

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – 2 SEPTEMBER 2010

CENTRAL OXFORD CPZ, MINOR AMENDMENTS TO PARKING

Report by Head of Highways & Transport

Introduction

1. This report considers comments and objections received to the formal advertisement and statutory consultation to vary the Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for the Central Oxford Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) area to amend the parking and loading arrangements in several streets in response to requests from local businesses, colleges, as part of the High Street repaving scheme and to clarify restrictions on certain streets with Pay & Display bays (particularly with regard to Sunday parking arrangements). The opportunity was also taken to consolidate into a new TRO both these and the many other changes that have been made since 2003.

Background

2. The parking restrictions in central Oxford have remained largely unchanged for a number of years. Inevitably needs change over time and there have been requests from businesses and one of the colleges to make small changes to the restrictions to better meet their operational requirements. At the same time there is also a small part of the recently remodelled section of High Street where the restrictions had not been simplified in the same way as the other parts of the street. In addition, some recent parking enforcement cases have highlighted the need to clarify restrictions to help drivers better understand them.
3. The parking controls in central Oxford are contained in three separate TROs. The general restrictions are in the CPZ Order, whilst Pay & Display parking and Disabled Persons Parking Places (DPPPs) each have their own separate Orders. As the proposed changes affected Pay & Display parking bays and DPPPs as well as restrictions in the CPZ Order, consultation included all three TROs.
4. In keeping with good practice, it was considered appropriate to take the opportunity to revoke the current CPZ Order (which has had numerous minor variations/amendments made to it since 2003 making it rather unwieldy to use) and to consolidate that order and the variation orders into a single new Order. The order provisions will also be updated so as to accord with more recent CPZ orders.

Formal Consultation

5. Formal consultation on the proposed changes took place in April/May 2010. Letters and plans were sent to relevant properties in the vicinity of the proposed principal changes, notices explaining the proposals placed on site and in the Oxford Times and information sent to local Councillors, the emergency services, groups representing the interests of disabled motorists and delivery companies. A copy of the public notice and the other legal documents, which were placed on deposit at the Central Library and at County Hall, are available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre. A summary of the proposed principal changes is attached at Annex 1.
6. In total, 8 letters or e-mails were received in response to the advertised proposals. A précis of these together with the observations of the Head of Highways & Transport is attached at Annex 2. Copies of all these communications are available in the Members' Resource Centre.

Consultation Responses and Discussion

7. Thames Valley Police were concerned about an extension to the Pay & Display parking bay in the vicinity of the Institute of Virology and Experimental Microbiology on Mansfield Road, as it could interfere with the policing of demonstrations. In these circumstances it is proposed that this change does not proceed at this time.
8. A specific objection was received to the conversion of one DPPP on St Michael's Street to a loading bay. The objector also made a more general objection to the restrictions in central Oxford and their effect on disabled people. This is an objection to the provisions advertised as part of consolidating the current CPZ Order and its minor variations/amendments. In view of these objections an assessment has been undertaken of the availability of on-street parking in Oxford City Centre. That is attached at Annex 3.
9. The conversion of a DPPP at St Michael's Street into a loading bay is proposed as a result of longstanding and ongoing requests from the adjacent auctioneers whose customers have difficulties delivering and collecting heavy items and find the existing single bay insufficient. The proposals also included a change in the status of the bay to a general loading bay, rather than one restricted to goods vehicles only, to allow greater flexibility. Achieving an appropriate balance between competing demands for kerb space, especially in the narrow streets of central Oxford, is always difficult and the Council has a long-standing practice of prioritising parking for disabled people wherever possible (generally by the provision of specific parking places for Blue Badge Holders). However, in this particular case, and for the reasons set out at Annex 2 as well as the assessment contained at Annex 3, it is considered that the conversion of this one space from disabled parking to loading bay is reasonable.

