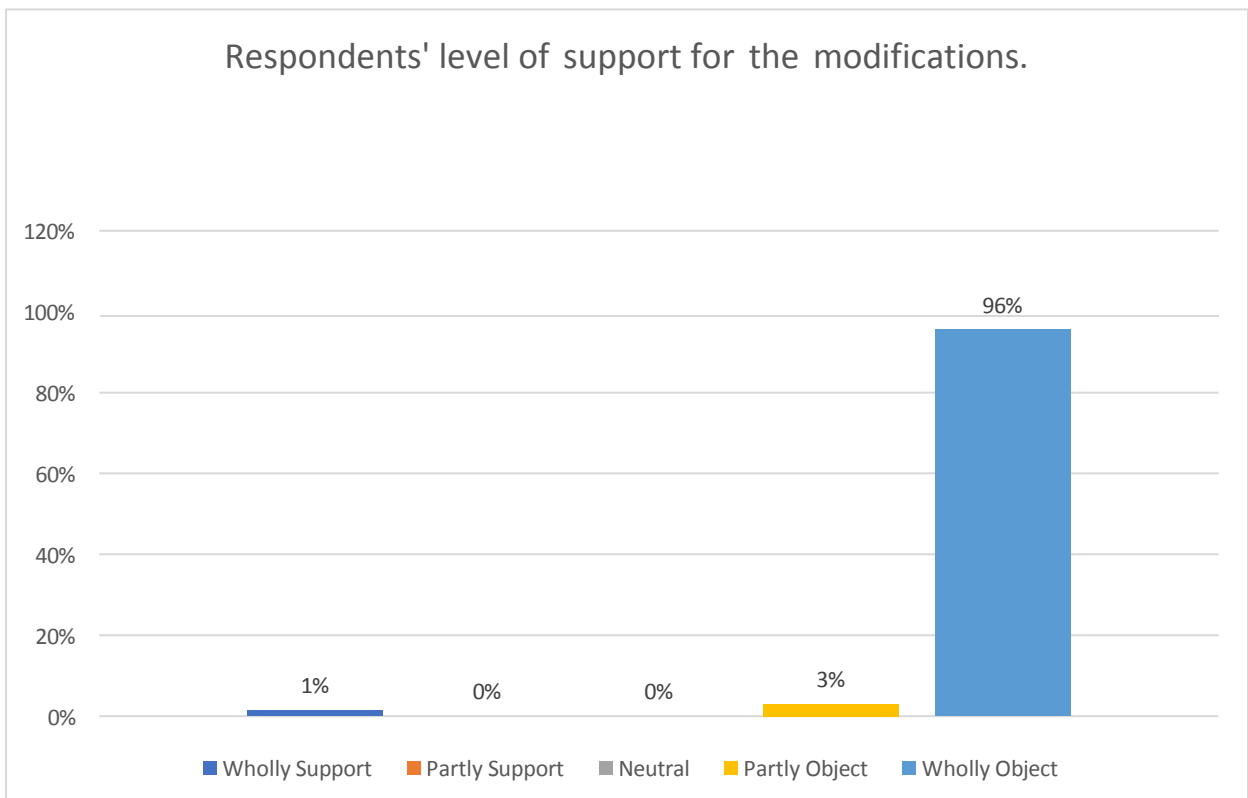


Figure 2: Respondents' level of support for the modifications.

4. Free Text Response Analysis

The following section outlines the main themes and sentiments expressed by the 135 respondents in their free-text response to the online survey, as well as by the 447 individuals who submitted feedback via email to the parking consultations inbox and one written response. All themes are shown in Figure 3 below.

Please note that the graphs show the number of comments assigned to each theme, not percentages. This is because individual responses could fall under multiple themes, which, if displayed as percentages, would exceed 100% and reduce the clarity of the graphs.

