

Division(s): Isis and East Oxford

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – 25 MARCH 2010

OXFORD, MAGDALEN ROAD AREA CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE

Report by Head of Transport

Introduction

1. This report outlines the statutory consultation process on the Draft Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for the revised proposed Magdalen Road Area Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) shown in the location plan at Annex 1. This follows the decision of the former Transport Decisions Committee in October 2009 to reconsult on the exclusion of the Iffley Fields part of the zone. It provides information on the policy context, development of the process to date, an outline of the consultations carried out, specific issues that have been raised by the consultees and recommendations in light of responses received.

Policy Context and Background

2. The policy context for the Magdalen Road CPZ is contained in the county council's Local Transport Plan (LTP2) for 2006 - 2011. It includes a parking strategy, which recognises that CPZs have an important role to play in controlling the overall level of peak hour traffic within Oxford's Ring Road and so helping tackle congestion in the city. It is also recognised that CPZs help to protect local streets from intrusive long-stay commuter parking.
3. A parking survey was conducted in the Magdalen Road Area as part of a feasibility study in 2007. On the day of the survey, 391 cars were parked for more than 4 hours within the zone, of which 227 were parked for more than 6 hours. Although it is appreciated that some of these vehicles were visiting properties in the area, it is likely that the majority belonged to non-residents.
4. The Magdalen Road Area adjoins the existing East Oxford CPZ and experiences displacement from commuters and residents in that area who may be unable to park or who have not obtained a permit. The demand for residential parking space in the Magdalen Road Area is very high, resulting in obstructive and potentially unsafe parking practices.
5. The proposed CPZ would restrict the number of permits to two per property to control the demand for on street parking (this would be in line with the adjacent East Oxford CPZ where similar capacity problems exist).
6. There has previously been extensive consultation on this scheme in four stages over more than two years. These were outlined in the report to the Transport Decisions Committee on 1 October 2009. A brief summary is provided at Annex 2.

Formal re-consultation: 20 November 2009 to 4 January 2010

7. On 1 October 2009 the Transport Decisions Committee approved the principle of a CPZ for the Magdalen Road Area but with the exclusion of the Iffley Fields area from the zone. The Committee authorised officers to advertise a new Traffic Regulation Order for the zone on that basis which would also incorporate minor changes arising from responses to the formal consultation. Plans were accordingly drawn up
8. Plans were drawn up showing proposed minor amendments and excluding Iffley Fields. On 1 October 2009 officers attended a meeting of local businesses from the Magdalen Road area following which additional minor changes were made to incorporate more short term parking to help address concerns expressed regarding parking for customers.
9. 1726 consultation packs were sent out – one to each property within the proposed zone and a further 511 packs to every property in the Iffley Fields area proposed to be excluded from the zone. The pack included revised plans, details of minor amendments and a questionnaire. The full draft Traffic Regulation Order was on deposit at Cowley Road Library, Oxford Central Library, County Hall and Speedwell House. Street notices were placed in every road within the zone and a notice placed in the Oxford Times on 26 November 2009. Full details, including all the materials, were available on the county council's website, together with an on-line response form. Consultation packs were also sent out to local councillors and formal consultees. In the light of postal delays the deadline for responses was extended to 4 January. Responses received up to a week after this date were considered.
10. An officer attended the East Area Parliament on 16 December to answer questions from members of the public. The question and answer session lasted for over two hours, at the end of which a show of hands indicated that opinions were equally divided for and against the CPZ, with no clear majority either way.
11. A total of 565 responses to the questionnaire were received. 176 were received on-line via the county council's new on-line consultation system, which prevents duplicate replies. The response rate from properties in Iffley Fields was slightly lower than in the previous formal consultation, at 25%. The response rate from within the proposed area was 23% which was considerably higher than in the previous formal consultation. A further 9 responses were received by letter or email, in addition to 9 responses from formal consultees.
12. Whilst the main purpose was to reconsult on the changes proposed to the consultation, all responses were carefully considered and responses are provided in document F in the background documents, together with the consultation materials. The themes of responses were largely the same as in the previous formal consultation, though this time there were relatively fewer objections about pavement parking and more objections to paying for permits and restrictions on visitor permits.

