

## Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 10 June 2021

### Report of the Head of Service - Highways

#### Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:  
Rossendale West;  
Mid Rossendale;  
Rossendale East

### Lancashire County Council (Bury Road, Haslingden, Kay Street, Rawtenstall, and King Street, Bacup, Rossendale Borough) (Revocation and Electric Vehicle Charging Place) Order 202\*

(Appendices 'A' to 'E' refer)

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#### Executive Summary

Following difficulties in the placement of Electric Vehicle Charging Points in the area it has become necessary to make minor revisions to the supporting waiting restrictions to allow for the charging units to operate safely.

#### Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the proposal to make minor revisions to the provisions that are already in place for Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Bury Road, Haslingden, Kay Street, Rawtenstall and King Street, Bacup as detailed within this report and set out in the Notice of Proposal (Appendix 'A'), Plans (Appendices 'B' to 'D') and Statement of Reasons (Appendix 'E').

#### Background and Advice

This proposal is to correct measures that have been put in place to ensure that electric vehicle charging points are available for customers who need the service.

Investigations indicated that the suppliers of the machines encountered difficulties when fitting the machines and placed the units as near to the originally intended position as possible. Therefore, due to the fitting of the charge units being different to that originally agreed the supporting waiting restrictions are no longer set ideally for the machines to operate safely.

This proposal covers minor revisions to the provisions that are already in place and will not have significant impact on other waiting restrictions in the area.

It is considered that the present COVID-19 restrictions have not significantly impacted on the formal consultation of the proposal but will ensure that the council can correctly provide the necessary provisions to allow the usage of this green travel option.

## **Consultations**

Formal consultation was carried out between 15 January 2021 and 12 February 2021. The proposal was advertised in the local press and notices were displayed on site for all areas. Divisional county councillors were consulted along with the council's usual consultees and the consultation documents posted on the council's website.

During the consultation period 1 objection was received in relation to Kay Street, Rawtenstall.

## **Objection**

The objection to the Kay Street proposal raises concerns that the highway infrastructure is being implemented on a 'piecemeal basis' in the absence of an overall strategy for active travel. The objector believes that there is a lack of awareness by the council's safety audit team of the existence of the Valley of Stone Greenway which starts at Rawtenstall town centre and that by restricting cycle access due to the establishment of on-street parking bays the council is in direct contradiction of the council's own and national government policies.

The objector believes that the council regards that access by vehicles is more important than by cycling and walking which is a policy in direct contradiction of both its own stated policies and those set out in the government's recent policy paper, 'Gear Change'. It is stated that:

- *That the proposal appears to reflect a belief, conscious or otherwise, that hardly anyone cycles or walks, that it is unimportant and that no meaningful space should be taken from more important road users, the very point that Gear Change warns against.*
- *That active travel access devised after many hours of discussion with Rossendale BC and the architects have been disregarded by LCC.*
- *That the safety auditors were not advised that the Valley of Stone Greenway, the county's own flagship cycle route, actually starts in the centre of Rawtenstall causing them to state in their report that there were no cycle facilities in the area.*
- *That the statement that a reduction in town centre parking will have an impact on local shops and livelihoods, is shown in any number of Government reports to be a myth.*
- *That the council is closing off the potential for active travel in the future when the Government's policies begin to take effect.*

In addition to the above, the objection also states that the government expects to see the following:

- *Active travel being embedded in wider policy making.*
- *Quality infrastructure, making streets better and safer for everyone.*
- *Direct continuous routes that do not give up at the difficult places.*
- *Routes that serve the places people actually want to go – often major public transport.*
- *corridors – and the journeys they actually want to make.*
- *Where necessary, the reallocation of road space from parking or motoring.*
- *Contraflow cycling, where cyclists are allowed to ride against the direction of travel on lightly trafficked one-way streets as the default on all quieter one-way streets.*

Further correspondence received from the objector also confirmed that the Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 3 states that it has not been necessary to construct a traffic island at the end of a cycle contraflow and questioned why Lancashire County Council were continuing to restrict cycles access when the very opposite is being demanded by the government.

### **Officer's Response**

This objection is not dissimilar to that which was lodged against the changes to the road layouts and traffic flows that were introduced to support the efficient use of the new bus station. At this time the request to maintain the contraflow facilities for cycles was evaluated and it was concluded that, due to the constraints of the available road space, it was not possible to include a contraflow cycle lane within the existing highway width.

The Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 3 states that if possible, the cycle lane should be segregated from the major road at the junction by a traffic island. This protects cyclists from traffic leaving the one-way street. It is acknowledged that the regulations allow for the omission of a traffic island, however on this occasion it was considered necessary due to the bus route and larger vehicles that needed to access the route whilst servicing the shops.

To allow a contraflow cycle lane to be established in a safe manner would also require the present parking provision available outside the shops on Kay Street to be removed. This would be necessary due to the use of this route by buses and larger vehicles serving the shops and the Post Office. This action could have a direct effect on a number of people's livelihoods. In addition, the removal of the electric vehicle charging points would reduce the effectiveness of the council's intended carbon reduction work that is also being demanded by the government.

Furthermore, this conclusion was accepted at Cabinet on 5 December 2019 and the order was approved. Changes to the moving orders were implemented with a new order that came into force on 14 September 2020.

In relation to this proposal, following difficulties in the placement of the charging units, it has become necessary to make minor revisions to the designation and lengths of the existing parking bays and does not introduce any new bays or alter the current road layout.

The current Electric Vehicle Charging Points on Kay Street were introduced by a Traffic Regulation Order approved by Cabinet on 16 January 2020 which was implemented on 10 February 2020.

Currently on Kay Street there are 2 separate bays with the smallest being a maximum stay of 1 hour and the larger bays being a maximum stay of 3 hours. The purpose of this proposal is to merge the 2 existing bays into 1 continuous bay to allow the customers who need the service to safely operate the charging units. By introducing a continuous bay this will also extend the current 1 hour maximum stay to 3 hours to ensure a consistent approach.

### **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 Salix 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 the Supporting Orders. The costs of removing or 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 then the existing bays and layout in these areas would remain with the current electric vehicle charging places in place, however, it would make the use of the facilities difficult.

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