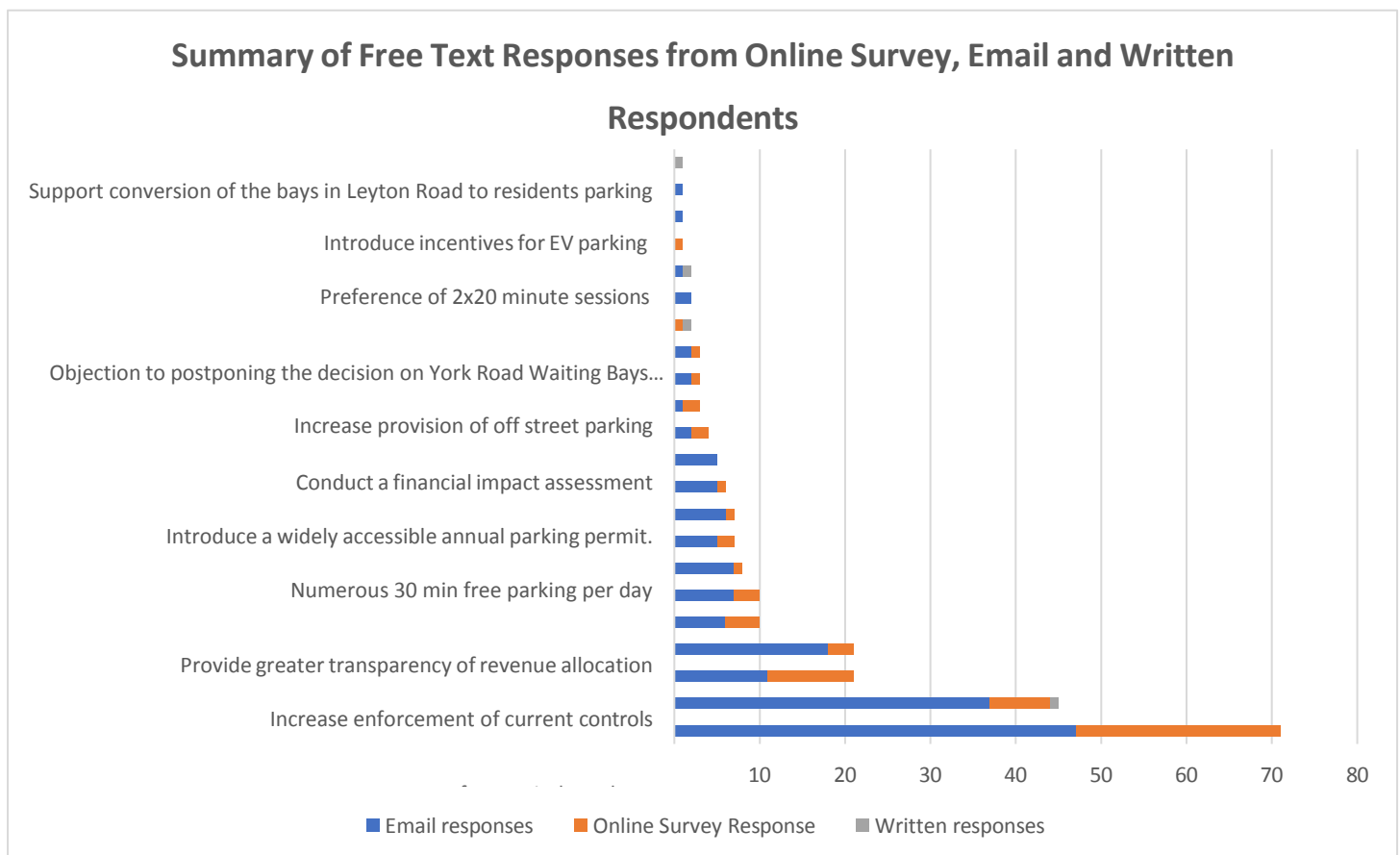


Figure 3: Summary of themes raised in free text responses from online survey and email respondents.

Responses have been analysed according to the five modifications proposed in response to the initial consultation held between 18 July and 15 August 2024:

- Change the start of controlled hours from 08:30 to 09:00 in Harpenden.
- Change two twenty-minute free parking sessions to one 30-minute free session per day.
- Chargeable parking periods will be made available in 30-minute sessions.
- Postpone the decision on York Road (St Albans) Limited Waiting Bays until the wider review of parking in Zone P which will be on the 25/26 workplan.
- Convert five bays in Leyton Green (Harpenden) to resident bays to relieve

parking stress.³

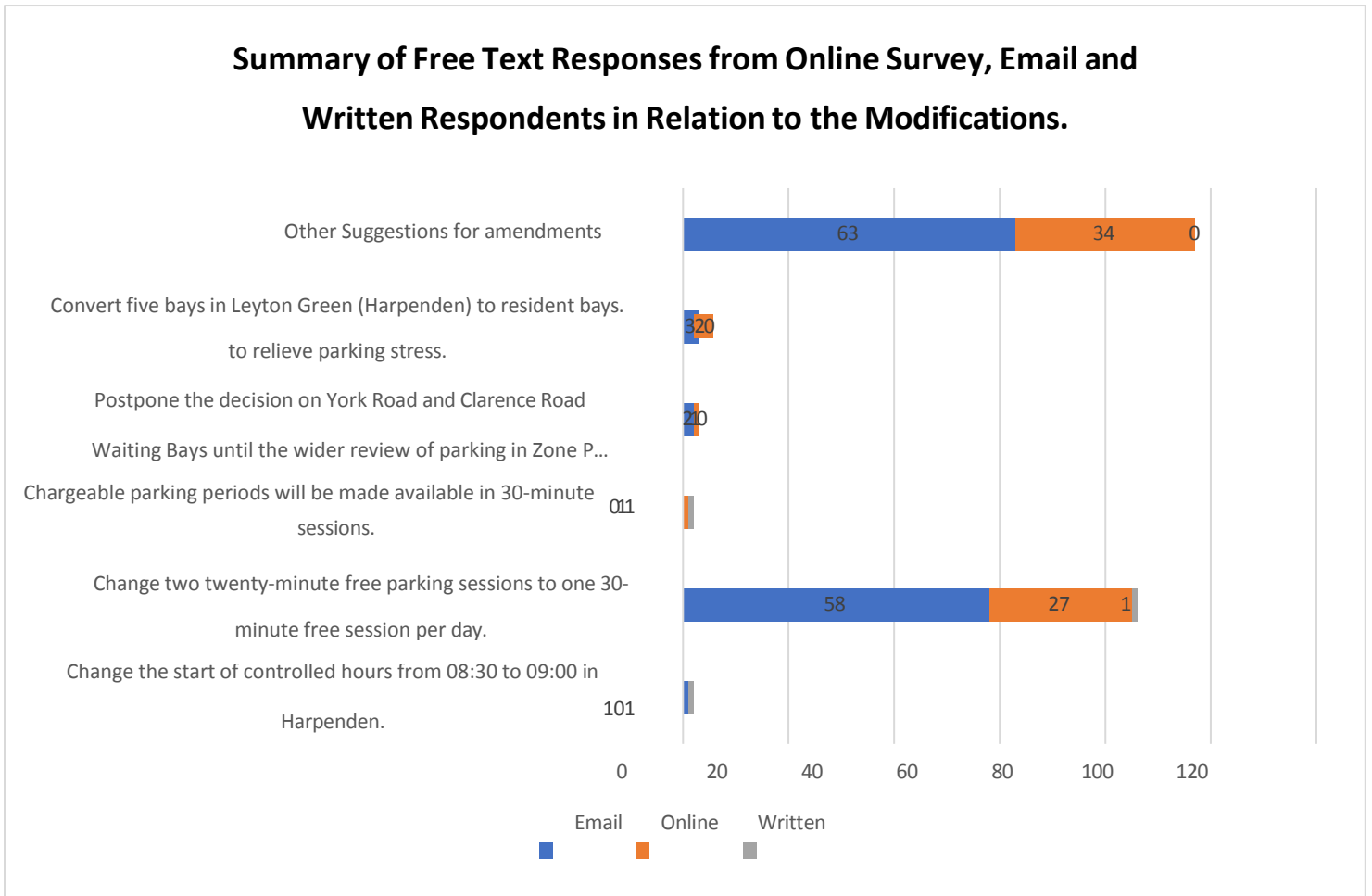


Figure 4: Summary of free text responses from online Survey and email respondents in relation to the modifications.

Whilst a total of 584 responses were received, it should be noted that a total of 391 were objections to the scheme and did not specifically reference the modifications listed in section 1.0. 313 of these were received via email and 78 as part of the online survey free text. Similarly, 5 email messages received were questions concerning the proposals, and have consequently not been analysed as responses.