13. In the proposed CPZ area (which does not include Iffley Fields) 37% of respondents replied to say they supported the proposals in their current form. 61% said they had objections to the proposals, but some of these could be addressed by minor changes to the proposals (subject to local reconsultation). The main fundamental objections are summarised at Annex 3, together with officer responses.
14. Given the amount of shared housing in the area, there were very few objections to the restriction of two permits per property (8 in total).
15. In the proposed CPZ area, the percentage of objections varied widely from street to street (Annex 4). As might be expected, fewer objections were received from streets nearest to the boundary with the existing East Oxford CPZ and more objections from those further away. In Howard Street, at the farthest edge of the zone, 91% of respondents raised an objection, whereas in Henley Street, close to the East Oxford zone, only 17% did so.
16. Within Iffley Fields, 54% of respondents supported the exclusion of their area from the CPZ, while 43% objected to it. There was a wide variation between the levels of support for the exclusion of Iffley Fields, ranging from only 15% in Bannister Close to 90% in Argyle Street (Annex 5). Most of the objections were from people concerned about overspill parking from the proposed CPZ area.
17. A meeting of residents in Iffley Fields and St Mary's Wards was organised by Councillor John Tanner and held at the Gladiator Club on 17 November. An officer was invited but was unable to attend due to short notice. There were 75 attendees, of whom 58 said they would oppose the CPZ proposals, and a decision was taken to start a petition against the county council's proposals. This took the form of four separate petitions, presented to the county council in January 2010 by Mr D Pratley: 632 signatures from customers of local businesses, 75 signatures from people in the Ridgefield Road area (just outside the proposed CPZ) concerned about overspill parking, 38 signatures from the local businesses themselves and 1106 mainly from residents and people working at or visiting premises within the proposed CPZ (including 141 who gave addresses outside the area). Whilst the original petition sheet promoted by Councillor Tanner was clearly headed 'We are against the Controlled Parking Zone in the Magdalen Road zone as proposed by the County Council', many other signature sheets included in the petition bundle were less clear and it is possible that people signing the petition living outside the area would not have been aware of the details of the scheme.
18. A petition was also received from ten residents in Bannister Close, wishing to be included in the scheme. However, as all houses have off-street parking, and most respondents favour yellow line restrictions along the length of the close, it would be more appropriate to consult separately on the introduction of these restrictions, rather than including Bannister Close in a CPZ.
19. Another petition of 105 signatures (including many people from outside the proposed CPZ area) was received from the Oxford Pedestrians Association

(OxPA) headed simply 'Say 'NO' to Pavement Parking'. A summary of the objection from OxPA is contained in Document F.

Equality and Inclusion

20. The county council has a statutory obligation to promote equality and to consider the impact of its policies and practices on people according to their race, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation and human rights. It also seeks to promote social inclusion.
21. The scheme has potential impacts on individuals with disabilities, including age related disabilities. These relate mainly to footway parking, which is part of the design proposals, and was discussed in detail in the report to the Transport Decisions Committee on 1 October 2009. Disability equality is considered alongside other equality issues in an assessment attached to this report at Annex 6. This assessment concludes that there would be a significant net improvement in conditions for disabled people across the proposed zone as a result of the scheme.
22. The assessment shows that there are mitigating factors for possible negative impacts on other equality groups. As these relate to aspects of the permit schemes not specific to this proposed CPZ, but rather in common with CPZs across Oxford, officers recommend that they are considered in more detail as part of an Equalities Impact Assessment of CPZ policy in general, and that any concerns are reflected in a future wider review of permit schemes.

Environmental Implications

23. The scheme would lead to an increase in the number of signs and lines in the area, though this would be kept to a minimum through careful design. Existing poles and lamp columns would be used for signs if practical and any new posts would be sited as sensitively as possible. Where agreeable with homeowners signs could be erected on boundary walls.

