
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 10 November 2010
Subject: Bidwell Hill, Houghton Regis - Resolution of objections to the proposed Prohibition of Waiting
Report of: Basil Jackson, Assistant Director of Highways and Transportation.
Summary: To report to the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles the receipt of objections to proposals for waiting restrictions in Bidwell Hill, Houghton Regis and seek approval for the implementation of this scheme.

Contact Officer: Gary Baldwin – Traffic Engineer
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Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Houghton Regis
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

To improve highway safety and facilitate the free flow of traffic.

Financial:

Minimal cost can be accommodated within current budgets

Legal:

None as part of this report

Risk Management:

None as part of this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as part of this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None as part of this report

Community Safety:

The proposal will improve road safety

Sustainability:

None as part of this report

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the proposal to extend the existing No Waiting Restriction on the south side of Bidwell Hill, Houghton Regis by 16.5 metres be implemented as set out in this report.

Background and Information

1. The Council has received a number of complaints about parked vehicles in Bidwell Hill near to its junction with Bedford Road. There are existing 'no waiting at any time' restrictions covering the junction itself, but these only extend a very short distance into Bidwell Hill. As a result, when vehicles are parked at the end of the existing double yellow lines this reduces the carriageway to a single car's width which creates conflict between vehicles turning into and out of the junction.
2. The matter was investigated and it was considered that if vehicles were prohibited from parking on the south side of Bidwell Hill for a distance of 16.5 metres this would allow sufficient road width to remove any vehicular conflict. A proposal was drawn up and this was formally advertised by public notice in August/September 2010. Consultations were also carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, the Town Council and Elected Members.
3. Two objections have been received, both of which were from local residents. They are objecting because the proposal states that the restrictions are being promoted on the grounds of improving road safety, yet they are unaware of any accidents that have occurred at this particular location. In their view, the junction is wide with good visibility and they fail to see how the proposed restrictions will aid visibility or improve road safety.
4. In addition, both objectors say that they have witnessed accidents on Bedford Road itself and that money would be more wisely spent on installing road safety measures on that stretch of road. They feel that improvements for pedestrians and dealing with speeding vehicles should be a higher priority than the proposed waiting restrictions.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

5. At the present time, vehicles are often parked at the end of the existing double yellow lines in Bidwell Hill, which means that they are very close to the Bedford Road junction. This creates conflict on those occasions when a vehicle is turning into Bidwell Hill from Bedford Road and an opposing vehicle is passing the parked cars whilst leaving Bidwell Hill. The proposal should remove this conflict by improving visibility and ensuring that sufficient road width remains to allow vehicles to pass one another.

6. The restrictions have been limited to the south side of Bidwell Hill only and for a relatively short length, so they are unlikely to create any significant difficulties with displacement of parking to adjacent lengths of road.
7. The removal of parked cars at this location will also improve visibility for pedestrians crossing the Bidwell Hill junction when walking along Bedford Road.
8. It is acknowledged that the proposal will have a relatively minor impact on road safety in the area and will not address wider issues such as excessive vehicle speed. However, the proposal is a low cost measure aimed at addressing a particular hazard at a specific location. The cost of introducing the restrictions would be insufficient to provide any significant road safety remedial measures on Bedford Road.
9. The collision record has been checked for that stretch of Bedford Road near to the Bidwell Hill junction. This shows that during the past 3 years there have been two slight injury accidents, both of which occurred just to the south of the Bidwell Hill junction. One of these involved a pedestrian being struck by a vehicle heading north-westwards in heavy slow moving traffic. The other involved a vehicle travelling north-westwards hitting a vehicle that was waiting for a third vehicle to complete a turn right into a residential driveway.
10. Whilst there are no recorded collisions involving parked cars at this location, it is considered essential that parking is prohibited to ensure that motorists are able to safely negotiate the junction and to improve visibility for pedestrians.