³ Due to an error in our mapping system, the modification maps appear to have captured an additional 2 bays on Leyton Green. As clearly stated in the modification literature and correspondence, only 5 bays are being converted to resident parking bay for Zone LA. This error will be corrected in the Made Order.

Appendix B- Summary of Key Themes and Sentiments

Modification 1: Convert five bays in Leyton Green (Harpenden) to resident bays to relieve parking stress.⁴

This amendment was mentioned by 2 online survey respondents and 2 email respondents. Respondents felt that these bays are currently widely used, and there is not sufficient demand for resident only use of the space.

Of the online survey respondents opposing this modification, 1 resided approximately 1km away from the bays on Leyton Green and 1 was a business. Of the email respondents, no address was provided.

Modification 2: Postpone the decision on York Road (St Albans) Limited Waiting Bays until the wider review of parking in Zone P which will be on the 25/26 workplan.

1 online and 2 email respondents made reference to this modification. 100% of comments were objections to this modification. Key concerns raised were that this would result in a reduction in access to Clarence Park, and that this should be subject to a more localised consultation.

Modification 3: Chargeable parking periods will be made available in 30- minute sessions.

1 email and 1 written respondent made comments relating to the modification of chargeable parking periods will be made available in 30-minute sessions. 1 of these comments was in favour, and 1 stated that chargeable periods should not be restricted to 2 hours.

All customers who may have no other means of paying for their parking other than by cash or chip and pin will be able to use a network of PayPoint outlets across the district. When a customer enters a PayPoint location the customer would pay the shopkeeper in cash or chip and pin and their session would be uploaded to the PaybyPhone solution. A map setting out the distribution and location of these PayPoint areas will be published in due course. Having the option of PayPoint is advantageous to local businesses, improving footfall into high street and surrounding retail areas and increasing the likelihood of additional purchases.

Modification 4: Change two twenty-minute free parking sessions to one 30-minute free session per day.

8 email respondents, 27 online survey responses and 1 written response referred to the modification to change the initial proposal of two twenty-minute free parking sessions to one 30-minute free session per day. Of these responses, 71 (47 email and 24 online)

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suggested that the free session should instead be extended to one hour, 8 (7 email and 1 online) proposed numerous or unlimited 30-minute sessions per day and 4 (2 online and 2 email) stated that a free period of 2 hours would be preferred. 1 respondent (written) voiced that they are in favour of this modification.

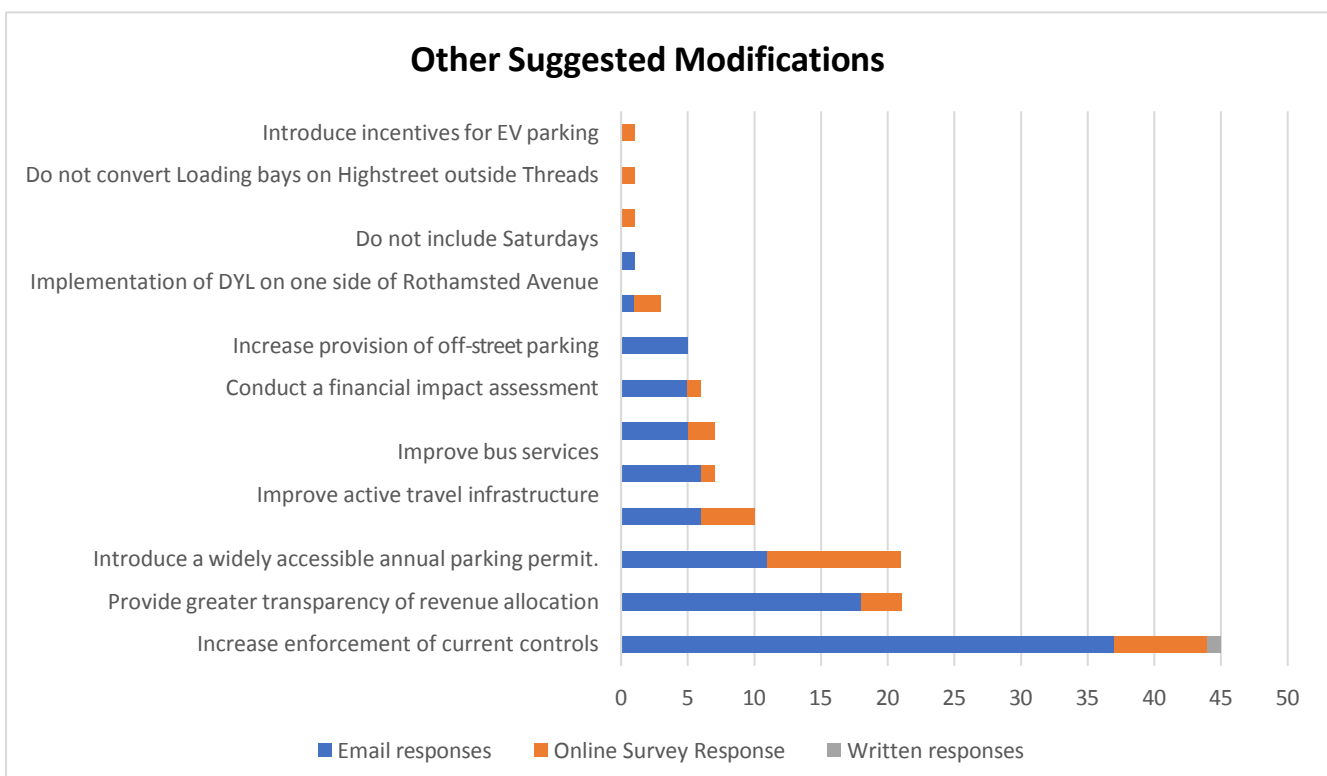
Modification 5: Change the start of controlled hours from 08:30 to 09:00 in Harpenden.