10. In the light of these conclusions it is suggested that the objection be overruled but that organisations representing disabled people be asked to suggest if there are specific locations where additional DPPPs might be provided in central Oxford and a further report on the matter be presented to this meeting in due course.
11. Buro Happold are consultants acting on behalf of St John's College who have recently completed major works to their site with accesses off Blackhall Road. Their particular concern is to secure use of an off-street loading bay which has a narrow gateway (in a listed wall) and gives access to a bio-mass boiler. The parking proposals for Blackhall Road are to amend the current Pay & Display parking which is opposite the loading bay (and if occupied will prevent lorries accessing the loading bay) by creating two separate sections of parking so that one can be suspended on the days when the bio-mass material is scheduled for delivery. This is considered a workable compromise between the demands for parking in this area and the needs of the College to receive timely deliveries of the heating material.
12. The other responses are discussed in the Annex and are either raising issues outside the scope of the consultation or are minor complaints and/or misunderstandings.

Conclusions

13. The principal objections raised to these proposals are discussed fully above. It is considered that only the matter raised by Thames Valley Police should result in a change to the advertised proposals which should therefore proceed and the objectors informed accordingly.

How the Project Supports LTP2 Objectives

14. The proposals described in this report relate to the LTP2 objective of improving the Street Environment (better management of parking).

Financial Implications (including Revenue)

15. Funding for the costs of implementing the proposals described in this report, estimated to be around £10,000 (including advertising) will be met from existing budgets.

RECOMMENDATION

16. **The Cabinet Member for Transport is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **approve the proposed changes to parking and loading restrictions in central Oxford as advertised in The Oxfordshire County Council (Central Area Oxford) (Controlled Parking Zone and Waiting Restrictions) Order 20**, The Oxfordshire County Council (Oxford Central Area) (Designation and Regulation of Street Parking**

Places) Variation Order 20 and The Oxfordshire County Council (Disabled Persons' Parking Places – Oxford) (Amendment No.*) Order 20** as amended in respect of part of Mansfield Road as set out in this report;**

- (b) authorise the Head of Highways & Transport to agree any further non-substantial variations he considers appropriate subject to him consulting the Cabinet Member for Transport on any material variation and undertaking any further consultation which he may consider appropriate.**

STEVE HOWELL
Head of Highways & Transport
Environment & Economy

Background papers: Copies of all the legal documents plus letters and emails received in response are available in the Members' Resource room.

Contact Officer: David Tole Tel: 01865 815942

August 2010

CENTRAL OXFORD CPZ AREA**DESCRIPTION OF EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES****BLACKHALL ROAD**

The existing permit holders and Pay & Display parking bays at the southern end of the road will be rearranged to better differentiate between the two restrictions and reduce the length of permit holder parking to reflect permit eligibility. Separately, the Pay & Display parking opposite the rear of St John's College will be rearranged to better meet the needs of this recent redevelopment.

HIGH STREET

The remaining two goods vehicle loading bays in the central section will be replaced with No Waiting 6am to 6.30pm daily as part of simplifying the restrictions along the street and as part of the ongoing High Street works.

ST MICHAEL'S STREET

The existing Goods Vehicle loading bay will be extended and changed to become a general loading bay to better reflect the needs of the adjacent business. This will require a reduction by 7 metres in the length of one of the existing Disabled Parking Bays.

ST JOHN STREET

The restrictions currently on site (left from a temporary order) will be replaced to recreate permit holders only parking bays.

MARKET STREET

The existing Goods Vehicle loading bay will become a general loading bay and the permits issued to the Market Traders Committee for use on Market Street removed, in response to specific requests from the Covered Market Traders Committee.

HYTHE BRIDGE STREET

The time limit in the existing loading bay will be amended from a maximum of 20 minutes to a maximum of 30 minutes to be consistent with other similar bays in the City Centre.

PAY & DISPLAY BAYS

The existing Pay & Display bays in Beaumont Street, Blackhall Road, Broad Street, Cromwell Street, King Edward Street, Longwall Street, Merton Street, Museum Road, Parks Road, St Giles, Woodstock Road and Wellington Square will be amended so that on Sundays they become standard 2-hour parking bays. This is to clarify the current arrangements which require the obtaining of a free Pay & Display ticket with a maximum stay of 2-hours.

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In addition, the descriptions of the bays in Blackhall Road, Mansfield Road, Museum Road, Parks Road, Saville Road and Woodstock Road will be redefined to allow gaps for existing accessways.

