
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 21st September 2010
Subject: Residents' Survey & Report – Parking Restrictions in Kendall Drive, Flitwick
Report of: Basil Jackson Assistant Director for Highways and Transportation
Summary: The purpose of this report is to present a residents' survey concerning parking in the Kendal Drive area of Flitwick.

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Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Flitwick

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Financial:

None as a result of this report

Legal:

None as a result of this report.

Risk Management:

None as a result of this report.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as a result of this report.

Equalities/Human Rights:

None as a result of this report.

Community Safety:

None as a result of this report.

Sustainability:

None as a result of this report

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles is requested to note the contents of the report.

Background and Information.

1. A report has been received via Councillor Stephen Male from a resident of Kendal Drive, Flitwick containing the results of a local parking survey and suggesting possible actions.
2. When the outcomes of the Flitwick parking study were implemented Kendal Drive and the culs-de-sac off it were all subject to part time waiting restrictions designed to prevent all day parking by rail commuters. This is one of the residential areas closest to the station. Following this the residents of Grassmere Close asked residents parking.
3. Conventional residents parking would not have been cost effective in this small close so it was agreed it would be implemented on an experimental basis by leaving the yellow lines in place to apply to non permit holders but permitting those in possession of a permit to park on the lines within Grassmere Close only.
4. Following the experimental period it was felt that it had been successful and the situation has now been made permanent.
5. Residents of Kendal Drive and the culs-de-sac leading from it have expressed an interest in something similar and to test opinion have carried out their own surveys.
6. Two private surveys of residents have been undertaken during 2010. It was acknowledged by the organiser that the original one was overly complex. Hence, a second survey was conducted which simply asked those living in Kendal Drive and the immediately adjoining side roads if they would like to have a residents' permit zone (RPZ) covering their streets. It is this second survey upon which this report concentrates.
7. There are approximately 65 homes in the area and 29 households responded to the survey. Of those, 21 said that they would like to apply for an RPZ and the remaining 8 said they would not. Each individual street shows support for an RPZ, albeit in some cases the number of survey returns is very low.
8. Generally, residents consider that the current restrictions have significantly improved the parking situation in their streets, mainly by removing commuter parking. They also feel that on-street parking difficulties experienced at the start and end of the school have eased a little.
9. Given the apparent support for an RPZ the person leading the campaign has suggested the following way forward:-
 - (a) The whole area becomes a resident only parking area.
 - (b) Retention of the existing alternating yellow line restrictions.

(c) No Marked-out parking bays.

10. In essence, they want to retain the existing restrictions, but allow residents the option to purchase a permit to be exempt from the restrictions.

Conclusion and the way Forward

11. The type of restrictions that are currently in place are effective at addressing parking by non-residents, but it is accepted that they do have drawbacks. The main one being that those residents who wish to park on-street during the operational days are required to move their vehicles during the restriction 'changeover' period, which in the case of Kendal Drive is between 12.45 and 13.15pm. This clearly has an impact of those households who have insufficient off-road parking for their needs and there appear to be a small number of households in this situation in Kendal Drive.
12. Consequently, the residents' desire to have the option to purchase a permit to exempt them from the current restriction is understandable and appears to be a reasonable request. However, this would require significant changes to the existing restrictions.
13. Regulations governing how parking controls are marked and signed dictate that where waiting is prohibited, either at all times or for specified periods, these lengths of road are indicated by yellow lines. Where parking is permitted but conditions apply, such as residents' permit zones, these are marked by white boxes. It is not normally permissible to provide residents' permits to allow vehicles to be parked on yellow lines. This is the reason that the Grasmere Close scheme was implemented under the experimental title.
14. In addition there are some practical difficulties in allowing residents to be exempt from the existing yellow lines. For example, most vehicles would be switched from one side of the road to the other at lunchtime, but those with permits would not be moved. This may create some vehicular conflict. Also, if certain vehicles are seen to be disregarding the yellow lines, this may encourage others to do likewise, which may bring the restrictions into disrepute.
15. There would appear to be several possible options to address residents' concerns, and these are detailed below:-
- Remove the existing restrictions and replace them with a full RPZ. This would require a full and formal consultation of all residents and would only proceed if more than 50% of the households were in favour and prepared to pay for permits. Once implemented it would require all residents wishing to park on the road to buy a permit, which would remove any requirement to move their cars at lunchtime. It would still remove all commuter parking. A possible disadvantage is that white parking boxes would need to be marked, which would regulate parking to such an extent that the overall number of parking spaces would be significantly reduced. A further drawback is that all residents who wished to park on-street during the operational hours would need to buy a permit.

- An RPZ could be introduced, but signposted by a new type of RPZ entry sign that would inform drivers entering the area that parking was for permit holders only between the prescribed hours. This type of sign does not require road markings, so the existing lines could be removed or left to wear away. The advantage is that white boxes would not be required, so parking capacity would not be affected. However, this system relies on permit holders parking in a sensible and considerate manner. A possible disadvantage is that the removal of some upright signage may lead to non-residents believing that parking is unrestricted. The support of the community would still be required at the same level.
 - The type of parking restriction currently used could be retained, but the operational hours changed. For example, the restrictions could apply from, say, 9.00am to 9.15am from Monday to Friday and would apply to both side of the road. This would mean that rail commuters would be very unlikely to park there as they normally need to park before 9.15am. After 9.15am residents would be able park their cars on street for the remainder of the day without having to move them. A disadvantage is that all cars would need to be removed from the street during the operational 15 minutes. However, this is a time when some residents may be away from home, for example taking children to school. Unless, however, this were to be applied across Flitwick this would introduce an inconsistency into the overall parking regime that the original scheme sought to introduce with consequent confusion for residents, commuters and enforcers.
16. If a suitable parking scheme could be agreed there would inevitably be the issue of setting a precedent. There are a number of streets in Flitwick that have suffered from commuter parking and the type of alternating yellow line restrictions, such as those in Kendal Drive, have been introduced to address the difficulties. The character of many of these roads is similar, i.e. most properties have off-road parking, but some have insufficient for their needs. As a result, residents of these roads may well demand a similar scheme to Kendal Drive and this would have significant resource implications.
17. It is considered that the existing restrictions in the Kendal Drive area have been very successful in addressing commuter parking and this has been acknowledged by the survey organiser. However, there appear to be a small number of households who are disadvantaged by the restrictions and would favour a change to the present situation. Whilst these difficulties are acknowledged, it is often impractical to tailor on-street parking controls to the needs of individual residents.
18. In recent years, significant resources have been committed to resolving parking issues in Flitwick, including the Kendal Drive area. It is difficult to justify additional expenditure amending a system that for the most part works well.

19. Before making any changes it would be necessary for Central Bedfordshire to undertake its own consultation to ascertain the support for each of the residents parking options and for that support to represent in excess of 50% of the households not the respondents to be in support of the changes. This exercise would be in itself costly to undertake.
20. It is therefore proposed that whilst there is a clear support for change from some of the residents this, as currently represented, does not comprise sufficient reason for change. To determine this further survey work would be required. The proposed Local Transport Plan 3 document currently in production will target available finance for the coming year at those areas and projects that it considers will represent the best value for the priority areas selected. At this juncture it must be considered unlikely that schemes such as this would achieve sufficient priority for inclusion in a work programme especially considering that Flitwick has not been selected as one of the first tranche of priority areas to be considered in LTP3.
21. There would be no immediate barrier, however, if the scheme were to be considered a priority by the Flitwick Town Council to that body funding the necessary work.
22. It is therefore requested that the portfolio holder note the content of this report and that the lead petitioners be advised of the outcome.