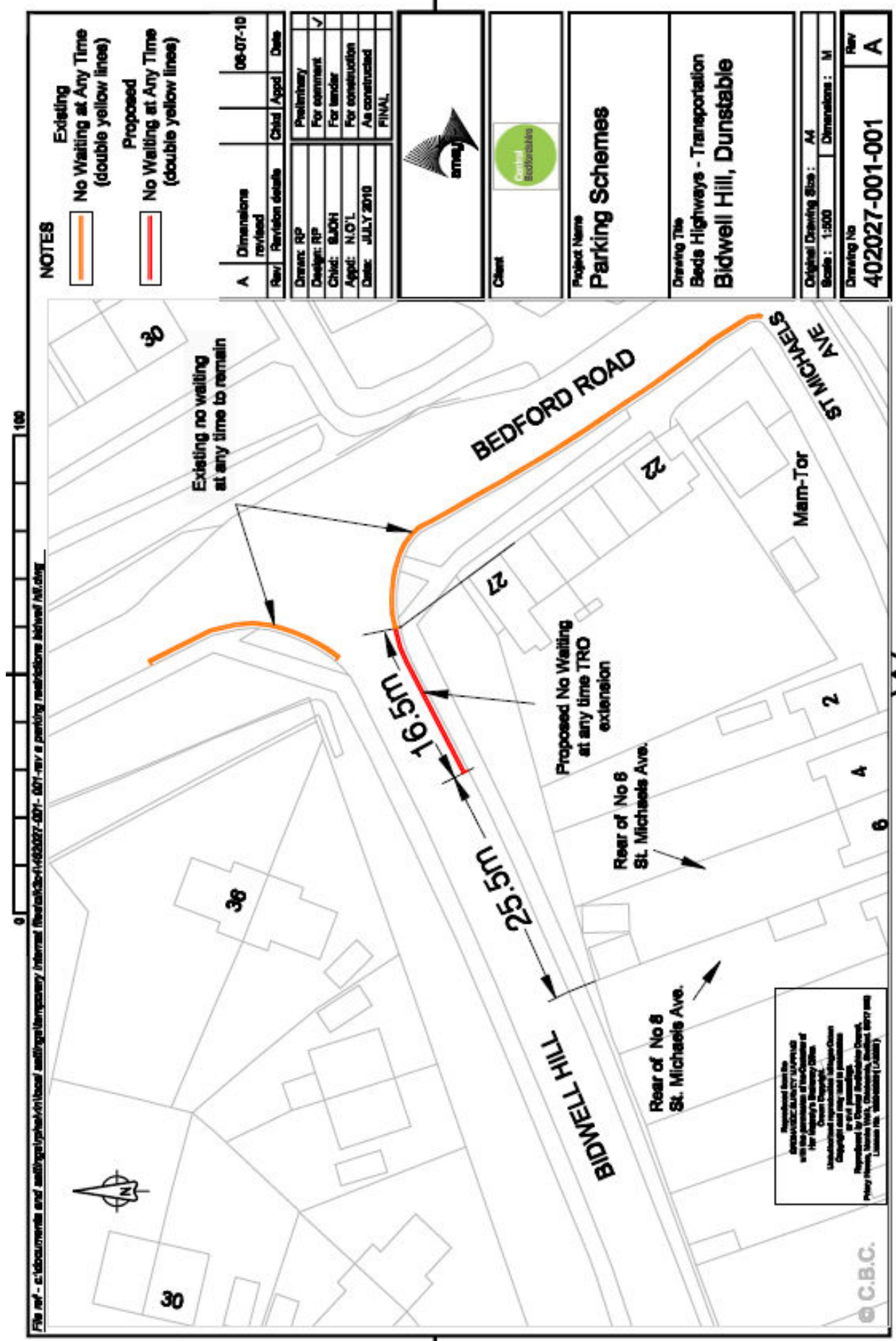
Appendices:

Appendix A – Location plan

Appendix B – Public notice

Appendix C – Objections to proposal

APPENDIX A



PUBLIC NOTICE

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO INTRODUCE A NO WAITING RESTRICTIONS ON BIDWELL HILL, HOUGHTON REGIS, DUNSTABLE.