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO PARKING – CENTRAL OXFORD CPZ
Summary of Public Comments**

No.	Commentor's Address	Summary of Objection or Comment	Observations of the Director of Environment & Economy
1.	Thames Valley Police	No objection to majority of proposals Object to proposed extension of Pay & Display parking on the northern end of Mansfield Road (east side) as this will interfere with the policing of ongoing animal rights protests in connection with the adjacent building.	Noted In view of these comments it is suggested that the proposed extension to this parking bay does not proceed.
2.	Michael Hocken	<p>Objects to the reduction in the length of the DPPP in St Michaels Street without making any alternative provision. Usage of the existing disabled parking bay is extremely heavy, and suggests that any reduction would cause real hardship. No evidence of any structural shortage of loading facilities appears to have been adduced, nor any apparent consideration given to a time-restricted loading zone which would enable the spaces to be used at other times by blue badge holders or of any alternative which would preserve these spaces at times other than when required for loading purposes.</p> <p>Objects to the blanket imposition of No Waiting and loading restrictions across all streets given that the consequence of this order will be to prevent any parking by blue badge holders on double yellow lines across the whole of the City</p>	<p>The proposed reduction of the DPPP by 7 metres to allow the current loading bay to be extended is as a direct result of longstanding and ongoing requests from the adjacent auctioneers who have also requested the bay be changed from Goods Vehicles only so that any vehicle (including a BBH) can use the bay to load/unload).</p> <p>If the proposed changes are introduced DPPPs for 6 vehicles will remain in St Michael's Street plus 40 metres of double yellow lines where BBH may park for up to 3 hours. In addition, the adjacent New Inn Hall Street has DPPPs for at least 13 vehicles plus additional double yellow lines where BBH may park for up to 3 hours.</p> <p>This advertised proposals do not represent a change from the current position. See Annex 3 for further response on this issue.</p>

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		<p>centre (this restriction is, moreover, ill-understood by many blue badge holders, as it is hardly ever used in many parts of the country, and generates large numbers of PCNs, suggesting that these new proposals may in part have a revenue-raising purpose).</p> <p>Requests that before any decision is taken on these proposals a comprehensive equality audit of on-street parking possibilities for blue badge holders in the City centre be conducted.</p>	<p>See Annex 3.</p>
3.	Buro Happold consultants on behalf of St John's College	<p>Object to the continued provision of Pay & Display parking for a 12 metre section of Blackhall Road as it will not provide adequate access/egress to enable the College to meet its planning commitments and allow for ad hoc deliveries of wood chip fuel. The proposal to suspend the parking bay when deliveries are due will be unworkable. The loss of two spaces will have minimal impact on the parking facilities in the street and the Council's income from them.</p>	<p>It is recognised that the planning conditions agreed as part of the redevelopment of the College site bring particular challenges for deliveries to their bio-mass boiler house. As these deliveries will be infrequent it is considered that the most appropriate method of assisting access is to temporarily suspend the parking opposite the delivery gate. To this end, the advertised proposals create a separate short length of Pay & Display parking which could be clearly suspended without affecting the remaining parking in what is a well-used area of the city centre. Should this not prove satisfactory then consultation on a revised proposal will be undertaken.</p>
4.	Black Sheep Galleries, High Street	<p>Objects to the proposal to replace 2 Goods Vehicle Loading Bays with single yellow lines as they receive large, heavy and valuable deliveries on a regular basis and need to be able to unload without the worry of receiving a ticket. Deliveries and collection are difficult enough and the proposed plans will make it worse.</p>	<p>This change is the final stage in the remodelling of High Street as reported to the Cabinet Member Meeting in November 2008 and is part of reducing the visual clutter required by the current restrictions.</p> <p>Drivers will continue to be able to load/unload in High Street (except where there are loading</p>