How the Project Supports LTP2 Objectives

24. Together with other CPZs in the area, the Magdalen Road CPZ would prevent commuters from parking in local streets and continuing their journey into the centre of Oxford or to the major employers in the area. This includes not only those commuters currently parking in local streets, but a potentially greater number as the economy and population grow and car ownership increases. The introduction of a Magdalen Road CPZ would therefore encourage commuters to use alternative means of travel to get to their place of work,
25. Such a change in travel behaviour would reduce the overall level of traffic, having a direct benefit of helping to reduce congestion in the area. Other benefits associated with reduced traffic would be improved road safety, improved accessibility (through the increased attractiveness of existing or potential bus services), improved air quality and an improved street environment.

Financial and Staff Implications

26. The total cost of the proposed zone is estimated at £297,500, of which construction costs would be in the region of £96,500. The project is fully funded. The source of the funding is £268,000 from SCE, and £30,000 from developer funding.
27. Additional Civil Enforcement Officers would be required to enforce the zone, but the additional revenue cost would be recovered from permit and enforcement income.
28. When setting this year's budget, the Council recently approved a proposal to review permit charges to offset the current deficit in administering the Controlled Parking areas within Oxford. Any households which may fall within this proposed zone will be included in that consultation exercise when it is undertaken.

Conclusions

29. On the basis of the consultation response and the other factors mentioned in this report, officers consider that Iffley Fields should be excluded from the CPZ. Parking in Iffley Fields could be monitored before and after the scheme's introduction and minor additional yellow line restrictions promoted if necessary to tackle any obstructive or dangerous parking resulting from overspill. However, where there are no parking restrictions, the police would remain responsible for enforcing against obstructive parking, which generally occurs only as a result of residents' complaints.
30. There remains considerable strength of opinion against footway parking. However, as footway parking already occurs over much of this area, the proposals represent a significant improvement over current conditions, so officers believe there is no reason to change the design apart from in very specific locations.
31. Although 61% of respondents in the proposed CPZ area raised objections to the proposals (including objections to small details as well as more fundamental objections) it is significant that although consultation packs were sent to all properties there were no objections received from three quarters of them. It is also significant that as many as 37% of respondents took the time to return questionnaires indicating support for the scheme. Although the scheme is obviously controversial, officers consider that the benefits in terms of the scheme's overall objectives would outweigh the disbenefits raised by respondents in their objections.
32. Although there appears to be much less support for the scheme to the SE of Magdalen Road, officers consider that due to the street layout, this area would be likely to suffer from a significant level of overspill parking if it were not included. Moreover, as the housing is particularly dense in this area, with limited on-street space compared with the number of houses, overspill parking is likely to cause a nuisance to residents, particularly in the evenings. The

proposed scheme boundaries were set taking into account the street layout, housing density, and the availability of off-street parking.

33. If it is decided to progress the scheme, some of the objections raised could be addressed by small amendments that would be subject to minor consultation with residents and businesses in the immediate vicinity. These are listed at Annex 7.

RECOMMENDATIONS

34. **The Cabinet Member for Transport is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) authorise the making of the Oxfordshire County Council (Oxford – Magdalen Road area) (Controlled Parking Zone and Waiting Restrictions) Order 20**;**
 - (b) authorise officers to reconsult locally on amendments to the scheme, as set out in Annex 7 to this report; and**
 - (c) authorise the Head of Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport to carry out further minor amendments to the scheme and the Traffic Regulation Order that may be required when implementing the proposed parking zone.**

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Annexes: Annex 1 Location plan
Annex 2 Outline of previous consultation stages
Annex 3 Summary of main objections with officer response
Annex 4 Analysis of responses by street within the proposed CPZ area.
Annex 5 Analysis of responses by street in the proposed excluded area
Annex 6 Equality and inclusion
Annex 7 Recommended minor amendments (subject to local reconsultation)

Background papers: Document A Report on Feasibility Study
Document B Report on Initial Consultation
Document C Report on Informal Consultation
Document D Formal consultation documents and responses
Document E Re-consultation documents
Document F Re-consultation responses and officer comments

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