

**The Essex County Council (Fairmead Road, Waltham Abbey)
(Prohibition of Motor Vehicles) Order 202***

Statement of Reasons

Summary of the Location

Epping Forest is a 2,400-hectare area of ancient woodland, and other established habitats, it is of significant nature conservation importance and is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as a Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Reasons for the Proposed Changes

The Conservators of Epping Forest have requested the implementation of a Permanent Traffic Regulation Order to be installed on Fairmead Road, preventing motor vehicles from accessing the majority of this road.

This follows the implementation of an Experimental Prohibition of Motor Vehicles on 29 May 2020 on a section of Fairmead Road in response to continued inappropriate and illegal use of highway space, including but not limited to:

- Fly-tipping.
- Use of the area as a public sex environment.
- Environmental damage to SSSI and SAC by day and night
- Verge parking in the conservation Zone by day and night
- Anti-social behaviour by day and night
- Stolen vehicles being dumped and burnt out
- Improved public safety due to no motor vehicles creating an environment for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, who are now able to utilise a safe, traffic free route through this section of Epping Forest.

In 2013, Essex County Council extended the existing (from 1977) prohibition of motor vehicles to a point approximately 500m from the junction with Cross Roads. Unfortunately, due to an administrative error the traffic order stated 50m from the junction with Cross Roads (this Order is part of the deposit pack of documents).

Benefits of the Proposed Changes

Following the extensive improvement brought about by the 2013 Prohibition of Motor Vehicles, it was felt that the success could be replicated to resolve the issues being experienced on the remainder of Fairmead Road. This action would create a safer environment for cyclists, walkers and horse riders as well as serving to protect the local environment of ancient woodland and its wildlife.

To enforce this experimental order, a gate was installed preventing access to vehicular traffic. Since the introduction of the experimental order there was a significant reduction in fly tipping which was not displaced to the open 80m of the road, the public sex area was no longer used and no instances of public sex have been reported, there were no abandoned or burnt-out vehicles.

This had an improvement in the environment for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, who are now able to utilise a safe, traffic free route through this section of Epping Forest.

The experimental order received several objections, and these were due to be determined following Essex County Councils governance process, however, the time frame for undertaking this process has expired. Since the expiration of the experimental order, there has been a resurgence in the anti-social behaviour as detailed above.

In order to consider the merits of this scheme correctly the permanent order making process will now be undertaken. All objectors to the experimental scheme will be invited to comment on the permanent proposal.

The implementation of a permanent order is supported by both the Brentwood and Epping Forest District Community Policing Team and Epping Forest District's Community Safety Partnership.

The implementation will also complement the initiatives proposed in the forthcoming A104 Epping New Road Safer Road Scheme.

The effect of the proposed permanent order will revoke the existing prohibition orders on Fairmead Road and consolidate the restriction into one order for the entire extent of prohibition.

The gate installed for the experimental Order will remain opened until this process has been completed in accordance with the statutory regulations and Essex County Council governance and removed if the decision is taken to not proceed with the order.