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			prohibitions) irrespective of the presence of a loading bay. The approved Enforcement Policy which states that there will be an observation period (20 minutes for goods vehicles) during which, if loading/unloading is seen to be taking place then no PCN will be issued, is the same for loading bays as for yellow lines.
5.	Resident, Blackhall Road	Accepts that the location of the current permit parking spaces on Blackhall Road can be confusing and that moving them to the end of the road will be better providing they are well signed. Also accepts a reduction in the length of the residents bay but requests that there be room for 4 cars instead of the proposed 3 to allow space for visitors.	Noted There are only 3 properties eligible for permits, none of whom currently have any permits. The proposals seek to better match the allocated kerbspace to the likely demand for permits.
6.	Bonnors (greengrocers), Covered Market	Requests Business Permits to enable vehicles to park vehicles close by when waiting between deliveries etc.	The proposed Order seeks to replicate the current arrangements whereby up to 6 permits can be issued through the Covered Market Traders Committee for the use by traders to park in the Mansfield Road area. It may be appropriate to discuss with the Traders Committee whether to increase this number to reflect changing trading patterns. Any change would of course be subject to public consultation.
7.	Chocology, Covered Market	Welcomes proposed changes on Market Street but hopes that Loading Only signing will remain to ensure area is kept free for loading/unloading.	The only change will be the signing which will no longer refer to a <u>Goods Vehicle</u> Loading Bay.
8.	Lizzie James (Posh Frocks), Little Clarendon Street	Would like to see the current 30 minute parking limit increased to 1 hour to allow customers to be served in a less hurried way.	This request will be considered at the next opportunity to make changes within the Central Oxford CPZ.

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AVAILABILITY OF ON-STREET PARKING FOR BLUE BADGE HOLDERS IN OXFORD CITY CENTRE

BACKGROUND

Parking on-street in Oxford City Centre (for the purposes of the assessment, this is shown in Appendix A) is controlled by means of a number of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO), one of which deals with all Pay & Display (P&D) parking, another deals with Disabled Persons Parking Places (DPPP) and one which deals with all other parking/waiting/loading restrictions and creates a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ).

In April 2010 Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) advertised for public consultation TROs to make a number of minor changes to parking in various streets in the City Centre, which are summarised in Appendix B. At the same time the opportunity was taken to 'consolidate' (ie bring together into a single new Order) all the preceding CPZ TROs which have been made over the last few years; this required the advertisement of all the restrictions in the CPZ, whether or not they are being changed.

On 2nd May an email was received objecting to the proposed change to Disabled Parking in St Michael's Street (one of the minor changes) and 'to the blanket proposal to impose waiting and loading restrictions across all the streets set out in the Controlled Parking Order'. The objector also requested that:-

before any decision on this Order is taken, a comprehensive equality audit of on-street parking possibilities for blue badge holders in the City centre be conducted by a fully qualified officer or consultant and used to produce a fully thought-through and 'joined-up' set of proposals so as to ensure that there is no deterioration in the existing already inadequate provision, and to explore fully the scope for extending the number of blue badge spaces available in the City centre.

A copy of the objection email is attached as Appendix C.

CITY CENTRE PARKING POLICY

Any discussion regarding parking for Blue Badge Holders (BBH) should be set in the overall policy context for City Centre parking.

For many years the approach to dealing with the private car in Oxford (as is the case with many historic towns and cities across the UK) has been to restrain the availability of parking in the central area and to encourage motorists to use Park & Ride. This has been very successful and has allowed the removal of all or most vehicles from key pedestrian areas such as Cornmarket, Queen Street, George Street and High Street.

Generally, access is retained for buses, taxis and private hire, which in themselves have become significantly more disabled-friendly with (for example) low-floor buses and wheelchair accessible taxis. There is also a Shopmobility service based in the principal City Centre Car Park.

There are around 100 DPPPs in the City Centre, focussed principally on the main shopping/commercial areas (eg New Inn Hall Street, St Aldates, St Giles, Broad Street, Beaumont Street) which allow Blue Badge Holders to park without charge or limit much closer to central facilities.

GENERAL PARKING AVAILABILITY FOR BBH

The National Concessions

A disabled person who is a Blue Badge Holder (BBH) is able to benefit from certain exemptions to parking restrictions providing they are in a vehicle (whether as driver or passenger) which is displaying a valid Blue Badge.

Apart from certain parts of Central London, these exemptions apply across the whole of England (similar concessions apply elsewhere in UK) and are set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Exemption for Disabled Persons) (England) Regulations 2000.

The principal exemptions (set out in the DfT booklet 'The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities in England') are that BBH can park on double or single yellow lines for up to 3 hours (except where there is a ban on loading/unloading) and can park in Pay & Display bays without charge and without time limit.

