

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 16 January 2020

Report of the Head of Service - Highways

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Preston North;

Lancashire County Council (Churchfield, Fairways, Haighton Court, Kennet Drive, Levensgarth Avenue, Southey Close, St Clare's Avenue, St Francis Close, The Paddock and Tower Green, Fulwood, Preston City) (Revocation, Prohibition of Waiting and Restriction of Waiting) Order 201*
(Appendices 'A' to 'G' refer)

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Executive Summary

This report sets out proposals to introduce parking restrictions on ten streets in the Fulwood area of Preston. There is significant daytime parking on these roads due to staff, patients and visitors to the Royal Preston Hospital using the surrounding residential roads for parking.

Excessive and obstructive on street parking is creating issues with traffic flow and parking. The proposed restrictions will remove the obstructive parking and assist with the expeditious movement of traffic along the roads and at their junctions with other roads, whilst also improving road safety for all highway users.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the making of a Traffic Regulation Order as set out in the draft order and the plans attached at Appendices 'A' to 'G'.

Background and Advice

Complaints have been received from residents in the Fulwood area, stating that staff, patients and visitors to the Royal Preston Hospital are parking in unsuitable locations including residential cul-de-sacs. They contend that this indiscriminate and, at times, obstructive parking is creating difficulties for the movement of vehicles along some roads and at junctions. Larger delivery and refuse collection vehicles are particularly affected, along with problems for access and egress for private driveways.

Consultations

Formal consultation was carried out between 9 August 2019 and 6 September 2019. This was advertised in the local press. Notices were displayed on sites for all areas where the restrictions are proposed. Divisional county councillors were consulted along with the council's usual consultees and the consultation documents posted on the council's website.

Objections and Correspondence

As a result of the formal consultation 36 responses were received of which nineteen were declaring an objection to the scheme, three made comment but did not express a definite support or objection to the scheme but asked questions regarding the proposal and thirteen expressed support for the proposal. Of the thirteen that expressed support, two gave unconditioned support with the rest making comments that suggested that further matters needed to be addressed to resolve the issues related to parking in these areas. Of these, there were comments that should be considered as adverse to the proposals. All of these points are covered below. Two responses were received from statutory consultees confirming that they had no objections to the proposals.

Further analysis of the objections and comments indicated that, though the comments could be grouped to particular concerns, the points raised were unique to the individual roads within the proposed order. This indicates that, for clarity, it would be easier to deal with the objections by the individual streets in the proposed order.

Churchfield

Eight communications were received in relation to Churchfield, one of which was a duplicate submission. Only one of the communications gave full support to the scheme and only one noted a definite objection to the proposal. Six communications supported the scheme but indicated concerns.

The main concern was that whilst the provisions would help, they do not cover the full extent of the problem as there would still be lengths of the road available for parking. The correspondence indicated that as much as the proposal would stop the hospital parking in the present locations, the individuals that persistently use their road as a car park would move to the lengths that are not covered by the proposed restrictions.

One of the respondents stated that they supported the proposal, but was concerned that the measures would be limiting for the local residents and would ask if a scheme of visitor passes could be used to allow genuine visitors to the properties to park.

Officer's Response

The proposed parking controls for Churchfield and several of the other locations were confined to the main spinal access road of the cul-de-sac as this was the main area where the obstructive parking was taking place. This would also keep the inconvenience to the residents to a minimum as there are very few properties that have direct access to the road on this section of Churchfield.

The parking controls were not extended further into the shorter side branch cul-de-sacs as this risks introducing a much greater inconvenience to the residents. Past experience has shown that drivers are much more reluctant to park in these areas as the carriageways are much narrower, have no footways and the driveways are relatively close together.

However, where restrictions are considered necessary in residential roads, it is often the case that some residents will be directly affected. Some displacement of parking may well occur and this will be monitored following installation of the changes and should there be any adverse impacts these could be addressed at a later date.

With regard to issuing "visitor passes" these can only be offered as part of a formal "Residents Permit Holders Only Scheme". At the present time the majority of properties on the streets covered by this proposed order have off road parking available to a level that would indicate that the area would not qualify for such a scheme.