This modification was expressed by 1 online respondent and 1 written respondent. Sentiment surrounding this topic was in support of the modification, however it was noted that current enforcement is rarely perceived to begin before 09:00, so any benefits from this modification would be minimal. This theme was expressed by 68 (7%) online survey respondents and 24 (9%) email respondents. Respondents felt that there are no existing parking issues in St Albans and Harpenden, rendering the objectives of these modifications unnecessary.

Other suggested modifications:

129 comments were received with modification suggestions outside of those listed as part of the proposed modifications. Of these, the most common theme was that of reducing the proposed charges. This was expressed by 37 email respondents, 7 online survey respondents and 1 written response. Another popular suggestion was to avoid using mobile phone or app-based payment systems due to concerns of digital exclusion of elderly residents. This was raised by 18 email and 3 online survey respondents. The third most popular suggestion outside of the proposed modifications was to increase enforcement levels. The 11 email and 10 online respondents that raised this felt that current controls are insufficiently enforced, which contributes to a lack of funds and abuse of parking in Harpenden and St Albans.

Figure 5 below summarises the suggestions received for further modifications to the proposals:



Themes	Number of responses
Increase free period to 1 hour	24
Increase enforcement of current controls	10
Reduce Parking Charges	7

Table 1: Top 3 most popular themes expressed by online survey respondents.

Themes	Number of responses
Increase free period to 1 hour	47
Reduce Parking Charges	37
Do not introduce an app / mobile phone-based system	18

Table 2: Top 3 most popular themes expressed by email respondents.

Appendix C- Council Response to Representations to the Modifications

1. Statement of Reasons

1.1 The council remains satisfied the rationale for change outlined in the Statement of Reasons for making this order remain valid and the modifications continue to support the rationale for change.

- **Encouraging active travel** –Town centres do become congested with traffic and the current restrictions fail to adequately manage the kerbside space. Respondents to the enhanced survey confirmed this was the case and that finding a parking place can be problematic. Free parking discourages active travel as driving into the town centre, often for short journeys, is easier and becomes habit. The making of this order will significantly improve the management of kerbside space, encourage greater turnover of space, and will actively encourage people to think about the travel choices they make.

The Evidence base of the new Draft Local Plan (Modal shift) states that up to 33% of existing car trips in St Albans district have the potential to switch to sustainable modes based on existing active and public transport networks / services, and the current sociodemographic/travel behaviour of residents).

- **Increasing parking enforcement** – The making of this order will provide the means to significantly improve enforcement of parking restrictions and the introduction of new infrastructure will support the use of enhanced enforcement such as Auto Number Plate Recognition. This will support some of the alternative proposals' respondents outlined in their representations.
- **Ensuring a greater turnover of premium parking places** – Structured parking charges actively encourage the turnover of parking spaces, improving availability of spaces for visitors, and proactively changes driver behaviour, potentially increasing footfall into the city and town centres.