Local Concessions

Like many authorities, OCC provides parking concessions for BBH which go further than the National Concessions. These are defined in the individual TROs and include parking without time limit in time-limited bays where there is no charge, as well as parking without time limit (or the need for a permit) in residents parking bays.

PARKING PROVISION FOR BBH IN OXFORD CITY CENTRE

A desktop study has been carried out to look at the availability of parking for BBH in the City Centre. The study involved calculating the length of kerb where it is potentially possible to park a vehicle and then to use existing/proposed TROs to assess how much of this is/isn't available for BBH to park legally. For simplicity the study has only looked at daytime parking as restrictions on BBH in the evening are either the same or less onerous. The study has also not taken into account the limitations resulting from loading restrictions which only apply in peak hours.

This approach has some flaws such as that no allowance has been made as to whether a street is wide enough for a BBH to park a vehicle on double yellow lines (DYL) using the National Concession without blocking the road and thus committing

an offence; neither has there been any attempt to calculate the lengths of kerb where all stopping is prevented (such as pedestrian crossing zig-zags and the middle of junctions controlled by traffic-lights). As a result there will be some overestimate of the length of street where BBH could theoretically park.

Results of Desk-Top Study

The Table (Appendix D) sets out the meterage of the different types of restriction that apply across the City Centre and calculates the percentage available to BBH whether under the National Concession for yellow lines (ie maximum 3-hours stay) or other Concessions allowing unrestricted use. The Table also shows the amount of kerb-length which is unavailable to BBH and the amount which is available exclusively through around 100 DPPPs.

It can be seen that:-

- over 70% of the kerb-length in the City Centre is available for BBH to park for up to 3 hours (this increases to around 80% between 0930 and 1600 daily);
- only around 11% of the kerb-length in the City Centre is not available at all to BBH;
- the remainder can be used by BBH without time limit.

To put this in context, in 2007 there were around 2.3 million BBH in England out of a population of just over 51 million – in other words BBH represent 4.5% of the population (this increases to around 6% if children in the general population area excluded). The British Standard for off-street car parks requires a minimum of 5% of spaces to be allocated to BBH

Looking in more detail at the locations where BBH cannot park these can be grouped thus:-

- Streets with peak-time loading bans – these are the key through routes carrying high volumes of traffic where stationary vehicles would seriously impede all traffic
- Streets with daytime loading bans – these are busy shopping streets, narrow roads providing access, and places where a parked vehicle is likely to block the road
- Bus Stop Clearways – these are installed at well-used stops and are of particular benefit for passengers with mobility impairments as they allow buses to draw up level with the kerb edge
- Bays which are reserved for particular purposes – mostly these are loading bays (some of which could be used by BBH if loading was taking place)

Increasing Parking Opportunities for BBH in Oxford City Centre

There are several ways in which the availability of parking for BBH in the City Centre can be increased.

New DPPPs

The most visible would be to introduce additional DPPPs. Currently there are no requests pending for new DPPPs in the City Centre, but if any were

received they would be carefully considered to see that they complied with road safety and traffic management standards and would then be implemented, subject to the outcome of the normal consultation process.

Reduced Loading Restrictions

It is possible to relax/remove the loading restrictions in locations where BBH may wish to park either generally or for specific purposes – an example of this is on Magdalen Street where the loading prohibition has been removed on Sundays to allow BBH to attend the adjacent church. Again, any request for similar changes would be carefully considered to see that it complied with road safety and traffic management standards and would then be implemented, subject to the outcome of the normal consultation process.

Removing Reserved Bays

As explained above, BBH are prevented from parking in bays reserved for other uses (eg loading bays). It may be possible to remove these types of restrictions in particular locations – one example of this is the recent works on High Street where loading bays have been replaced with single yellow lines, thus allowing BBH to park for 3 hours under the National Concession. Another example is Floyds Row where a section of Police Parking bay was removed to allow a DPPP to be installed. Again, any request for similar changes would be carefully considered to see that it complied with road safety and traffic management standards and would then be implemented, subject to the outcome of the normal consultation process.

