

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT - 14 JANUARY 2016

PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF DRIVING AND WAITING RESTRICTION – MEADOW LANE, OXFORD

Report by Deputy Director of Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Introduction

1. This report presents objections received in the course of the statutory consultation on a proposal to introduce a prohibition of driving of motor vehicles (except for access) and a prohibition of parking along a section of Meadow Lane in Oxford.

Background

2. The section of Meadow Lane between Jackdaw Lane and Bedford Street is not adopted and its ownership is unclear, but it is metalled and is well-used by pedestrians and cyclists.
3. As it is recorded on the Definitive Map as a public footpath, vehicular use of Meadow Lane by the general public (as distinguished from vehicular use by those with private access rights) is unlawful. However, the County Council has received a number of requests from the local community, including residents, Councillors and St. Mary & St. John Primary School, to take measures to reinforce this. In particular there have been requests to introduce enforceable restrictions to prevent parking along this part of Meadow Lane which in the past has caused access difficulties for large vehicles, including emergency vehicles accessing the school, and could become more significant with the increase in pupils attending the school premises. It is considered that in the particular circumstances of this case it would be appropriate to promote a Traffic Regulation Order – as an adjacent land owner Oxford City Council have provided funds for these restrictions to be promoted and implemented, if approved.

Consultation

4. The Formal consultation on the proposals (see plan at Annex 1) was carried out between 19 November and 18 December 2015. Letters were sent to approximately 70 properties in the immediate area (including the adjacent school), whilst street notices were also put up at intervals along the street. A public notice was advertised in the Oxford Times on 19 November, with an email sent to the statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service and local County Councillors. A total of 16 responses were received as part of the consultation process and these are

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summarised in Annex 2. Copies of all the consultation responses are available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre.

5. Thames Valley Police had no objections but sought clarification of the appropriateness of the 'Prohibition of Driving' restriction given the status of Meadow Lane as a public footpath. In response, the intention of this restriction is simply to reinforce the position that even though there will be a prohibition on parking along the road, this does not indicate a general permission for motor vehicles to use the route; it will also allow those who currently use the Lane to access their property to continue to do so.
6. Councillor Curran and others expressed concern that the effect of the proposed parking restriction will be to increase parking pressures in nearby residential streets, and that an alternative solution would be for Meadow Lane to be widened on the west side to allow both the current parking to continue and provide additional capacity for other residents to use. In response, the purpose of the restriction is to address current concerns regarding access – should the owner of the land on the west side of the Lane choose to widen it to allow parking in the future then the restriction could be amended accordingly.
7. The Head Teacher of St Mary and St John CE Primary School and a number of residents have written in support of the proposals – the former setting out the effect that impeded access along Meadow Lane can have on the operation of the School and the safety of pupils.
8. Two residents with direct access onto Meadow Lane and another with rear access have objected to the proposals. They suggest that the current practice of parking close to the buildings, or by the playground fence or in the passing bays, does not cause an obstruction. They request that specific provision should be made for residents and visitors (including Blue Badge Holders). In response, whilst it is acknowledged that there are those who do park carefully to avoid causing obstruction, there are others who do not do so and it is considered that the only way to ensure clear access to properties is to remove all parking. Previous proposals for a residents parking scheme in the Iffley Fields area (which included those properties with access onto Meadow Lane) were rejected in 2009 following consultation. With regard to parking for Blue Badge holders, this is permitted on double yellow lines for up to 3 hours providing no obstruction occurs.

Conclusion

9. The situation on this part of Meadow Lane is unusual with the combination of an unadopted road with no clarity of ownership, an entry on the Definitive Map as a public footpath, and a need to provide access for large vehicles (including emergency services) to a primary school. Whilst it is acknowledged that a small number of residents will have to make alternative parking arrangements – and that the nearby streets are already congested – it is considered that the proposed restrictions should be introduced in the best interests of the community as a whole.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

10. The proposals would help reduce the risk of accidents, improve road safety and facilitate the easier flow of motor traffic in the area.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

11. Full funding for the proposal has been provided by Oxford City Council (as an adjacent landowner).

RECOMMENDATION

12. **The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the implementation of proposal as advertised.**