Fairways and The Paddock

There was only one objection received regarding this location. The respondent objected to the proposal as the measures would not solve the problem as it will just move the parking further up Fairways. The objection was that a scheme should be proposed to deal with the problem once and for all.

Officer's Response

The extent of the parking controls for Fairways and The Paddock that have been put forward are in direct response to the enquiries/complaints and the sections of roads included in the proposals were identified from these. The proposals were not extended further into the estate as it is highly likely that the introduction of parking restrictions would result in strong opposition from the residents who are not currently experiencing any significant parking issues. However, as with the previous objections, where restrictions are considered necessary in residential roads, displacement of parking may well occur and any impacts that result could be addressed should they arise.

Haighton Court

Three items of correspondence were received regarding this location. One indicated that it supported the scheme but had comments whilst the other two respondents objected to the proposal. The respondents were concerned that there was a bigger problem during school start and finish times rather than the hospital. That the school parking took little regard for local residents having access to their properties or respect for private residential parking. As the proposal is for restrictions only on the main leg of Haighton Court the proposal will only move the parking on to the roads north of this length.

The objectors are concerned that the problems will not be policed at school start and finish times and would like signs indicating that there are lengths that are private parking in the same manner as private drives.

Officer's Response

With regard to the parking at school times, it is, unfortunately, a fact of modern life and many roads adjacent to local schools experience larger volumes of traffic and less than ideal parking habits performed by parents at school drop off/pick up times. Although these practices are not ideal, they are predictable, are for only relatively short periods at the start and end of the school day, and are difficult to prevent. Houghton Court does not experience traffic issues different to any of the many other schools in Lancashire that are located in residential areas.

The restrictions for Houghton Court were only proposed for the spinal access road and for a short distance into the side branch roads, where the complaints identified that the obstructive parking was taking place.

As already indicated, it is accepted that some displacement of parking may occur and this will be monitored and any impacts addressed should they arise.

The situation with regard to the residents' concerns that the restrictions would not be policed at the start and end of the school day, unfortunately, the resources do not exist at a level which enable enforcement to be targeted at the peak times when these problems are occurring.

However, the county council has committed to visiting every school in the county a minimum of once per school year to ensure compliance with local parking restrictions. Where complaints are raised, more visits may be programmed in. Any request for enforcement can be placed using the Lancashire County Council website and searching for Parking Services.

With regard to signs being provided to indicate "Private Parking" the proposed restrictions only apply to the formally adopted sections of the spinal access road and side cul-de-sacs, signs on the public highway displaying this message are not permitted. However, the non-adopted areas are the responsibility of the property owners and they can provide whatever signs they consider appropriate on their land.

Levensgarth Avenue and Tower Green

One objection to the scheme was received from a resident of Levensgarth Avenue, stating that there is no need for the additional restrictions as they were far enough away from the hospital for the level of parking by staff, and visitors not to be a problem.

Offsetting this, nine communications were received from residents of Tower Green, five of which registered objections to the scheme and four supporting the changes but with further concerns that the present problem with hospital parking would only get more severe as further restrictions are introduced as the displaced drivers will look for new parking places. Presently there are problems with double parking and footway parking causing vulnerable road users having to walk in the carriageway. This situation is particularly concerning because Tower Green is a regularly used walking route to and from a primary school. Other concerns were that this parking is making it difficult for drivers accessing private driveways.

The respondents suggested various ways to deal with the parking situation including the hospital providing parking that better suits its needs. One respondent indicated that the problem was not isolated to Tower Green but in recent years the problem has extended to both sides of Garstang Road too. Others requested that Tower Green be included in the roads that have parking restrictions. One suggestion was to implement a lunch time parking ban to stop people from parking all day but still allow visitors.

Officer's Response

The proposals that are currently being promoted for Levensgarth Avenue and Southy Avenue are in direct response to concerns regarding double parking, footway parking and pedestrians having to walk in the carriageway.

If approved, the proposed restrictions would remove the parking that is creating this situation, although as with the other locations, it is accepted that it is highly probable that some displacement of parking may well occur.

The extent and locations where the parking will migrate to is presently unknown and to try and pre-empt this and include additional restrictions would only add further inconvenience to residents not currently experiencing any parking problems. The areas adjacent to these proposals will be monitored and any significant impacts addressed, should they arise.