Attachments

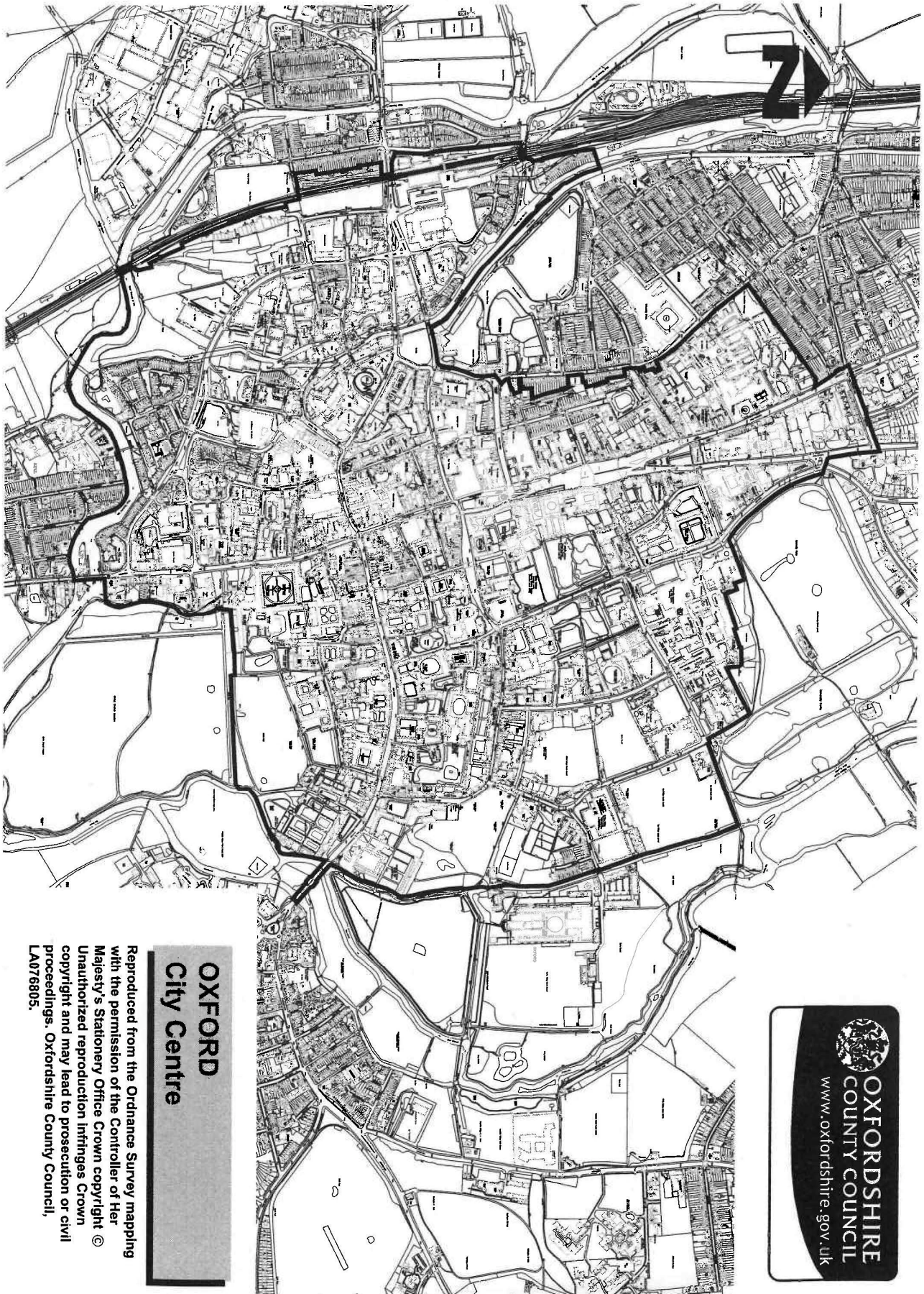
Appendix A – Plan of Oxford City Centre

Appendix B – Summary of proposed changes to parking etc April 2010

Appendix C – Objection from Michael Hocken

Appendix D – Summary results of Desk-Top Study

PLAN OF OXFORD CITY CENTRE



OXFORD
City Centre

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CENTRAL OXFORD CPZ AREA

DESCRIPTION OF EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES

BLACKHALL ROAD

The existing permit holders and Pay & Display parking bays at the southern end of the road will be rearranged to reduce the better differentiate between the two restrictions and to reduce the length of the permit holders parking to reflect permit eligibility.