MARK KEMP

Deputy Director of Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Background papers: Plan of proposed restrictions
 Consultation responses

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December 2015

ANNEX 2

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
Thames Valley Police	<p>No objection but seeks clarification of the appropriateness of the use of 'Prohibition of Driving' restriction given the status of this part of Meadow Lane on the Definitive Map.</p> <p>Notes any enforcement activity by Thames Valley Police will be extremely low</p>
County Cllr Steve Curran	<p>Notes that the reasons given for the proposals are to aid access for emergency vehicles etc in Meadow Lane it will make the parking issues in Stratford Street and Argyle Street worse. The parking in these streets is already pretty impossible. It makes much more sense to have no parking on the street side of Meadow Lane and to widen it on the field side to allow for overflow parking from residents in Stratford and Argyle Streets at the same time allowing emergency vehicles to pass with ease.</p>
Headteacher, St Mary and St John CE Primary School	<p>The school is strongly in favour of the proposal to prohibit parking or driving (except for access) on Meadow Lane.</p> <p>The school's address is Meadow Lane: it was built with access for all heavy deliveries to be made through the large double gates, giving onto the Lane, situated opposite the school's hall and kitchen. Bedford St, which is its other access, is a residential road with heavy parking from its own residents and is not suited for lorries. Deliveries are made to the school most days of the week, chiefly with food for the school dinners, but also with other equipment. Just one car parked on Meadow Lane prevents the food delivery lorry from reaching the school: the driver then has to trolley the goods along the road, adding half an hour to the delivery time, which impacts on our kitchen timing and on the other schools on his round. Rubbish lorries cannot pass parked cars and there have been occasions when we have not had collections, which is serious. More importantly, parked cars can obstruct the emergency services. There was an incident in March 2015 when the ambulance could not reach the entrance, had to back down the road and drive round to gain access through Bedford St. which added twenty minutes to its response time.</p>

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Resident of Meadow Lane	<p>Having been resident on Meadow Lane for over 3 years, there have been comparatively few incidents of any parked cars restricting access past the houses. There have been no incidences of missed deliveries to our property or missed collections of rubbish once notices were issued at the junction with Jackdaw Road stating that parking was prohibited on Meadow Lane.</p> <p>Concerned about a few points and would like to suggest a couple of adaptations/alternative solutions that would represent the best of both worlds for all involved:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) We are concerned that the already congested parking conditions on Stratford Street will be exacerbated by the complete removal of all previous “common sense” parking on Meadow Lane by residents which does not prevent access by emergency vehicles, such as tight to the walls of properties and in the passing bay areas, which have been successfully used for parking for at least 5 years without any problems. Stratford Street residents have already lodged issues with their current situation (due to the lack of permit system) and this is likely to get worse with Meadow Lane residents using that as their closest legal parking spaces.2) There appears to be no provision in the plans for disabled parking (blue badge holders) specifically, meaning that the closest disabled access requires a wheelchair user to travel 400m to Meadow Lane residence from Stratford Street disabled bays. This is clearly not suitable for those that rely on a wheelchair permanently especially in poor weather when neither Stratford Street nor Meadow Lane are treated with grit/salt.3) There are several houses on Meadow Lane that have been given HMO licenses, and it’s safe to assume that in these instances, it is likely that multiple vehicles are also in use. We assume that this will have been considered when issuing HMO licenses, and therefore it would seem sensible that it is also considered when changes to the parking are made. <p>To ensure that the needs of residents are met whilst maintaining emergency access, it would seem sensible to provide a small number of residents parking bays plus a disabled bay, clearly marked, whilst using double yellows to restrict parking inappropriately. These bays could be placed in the central bay currently marked for “passing”, as there are adequate passing spaces close to the junction with Jackdaw Lane to the north, and the junction of Eyot Place to the south. If both “passing bays” are still desired, then joining of the bays to create an extra standing for around 3 cars that could include a disabled bay would</p>
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	<p>seem to provide an ideal compromise between emergency access and the needs of the residents. If no bays are provided, then there is the likelihood of blue badge parking on double yellows (as is permitted when displaying a valid badge) which may pose more of an issue.</p>
<p>Resident of Stratford Street (with rear access off Meadow Lane)</p>	<p>This is a private lane and for those who have altered their back gardens so they can park their cars it won't affect them, but I haven't. It's going to make life very difficult as I am elderly and have problems getting around. My niece helps me with my chores at least 4 days a week and always has trouble finding a place to park on Stratford Street so has to park round the back on Meadow Lane. Outside my back gate is a parking bay and it's unfair to put double yellow lines in these bays.</p> <p>This is going to affect so many people, not only residents, but for families who come and play in the lovely green field, also young and older people who play football, cricket and plenty of other sports. It's not that they're going to park there all day; it's only for a short amount of time. What's the problem?</p>
<p>Resident of Argyle Street (with access off Meadow Lane)</p>	<p>I have been resident since 2012 and my door is on Meadow Lane, and really my address should have been Meadow Lane as my only access is located on the Lane opposite the children's playground. The only bottle neck that exists on Meadow Lane is the stretch of road from Eyot Place up to the alley leading into Argyle Street as this is made particularly narrow by drivers who leave their cars and mopeds who go to the skateboard park and sometimes students going to the University or City Centre.</p> <p>Concerning the ambulance/emergency issue, in all my time here twice an ambulance came and the only reason for an accident in the skateboard park, and once the ambulance could not reverse because again someone left a vehicle near the entrance of Eyot Place. All other times the ambulance and police cars went from the main entrance of the school in Bedford Street.</p> <p>To resolve the problems I suggest one of these three options:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Widen the road of Meadow Lane by one metre, so even if someone parks there is still enough room for larger vehicles to pass. 2. Put up a physical barrier, and give all residents and delivery drivers to the school a key to unlock and drive through. 3. Put on one side of the Lane a double yellow line from the start of Meadow Lane until the entrance of the children's park or passage leading into Argyle Street.