The obstruction of the public highway and private driveways is a criminal offence, enforced by Lancashire Constabulary. Where drivers are parked wholly on a private driveway this is outside the control of the county council and is a matter for the property owner to resolve.

With regard to the objector's comments that parking has increased on both sides of Garstang Road, this area is remote from this site and not directly relevant to the locations under discussions, however, no recent reports or complaints of obstructive parking from the area mentioned have been received. In addition, several site checks have not revealed any issues that would require any action to introduce parking restrictions.

Tower Green was not included in the current proposals as there were no direct complaints submitted from the residents that parking along its length was causing any problems. However, the officer comments above concerning the displacement of parked vehicles would apply here.

The introduction of a "Lunchtime restriction" as suggested by the objectors would only prohibit parking over a very short period of 1.5 or 2 hours during the middle of the day. Such a restriction over a short period would not allow effective enforcement to be completed and therefore would not be a practical solution.

St Clare's Avenue

Of the nine respondents from St. Clare's Avenue that have made representation as a result of the formal consultation, only one expressed support for the changes but this correspondence also included concerns to be addressed. The objections in this area were that the additional restrictions would cause problems for residents on St Clare's

Avenue because not all residents have off street parking or sufficient off street parking for all of the vehicles at the household.

A number of different points were raised to support the objections to the additional lines, including concern that the daytime parking is required by residents and those affected will need to move their vehicles away from the road near their house during the day. The day time restrictions will mean that the houses do not have any day time parking and therefore the changes will have an impact on the value of their homes. One objector had claimed that they had previously been advised to concrete over their garden to make parking and indicated that this was not good advice. There is no indication who has given this advice.

One objector complained that the problem was not that there was hospital parking but that there were residents who regularly parked commercial vehicles on the estate making the area look bad.

Officer's Response

As with the previous locations the proposals have been confined to the main spine road and at the immediate junction. The proposed parking controls will apply to all vehicles including the residents and their visitors.

With the exception of very few, the majority of properties on St Clare's Avenue have driveways or off road parking. However, it is correct that any residents that do not have this facility, or may have several vehicles at the property, would need to re-locate their vehicles during the restricted period (8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday). Unfortunately, there is little that can be done to mitigate this if parking on the road is considered to be an issue that needs to be addressed for safety reasons.

Whilst it may be the case that property values are influenced by the presence of the proposed restrictions, it is not a factor that can be taken into account when considering the provision of road safety and access issues.

The advice regarding the provision of off highway space at a property as mentioned by one objector, i.e. to "concrete over their garden" is not something that the county council could comment on. That being said, it is noted that many of the properties on St Clare's Avenue have hard-standing areas for off road parking within the boundary of their property.

The parking of commercial or works vehicles making an area "look bad" is, as with the issue with property values, not a relevant factor when considering whether to introduce parking restrictions for the safety of road users.

St Francis Close

Two responses were received regarding St Francis Close. The first was to make an observation regarding the length of the restriction and how this would affect the individual's property. The traffic engineer dealing with this proposal has spoken to the resident explaining the proposed extents of the restriction and satisfied them that the impact on their property would be minimal. Following this the observation was removed.

The second communication was from a resident who has two cars and the proposed changes would leave him with no space for the second vehicle. The objector asks for a residents permit scheme.

Officer's Response

The situation regarding the introduction of a Residents Permit Scheme has already been mentioned in the responses for previous locations. At the present time the majority of properties on St Francis Close have off road parking available. Presently the county council are not offering new residents only parking schemes but should this position change the road would still fail to qualify for such a provision as more the half of the properties have access to off street parking

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

The costs of the Traffic Regulation Order will be funded from the 2019/20 highways budget for new signs and lines at an estimated cost of £5,900.

Risk management

The present parking situation is causing excessive daytime parking on residential streets that in turn is causing problems for residents from early in the morning until late afternoon. This is causing congestion in these roads and safety issues due to the need for vulnerable users having to use the carriageway because the footways are obstructed by parked cars. The changes are required to improve road safety and ease congestion and obstruction situations.

List of Background Papers

| Paper | Date | Contact/Tel |
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A