

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – 1 SEPTEMBER 2011

CHANGES TO PARKING CONTROLS IN IFFLEY ROAD, OXFORD

Report by the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Highways & Transport)

Introduction

1. This report sets out proposals to change the on-street parking controls on part of Iffley Road in Oxford to allow a new stretch of on-carriageway cycle lane to be created. This proposal is timed to coincide with the major maintenance works currently underway in Iffley Road for efficiency of implementation. A public and stakeholder consultation on the proposals has been completed, the results of which are summarised in the report. The report recommends that the proposals are implemented in full as advertised.

Policy context

2. The county council's Oxford area strategy (part of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2030) states that 'the environment for cycling will be improved to encourage more people to cycle, particularly for journeys to work and education'. Oxford's cycle network is very good, but there are significant gaps where no provision is made for cyclists. Often these gaps are in places where it is not straightforward to provide cycle facilities because the road is too narrow or is partly occupied by car parking, as on parts of Iffley Road.
3. The strategy recognises the importance of providing a joined up network of cycle routes across the city.
4. The council recognises that on-street parking is important for residents and businesses, particularly in parts of the city such as Iffley Road where off-street parking is in short supply.

Current situation

5. Iffley Road is an important arterial route, with higher cycle flows than Botley or Abingdon Road. An estimated 3900 cyclists use the part of Iffley Road between The Plain and Bullingdon Road in a 24 hour period on a weekday. An estimated 91% of these cycle journeys are made from Monday to Saturday, and of these an estimated 76% of journeys are made between 08.00 and 18.30. In the last 5 years, 4 accidents involving cyclists have been recorded on this same part of Iffley Road. These include an incident where the driver of a parked vehicle opened their door into a cyclist's path, causing serious injury to the cyclist.

6. This length of road already has a cycle lane northbound towards the city centre from Jackdaw Lane, which is due to be extended as far as Donnington Bridge Road when phase 2 of the maintenance scheme takes place. However, no provision is made for southbound cyclists because the east side of the road is occupied by parking bays. These bays are part of the East Oxford Controlled Parking Zone, and provide a mixture of residents only and public parking totalling approximately 47 spaces, assuming 5 metres per vehicle. There is no parallel cycle route available on quieter side streets.

Proposals

7. The changes advertised in the consultation are described in detail at Annex 1. Copies of the relevant legal documents are available in the Members' Resource Centre.
8. The changes advertised seek to strike a balance between providing parking spaces for residents and businesses and providing a continuous uninterrupted cycle facility at the times of day when cyclists will benefit most from it. In recognition of the demands on parking in this area, the proposals allow on-street parking in the early mornings, evenings, overnight and all day on Sundays. These are times when traffic and cycle flows are lower and when demands on parking are higher.
9. It is very difficult to say with certainty whether it will be possible for the parking displaced from Iffley Road to be accommodated in the immediately adjacent streets at all times. Any survey would inevitably be a snapshot of a very fluid situation so would be of no real value in assessing the likely impacts. It is therefore better to take a cautious approach and assume that there will be times when residents are inconvenienced by the proposed changes, particularly immediately after implementation before people have adapted to the changes.
10. Cycle lanes perform several important functions. They make drivers more aware of cyclists, they make cyclists feel more comfortable and they allow cyclists to pass queuing traffic without using the footway or opposite carriageway. There is no evidence to suggest cycle lanes at this location would increase traffic speeds or endanger cyclists, particularly as speed-reducing features (removal of centre line, side road entry treatments and a new zebra crossing) will be implemented at the same time.

Consultation

11. Details of the proposals were distributed to approximately 500 properties in the area, as well as local councillors and stakeholder groups.
12. 53 responses were received. 57% of respondents supported the proposals, while 38% objected. 5% expressed no clear view. Two petitions were received, both in opposition to the proposals. However, both petitions somewhat misrepresent the proposed changes by apparently omitting

important details such as the proposal to retain morning, evening and Sunday parking.

13. The objections were primarily from residents and business in the immediate vicinity, concerned about the reduced parking opportunities. 80% of objections were from people living on Iffley Road or in the immediate vicinity, 15% of objections were from further afield and 5% were from addresses unknown. The main objections are that the reduction in on-street parking is unacceptable, because there is insufficient capacity in the side streets to accommodate the displaced parking and removal of parking will increase speeds and reduce cyclists' safety.
14. The support was primarily from people living in other parts of the city and from the stakeholder groups, who welcomed the improved conditions for cyclists. However, it is worth noting that 27% of consultation responses supporting the proposals were from people living in the immediate vicinity of the proposals.
15. All of the comments received are summarised at Annex 2. Unabridged copies of all the responses are available in the Members' Resource Centre, along with the petitions received.

Officer response to consultation

16. An officer response to the main objections to the proposals are set out at Annex 2.
17. Clearly there is significant concern amongst residents and businesses about the reduced parking but also significant support from cyclists for the proposed cycle lane. It is very difficult to say exactly what the impact on residents and businesses will be, but it is highly likely that there will be some inconvenience, particularly in the short term while people adjust to the changes. This must be weighed against the benefits for cyclists and for the wider benefits associated with increased levels of cycling.
18. It is common for residents' and customer parking to be restricted on major streets as busy as Iffley Road, unless the street is very wide. This is because a large number of people rely on such streets for movement, whether by car, bus, bicycle or on foot. Whilst every effort should be made to accommodate appropriate parking on such busy routes, the movement functions should not be compromised.
19. In particular, the county council is keen to fill in gaps in the city's cycle network to encourage more people to cycle. The easy to deliver, uncontroversial cycle facilities have, on the whole, already been provided in Oxford. The challenge in creating a joined up network is tackling those locations such as Iffley Road where providing cycle facilities is controversial, complicated or expensive and where there are likely to be disadvantages as well as advantages.

20. The proposals do not ignore the needs of residents and businesses. They allow for parking at times when there is less traffic and fewer cyclists, including all day on Sunday.
21. Taking all of the above points and the consultation results into consideration, officers have concluded that the wider benefits in this case outweigh the disadvantages for residents and businesses.

Financial and Staff Implications

22. The changes to the traffic regulation order will cost a total of approximately £3,000, including advertisement and consultation. This will be funded from budget set aside for the improvement element of the current Iffley Road scheme. The physical works will be at reduced cost if implemented as part of the major maintenance scheme currently under construction and are unlikely to exceed £2,000. The minimal officer time required to complete the implementation can be accommodated within existing staffing levels.

RECOMMENDATION

23. **The Cabinet Member for Transport is RECOMMENDED to approve the changes to the East Oxford Controlled Parking Zone Traffic Regulation Order as advertised and set out in Annex 1 to this report.**

Steve Howell

Deputy Director for Director for Environment & Economy (Highways & Transport)

Background papers: Consultation documentation

Contact Officer: Martin Kraftl - 01865 815786

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