Separately, the Pay & Display parking opposite the rear of St John's College will be rearranged to better meet the needs of this recent redevelopment;

HIGH STREET

The remaining two goods vehicle loading bays in the central section will be replaced with No Waiting 6am to 6.30pm daily as part of simplifying the restrictions along the street and as part of the ongoing High Street works;

ST MICHAELS STREET

The existing Goods Vehicle loading bay will be extended and changed to become a general loading bay to better reflect the needs of the adjacent business. This will require a reduction by 7 metres in the length of one of the existing Disabled Parking Bays;

ST JOHN STREET

The restrictions currently on site (left from a temporary order) will be replaced to recreate permit holders only parking bays;

MARKET STREET

The existing Goods Vehicle loading bay will become a general loading bay and the permits issued to the Market Traders Committee for use on Market Street will be removed, in response to specific requests from the Covered Market Traders Committee;

HYPHEN BRIDGE STREET

The time limit in the existing loading bay will be amended from a maximum of 20 minutes to a maximum of 30 minutes to be consistent with other similar bays in the City Centre;

PAY & DISPLAY BAYS

The existing Pay & Display bays in Beaumont Street, Blackhall Road, Broad Street, Cromwell Street, King Edward Street, Longwall Street, Merton Street, Museum Road, Parks Road, St Giles, Woodstock Road and Wellington Square will be amended so that on Sundays they become standard 2-hour parking bays. This is to clarify the current arrangements which require the obtaining of a free Pay & Display ticket with a maximum stay of 2-hours

In addition, the descriptions of the bays in Blackhall Road, Mansfield Road, Museum Road, Parks Road, Saville Road and Woodstock Road will be redefined to allow gaps for existing accessways.

OBJECTION FROM MICHAEL HOCKEN

Dear Mr Jones,

I have carefully perused the abovementioned proposals and have become seriously concerned that they represent a further and significant deterioration in the already extremely limited parking availability for disabled persons who may need to use their cars to come into Oxford City centre.

BACKGROUND

The existing provision is already skewed by excessive use of "no waiting/no loading" restrictions, which prevent blue badge holders enjoying the legal dispensation to park on double yellow lines where appropriate and legal (i.e. where this does not restrict traffic flow, etc.). Whilst understanding the desire to keep highly polluting goods vehicles out of the City centre and to channel loading into specific areas/times, I'm afraid to have to conclude on a growing evidence base that scant consideration has been given to the impact on people with disabilities, and there is every indication that the authority has failed to mainstream its statutory equality duties into either the existing provision or – more worryingly - the proposed arrangements at conception, design or implementation stage. I have been unable to find any trace of an equality assessment or disability audit of on-street parking arrangements, and the evidence available is that there has been, and continues to be, an absence of properly qualified consideration of traffic orders from an equality standpoint.

Indeed, despite receiving assurances from your Highways team over a year ago about replacement provision for disabled parking spaces removed during works on the 'bottom' end of the High (opposite the Exam Schools), this was never done, nor was the undertaking to learn the lesson of that dismal failure respected, namely to ensure that in future stages of the High Street works appropriate alternative provision was made.

In fact, when I enquired why the sole disabled parking space at the 'top' end of the High (outside Harvey's café) was set to be removed without replacement for the duration of the next stage of the works, it became apparent that this had been totally overlooked, and that no-one had reviewed the proposed works from an equality angle, despite the earlier undertaking to this effect.

Furthermore, the alternative then proposed was quickly revealed to be impossible because other works had also been planned without coordination that prevented this being carried out.

In addition, several instances in which enforcement officers have issued PCNs to vehicles displaying non-UK blue badges on the grounds that they were not displaying a time clock have been brought to my attention and I have advised a number of foreign drivers faced with improperly issued penalty notices of their rights in this respect. Although it is clearly set out in the relevant rules (signed into force by

David Blunkett as European Council President some 13 years ago) that there is a complete dispensation from this requirement for non-UK blue badge holders, the company responsible has continued to wrongly issue PCNs on this basis (which suggests there may be either training or competence issues that need to be addressed). The authority's failure to ensure that the company which carries out enforcement work in respect of blue badge holders does so in compliance with both EU and national requirements further suggests that the OCC as an organisation may have an institutional disregard for its statutory equality duties.

