

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 5 December 2019

Report of the Head of Service - Highways

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
Chorley Central; Chorley North

Lancashire County Council (Market Street, Park Road, Chorley, Chorley Borough) (Suspension, Prohibition of Waiting and Limited Waiting)

Experimental Order 2019

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

An experimental traffic regulation order which created 3 hour Limited Waiting bays on Park Road was introduced in April 2019 as part of the town centre redevelopment, with a view to providing additional parking facilities for visitors to the town centre, whilst addressing anomalies and to clarify, simplify and tidy up discrepancies that have been identified within the area. The experimental order was subject to a 6 month consultation which has now expired.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to consider approving that the experimental traffic regulation order is made permanent without amendment as detailed within this report and as set out in the Notice of Proposal and plan contained within Appendices 'A' and 'B'.

Background and Advice

The amendments to the current parking restriction and cycle lane layout along the southern section of Park Road have been undertaken on behalf of Chorley Borough Council as part of the ongoing town centre development, with a view to providing additional parking facilities for visitors to the town centre. The scheme has been wholly proposed and designed by Chorley Borough Council with Lancashire County Council providing assistance regarding the repositioning of the advisory cycle lane along the amended section.

The alterations to the cycle lane were necessary to avoid dangers to cyclists that may have arisen by having such facility alongside parking bays. The concerns are

problems with drivers opening doors on to the cycle lane and vehicles pulling out of parking bays across cycle lanes.

The new layout has been progressed as an experimental traffic regulation order which allows the changes to be put in place for a maximum period of 18 months during which ongoing monitoring and public comments received can be assessed before a decision is reached regarding its future operation. It was considered that by using an experimental order we could assess the impact of the changes with regard to the general traffic flows in the area.

Consultations

The proposed Order was advertised in the local newspaper and during the consultation period of 3 April 2019 to 16 October 2019 notices were also displayed on site. Divisional county councillors were consulted along with the council's usual consultees and the consultation documents posted on the council's website.

Objections

During the consultation period 2 objections were received to the proposal and comments were made prior to the introduction of the experimental order regarding the use of the bays.

Comments

The comments received prior to the introduction of the experimental order were sent to the council prior to the completion of works when the bays had been marked on the road but the plates indicating the restriction were yet to be fitted. The comments were that bays that were to be provided for visitors to the town centre were being occupied all day by workers and therefore did not serve the purpose as intended.

Engineers Response

The works have now been completed on site indicating a maximum stay of three hours with no return in two hours and therefore excluding all day parking releasing the parking spaces for visitors to the town centre.

Objection to the design of the cycle lane

An objection was received from a member of the public indicating that he was speaking on behalf of a national cycling group. The objection was that the diversion of the cycle lane to support the introduction of the parking bays does not conform to London Cycling Design Standards 2016. The objector is concerned that the design does not provide adequate markings on the footway to ensure the separation of the cycle lane and pedestrians.

Engineers and Designers Response

The alteration to the parking restrictions in Park Road has been completed on behalf of Chorley Borough Council and county council traffic engineers agreed that the length of road could be made available for parking subject to the diversion of the advisory cycle route. There was a need to divert the cycle lane to ensure the safety of cyclists. The concerns that were expressed by the objector were passed back to Chorley Borough Council which offered the following response.

The design of the scheme introduced to Park Road is fully compliant with London Cycling Design Standards 2016 which is the standards Lancashire County Council (LCC) currently use. A number of different options were discussed with LCC and the one delivered (by LCC) achieved the objectives of still offering a continuous cycle route whilst introducing additional on-street parking in an area where it would be utilised by both visitors to the town centre and Astley Park. LCC Traffic approved the design and LCC Highways carried out the implementation of such scheme.

Chorley Borough Council also made the comment that they do value the safety of cyclists and pedestrians which is demonstrated by further schemes throughout the borough.

It is considered that the points raised by the objector were correctly addressed and that the changes that have been made do fully consider design criteria and the safety of all highway users.

Objection to the introduction of the parking

A second objection was received from a member of the public who registered complaints with regard to the following:

1. The changes were implemented without any public consultation and without the due legal process;
2. The changes were completed within a conservation area and are not in keeping with the surroundings. The scheme damages the high heritage quality of the listed features and conservation designations in the area;
3. The work has included the addition of a metal rail to the top of the wall on the east side of Park Road that is ugly to the point of being an act of vandalism;
4. The work has made changes to the height of the footways on both sides of the road. This has included the loss of the stepped kerb and damaged the walls/railings adjacent to Astley Park;
5. That there are concerns regarding safety issues with regard to the new provisions and the responsibility for these lay with the county council.

Officer Response

During the initial planning of the scheme, it became apparent that discrepancies with the existing traffic regulation orders at the location would prohibit the provision of enforcement activity. As a result, measures were put in place to amend the scheme, ensuring that all existing restrictions in the area will be fully enforceable. The changes have been introduced as an experimental order and as such the public have a longer period to make representations regarding the changes. Any comments submitted are able to be better assessed as the changes are already in place, albeit temporarily. This is an accepted process for undertaking certain changes on the highway where it is necessary to experiment and monitor the impact of traffic restrictions as imposed.

In relation to concerns raised over the wall and railings, Chorley Borough Council has confirmed that following discussions with the borough council's conservation officer, the design has been chosen to be simple and functional so as not to detract from the elegance of the historic railings or the Memorial Arch and gates at the entrance to Astley Park. To try to attempt to copy these would have been both difficult and disproportionately expensive and would put these railings in competition

for supremacy against the historic ones. It was considered to be better to keep the modern installation simple and functional so that the historic elements continue to shine through and remain dominant within the conservation area.

The scheme that has been implemented has been fully assessed with regard for road safety including the diversion of the cycle route to the shared footway. It is the diversion of the cycle route that leads to the need to change the footway level and the metal railing to increase the height of the wall on the east side of Park Road. The scheme has been completed to include all the necessary safety features.

The introduction of parking at this point on Park Road, Chorley gives the advantage of narrowing the running lanes in both directions and therefore offers extra safety features in slowing traffic on a bend approaching a light controlled junction.

Implications:

Financial

The costs of the Traffic Regulation Order will be funded by Chorley Borough Council. Chorley Borough Council has funded the works involved in making the necessary changes to date. There is no financial risk to the county council.

Risk management

The works have been completed on behalf of Chorley Borough Council but the county council agreed with the changes in principle and made substantial changes to the design that significantly added to the costs incurred by Chorley Borough Council. Failure to agree to the permanent order will involve costs to Chorley Borough Council to reverse the changes.

Failure to approve that the making permanent of the experimental order would reduce the parking available in Chorley town centre and would impact on the viability of the measures that Chorley Borough Council is taking to improve the viability of the town as a commercial centre.

There have been no reports of problems at this point on Park Road therefore we would not be looking to make the changes to the regulations. The request for the additional parking at this point will offer improvements to road safety in that the facility will reduce the width of the running lanes and this will, in turn, reduce traffic speeds on Park Road at a point prior to a signalised junction.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		