Car parking charges can change driver behaviour, promotes quick turnover of space, improving accessibility, and can therefore support businesses by making more parking available.

Furthermore, as detailed in the initial consultation, there will be changes to disabled bays in Harpenden to support those residents/visitors with mobility issues.

- Amend the operation of existing disabled persons parking places to at any time 3-hour maximum stay no return in 2-hours in (a) Amenbury Lane, (b) Arden Grove, (c) Bower's Parade, (d) Bowers Way, (e) Church Green, and (f) Vaughan Road.
- Convert free limited waiting parking places to disabled persons parking places to at any time 3-hour maximum stay no return in 2-hours in (a) Bowers Parade, (b) Leyton Green, (c) Station Road, and (d) Vaughan Road. Giving an increase of approximately 25% in the town centres.
- **Providing free parking sessions** – The making of the order will continue to provide free daily parking sessions, by changing the twenty-minute sessions in favour of one thirty-minute free session daily and modifying the start of the restrictions to 9am will support essential visits to the town centres such as school drop off and pickups, visits to pharmacies or the Post Office.

2. Themes

2.1 Appendix B provides a summary of the key themes and sentiments expressed for each modification within the free-text responses. This section provides a response to those themes:

Theme	Description	Council Response
Increase the length or number of free periods.	See appendix B.	<p>To agree to these amendments would fundamentally undermine the rationale for change from the statement of reasons. The charged for period provides the lever to enact the modal shift, other changes in driver behaviour and would remove some of the benefits related to enforcement.</p> <p>Increasing the length or number of free parking periods would lead to counterproductive results, reducing the need for regular patrols or control of parking.</p>
Reduce the proposed charges.	See appendix B.	<p>As above reducing the charges would reduce the fundamental level to enact the changes from the statement of reasons. The change of allowing purchasing the time in 30-minute periods does however provide a more flexible tariff allowing users only to pay for the period they require.</p> <p>We aim to take a fair and transparent approach to the setting of fees and charges; significant discrepancies could encourage or promote the use on on-street parking over off-street parking.</p>
Avoid the use of mobile/app-based payments.	See appendix B.	<p>Digitally excluded users are supported through the installation of pay and display machines in high volume areas, through the installation of paypoint devices in nearby shops, a proposed permit targeted at the digitally excluded to enable parking in our carparks and a phone number to book parking sessions (not app based).</p>
Improve enforcement.	See appendix B.	<p>The proposed order enables improved enforcement in a number of ways, presently an officer each parked vehicle must be observed and the details on a handheld device. The officer is then required to return on the expiry of the free period to check if the vehicle is still present.</p>

		<p>As drivers are required to register the vehicle on arrival this means that the time for the free period starts immediately rather than when the vehicle is first observed both cutting down on overstay eliminating the need to record each and every vehicle.</p> <p>As the vehicle registration will also need to be recorded it will also enable use the of an automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) vehicle to act as a spotter for vehicles parked in contravention. As an ANPR vehicle can cover the same distance up to 10 times quicker than an officer on foot this will also improve the efficiency of enforcement.</p>
<p>The proposed conversion of limited waiting bays in Leyton Green to Resident Parking Bays is not required.</p>	<p>See appendix B.</p>	<p>Demonstration of high demand for a zone extension, put forward by residents and Ward Councillors for Harpenden West (7 residents and 1 Ward Cllr). This proposal will be subject to a separate public consultation as part of the 2025/2026 work plan.</p> <p>Due to an error in our mapping system, the modification maps appear to have captured an additional 2 bays on Leyton Green. As clearly stated in the modification literature and correspondence, only 5 bays are being converted to resident parking bays for Zone LA. This error will be corrected in the Made Order.</p>
<p>The proposed changes in Clarence Road and York Road will result in reduced access to Clarence Park.</p>	<p>See appendix B.</p>	<p>The modifications to the initial consultation between 18 July and 15 August remove the proposal to introduce charging to this area and propose a wider review of Zone P as part of the 2025/2026 work plan.</p>