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	<p>In my opinion, at the moment, I do not see any sense to have double yellow lines covering the stretch between the alley to Argyle Street and the school as it is wide enough and does not cause any issues or bottle neck with the lorries and ambulances, and it will inconvenience me (as I have no parking spot) and all the other people who bring their children by car and park out of school hours to use the children's park for a short time.</p> <p>If all of the Lane does have double yellow lines all the parking traffic will switch into Argyle Street and all the residents will complain, as they already have problems parking their vehicles especially out of school hours coming back from work or weekends.</p>
Resident of Argyle Street	I wholeheartedly support the Council's proposals.
Email Response	I welcome the proposal.
Resident of Stratford Street	Supports the proposal as long as access to rear driveways on those properties that back on to Meadow Lane is maintained.
Online Response, (unknown)	This is an excellent initiative. With Meadow Lane having a school, a children's playground, a skate park and the leisure areas of Aston's Eyot and The Kidneys for walkers, picnickers and dog walkers, the notion of all these people having to run the gauntlet of traffic is an accident waiting to happen. However, I am very concerned about the knock-on effect for Bedford St at school start and finish time.
Online Response, (unknown)	It will be a relief to know that the school has access for emergency vehicles and that the Lane will not be used as a car park.

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<p>Online Response, (unknown)</p>	<p>Anything the council can do to keep this rare traffic-free route properly free of cars should be strongly supported.</p>
<p>Online Response, (unknown)</p>	<p>Supports the proposal as long as access to rear driveways on those properties that back on to Meadow Lane is maintained.</p>
<p>Online Response, (unknown)</p>	<p>Supports. Believe it would make travel safer and more efficient.</p>
<p>Online Response, (unknown)</p>	<p>No objection. Would like to keep this path free from cars as a footpath/cycle route only, it is dangerous if cars are using it too.</p>
<p>Resident of Fairacres Road</p>	<p>This proposal is welcome but there is now a serious problem in the turn round area in Meadow Lane at the end of Fairacres Road. Recently cars and vans have started parking in the turn round space, especially at night which is a hazard for cyclists who are forced to swerve to avoid parked cars and visibility for cars coming up to the junction is very poor. The parked cars also block access for emergency vehicles. Could the Regulations be extended to Fairacres Road please</p>