

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 16 January 2020

Report of the Head of Service - Highways

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
Fleetwood West & Cleveleys
West; Mid Rossendale; Pendle
Central; Preston City;
Rossendale East; Rossendale
West; St Annes South;

Lancashire County Council (Various Locations, Wyre, Pendle, Rossendale and Fylde Boroughs, and Preston City) (Revocations, Various Restrictions and Electric Vehicle Charging Points (No2)) Order 201*

(Appendices 'A' to 'G' refer)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

Following investigations and formal public consultation it is proposed to make a Traffic Regulation Order to introduce restrictions to manage on-street facilities for electric vehicles where charging facilities are installed. The restrictions are designed to create a turnover of vehicles ensuring that the facilities are available for a number of drivers. Along with the provision of electric vehicle charging bays it has been necessary to make alterations and clarifications to adjacent parking restrictions, including simplifying and tidying up a number of discrepancies that have been identified.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the making of the Traffic Regulation Order introducing time limited parking places for electric vehicles (such vehicles needing to be on charge in order to use the parking place) on the various roads within the Wyre, Pendle, Rossendale and Fylde Boroughs and Preston City along with any associated regulations necessary to ensure the introduction of the parking places as detailed in the Notice of Proposal at Appendix 'A', site plans at Appendices 'B' to 'F' and the statement of reason at Appendix 'G'.

Background and Advice

As part of the funding secured to reduce the county council's carbon foot print the council has committed to provide a minimum of 150 parking spaces where electrically powered vehicles can be charged. The provision is to primarily allow drivers to charge electrically powered vehicles when away from home.

The county council has entered into a contract with BPChargemaster to supply, install and maintain charging units on the highway in order for the county council to fulfil its commitment.

On street parking locations around the county were identified in areas where they would be an expected need, where an electric supply was sufficient and convenient to ensure the connection costs were financially viable. Finally, the sites had to be positioned such that they were clear of other electrical equipment, including lighting columns. Taking into consideration these limitations, the number of suitable locations in any given area is limited.

Sites have been identified in strategic positions around the county and most of the charging units have been fitted and are currently in use by the public. The bays have been marked for use by electric vehicles but there is no traffic regulation order to regulate this and so it currently relies on the courtesy of drivers to obey the signs. The purpose of the proposed traffic regulation order is to make an order that restricts the parking at the charge points to electric vehicles (being charged) only.

The charging units that have been installed are of two basic types, the majority of units are 'destination (fast) chargers' that will take up to three hours to charge a vehicle from low to full charge. There have been a small number of 'rapid chargers' installed that will charge vehicles in about one hour but these are, in the main, more sparsely spaced. The time restrictions that are proposed reflect the equipment installed and are set for a limited waiting period of three hours for the destination chargers and 1 hour for the rapid chargers, both with no return in 2 hours. The Order will also include the stipulation that the vehicle should be connected to the charging point and charging. This stipulation prevents the facilities being used as free parking for electric vehicles.

In order to introduce these parking places it is necessary to make alterations to the traffic regulation orders around the proposed bays. Where this has displaced bays for disabled parking, new locations have been identified so that this provision is not reduced by the proposed introduction of the electric vehicle charging bays.

Consultations

The proposed Order was advertised in local newspapers and during the consultation period of 16 October 2019 to 15 November 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

Before and during the consultation period one respondent, on behalf of the 'Colne BID' made a number of adverse comments with regard to the provision of six electric vehicle charging points on Church Street, Colne. The basis of the comments are set out below:

1. The parking bays have been placed at a point where the limited waiting provision is regularly used by short stay visitors to the town centre.
2. The bays should have been placed on the Pendle Borough Council's car park on Hartley Street.
3. The provision of six bays is a loss of important town centre parking whilst there is limited uptake of the use of the charging facilities due to the slow roll out of the technology.
4. The council should have introduced shared bays until the uptake of electric vehicles increased along with the need for the bays.
5. The bays should have been marked out in blue road markings so that they would be noticeable as electric vehicle charging bays.

In addition, five e-mails of support were received in relation to the introduction of the Electric Vehicle bays in Victoria Road West, Cleveleys – King Street, Bacup – Church Street, Colne and Kay Street, Rawtenstall.

Officers Response

The correspondence received indicating support for the bays also highlighted problems accessing the bays due to non-electric vehicles occupying the spaces, indicating a need for the provisions in these areas and a need for the proposed Traffic Regulation Order to ensure that the facilities are properly regulated to enable their intended use.

With regard to the adverse comments relating to the provision in Church Street, Colne, the position of the electric vehicle charging bays has been carefully considered against the full list of criteria. Finding a suitable position in Colne was difficult due to the one way system and the need to have the units close to the main shopping area. The site on Church Street was considered to be the most suitable option for the area.

It is acknowledged that placing electrical vehicle charging points in car parks is a sensible decision, however, Lancashire County Council does not own nor manage any off-street car parks in Pendle and as a result this option was not available.

The provision of electrical charging points in different areas of the county will in time become an asset for the individual areas. Colne is no exception and though in the switching of short term limited waiting bays to provision for electric vehicle charging may look as a loss to the town centre parking provision, the changes will ensure that drivers of these vehicles will be able to visit the town and this may in turn attract visitors. In the long term it is not considered that the parking places are removed, rather, altered to provide an asset for the area.

The option of making shared use bays has been considered but rejected as these are the only points where the county council is offering charging facilities in Colne. Should they not be available when required because the bays are parked up with vehicles not being charged then drivers would need to travel to Nelson, Earby or Barnoldswick for the nearest alternative charging points. As the bays have been provided with the charging equipment it is felt they should be reserved solely for that purpose.

The respondent expressed concern that the bays had been marked in a standard white marking rather than using a blue that is a colour universally associated with electricity. The markings for the bays are in line with the requirements in the Traffic Signs Regulation and General Directions 2016. As the vehicles that complete the road markings are equipped to mark in yellow and white limiting the use of road markings to these colours allows for quick and reasonably priced repairs and updates. We would not be looking to make changes that would result in an expensive liability for the council.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

The installation of the electrical vehicle charging points was undertaken in compliance with the terms of grant funding that the council secured as part of the work to reduce the county's carbon footprint. For this reason the units have been installed on the highway prior to the making of supporting Orders. The costs of relocating any of the charging points would need to be borne by the council.

Risk management

If the proposed traffic regulation order was not approved, these parking spaces would not be reserved for the charging of electric vehicles. This would reduce the effectiveness of the council's intended carbon reduction work and may jeopardise some of the grant funding, part of which was secured to introduce 150 parking spaces for electric vehicles.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A