This then is the background against which the new proposals need to be considered: viz accumulating evidence of a systemic failure to comply with the statutory equality duties on the part of the authority and a clearly deficient City centre blue badge parking provision.

THE PROPOSED ORDERS

As regards the specific proposals in the three proposed orders, **I hereby formally request that you register my objection to the proposal to reduce the length of the disabled bay on St Michael's Street by 7 metres** without making any alternative provision. Usage of the existing disabled parking bay is extremely heavy, and suggests that any reduction would cause real hardship. No evidence of any structural shortage of loading facilities appears to have been adduced, nor any apparent consideration given to a time-restricted loading zone which would enable the spaces to be used at other times by blue badge holders or of any alternative which would preserve these spaces at times other than when required for loading purposes (though even this would be a significantly retrograde step and in apparent contradiction with DfT guidance on the hierarchy of users). Ideally, **I would suggest that this element of the proposed orders be dropped**. If detailed and fully evidenced arguments were to be made for additional (but time-restricted) loading possibilities on this street, and a fully developed analysis of usage statistics of the existing bays by blue badge holders produced, then consideration could perhaps be given to temporary re-allocation of part of this particular bay at certain periods of the day/week.

Secondly, in the absence of any equality impact statement or assessment, **I also object to the blanket proposal to impose waiting and loading restrictions across all the streets set out in the Controlled Parking Order**, given that the consequence of this order will be to prevent any parking by blue badge holders on double yellow lines across the whole of the City centre (this restriction is, moreover, ill-understood by many blue badge holders, as it is hardly ever used in many parts of the country, and generates large numbers of PCNs, suggesting that these new proposals may in part have a revenue-raising purpose) **and request that before any decision on this Order is taken, a comprehensive equality audit of on-street parking possibilities for blue badge holders in the City centre be conducted by a fully qualified officer or consultant** and used to produce a fully thought-through and 'joined-up' set of proposals so as to ensure that there is no deterioration in the existing already inadequate provision, and to explore fully the scope for extending the number of blue badge spaces available in the City centre.

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Thank you in advance for the consideration you will give to these views. I invite you to inform me of the subsequent steps in the process, and to ensure that I be notified when this matter is taken to the Cabinet member responsible for decision, so that I may have the opportunity to make further representations.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Hocken

APPENDIX D

SUMMARY RESULTS OF DESK-TOP STUDY

RESTRICTION AFFECTING BLUE BADGE HOLDERS	LENGTH (m)	%
No loading at any time	170	
No loading 0700-1900	215	
No loading 0730-1830	300	
No loading 0800-1830	1900	
No loading 1000-1800	1060	
No loading 1000-1800 Mon-Sat	20	
No loading 1030-1730 Mon-Sat	120	
No loading 0730-0930 & 1600-1830	5510	
No waiting 0600-1830	180	
M/C Parking	105	
Doctors Parking	22	
Loading Bays	365	
Police Parking	34	
Bus Stop/Stand Clearways	1200	
No waiting at any time (except Sundays 1100-1900)	136	
30 min parking	100	
60 min parking	89	
60 min parking (Permit holders exempt)	23	
2-hour parking	270	
2-hour parking (Sundays only)	780	
Permit Holders Only (Zone CA)	420	
Permit Holders Only (Zone CB)	405	
Permit Holders Only (Zone CC)	350	
Permit Holders Only (Zone CD)	17	
DPPP	660	
TOTAL WITH NON DOUBLE YELLOW LINE RESTRICTIONS	14451	
Total kerb length	49470	
DYL length	35019	70.79%
Unavailable to Blue Badge Holders	11201	22.64%
Exclusive to Blue Badge Holders	660	1.33%
Other unrestricted to Blue Badge Holders	2454	4.96%
Unrestricted to Blue Badge Holders (Sun only)	136	0.27%
		99.73%