Reason for proposal: The proposed Order is considered necessary on the grounds of promoting road safety. The waiting restrictions in Bidwell Hill would improve visibility for motorists entering and exiting the junction.

Therefore, Central Bedfordshire Council proposes to make a Traffic Regulation Order as follows:

Effect of the Order:

To introduce No Waiting at Any Time (double yellow lines) on the following length of road in Houghton Regis, Dunstable:-

- Bidwell Hill Houghton Regis, Dunstable:- From a point 25.5 metres due east of the rear party wall between 6 and 8 St. Michaels Avenue, for a distance of approximately 16.5 metres.

Further Details: of the proposed order and plan 402027/001/001- Rev A may be examined during normal office hours at Houghton Regis Library, Bedford Square, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5ES. These plans will be placed on deposit until 6 weeks after the Order is made or, until it is decided not to continue with the proposal. Phone Ron Phelvin on:- 08453656009 for further details.

Objections: should be sent in writing to the Orders and Commons Registration Officer, Countryside Access Service, Central Bedfordshire Council, PO Box 1395, Bedford MK42 5AN, or (e-mail: chris.heard@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) stating the grounds on which they are made by 10th September 2010.

Order Title: if made will be "Central Bedfordshire Council (Bedfordshire County Council) (Civil Enforcement Area and Special Enforcement Area) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2008) (Variation No *) Order 200**".

PO Box 1395
Bedford MK42 5AN

Basil Jackson
Assistant Director for Highways

13 August 2010

APPENDIX C

CBC PROHIBITION OF WAITING ON BIDWELL HILL, H/REGIS

Comments re the above order:

I have lived at xx Bedford Rd for 28yrs & have never known of any accidents on this junction. The Bidwell Rd/ Bedford Rd junction is very wide, with 20yd of pathway & grass banks leading up to the houses lining the street, therefore vision in & out of Bidwell Hill is very clear and open. I fail to understand how an extension of double yellow lines (further away from the junction) would improve visibility at the junction. The existing double yellow lines at the notoriously dangerous junction St Michaels Ave / Bedford Road have done nothing to stop accidents there.

Most neighbours living along the proposed stretch of road have lived here for many years but I have never heard of any comments regarding that junction to be hazardous. They do however, talk about the excessive speeding of traffic on Bedford Road and complain that it is very dangerous to cross. I am sure these people would have no objections to road safety being improved on Bedford Road.

During my time on Bedford Road I have witnessed numerous accidents on Bedford Road itself or, particularly, at the St Michaels Ave/ Bedford Rd junction. An accident there, at the end of July, which involved one car coming out of St Michaels Ave crashing into a car coming along Bedford Road (the usual scenario) resulted in 1 of the cars crashing into the front wall of 22 Bedford Rd. A bollard near the house was demolished, gas mains were fractured & occupants evacuated. Any pedestrian there would have been killed. A similar accident a few weeks earlier resulted in 1 man lying on the grass outside the vicarage, being stabilised by the paramedics. If road safety is your priority, then surely the area where these accidents actually occur needs your attention, rather than a wide and comparatively quiet residential road.

Residents, many being elderly, have to walk on one side of Bedford Rd down to the lights at the Kings Arms pub to cross the road and then have to walk back up again. Children have to take their chances running across the road to get to school in the morning and in the afternoon. This road safety issue will not be alleviated with an extension of double yellow lines on Bidwell Hill.

In summary, although I applaud some recognition of a dire need to improve road safety on Bedford Road, I feel that any impact made by your proposals would be minimal. There is an urgent need for road safety to be improved along the stretch of Bedford Road around the St Michael's Avenue junction. In my opinion, during financially restrictive times, money would be better spent on addressing the safety of pedestrians and residents by putting more bollards on Bedford Road and dealing with the constantly excessive speeding of vehicles on Bedford Road.

Thank you for your attention.

Bidwell Hill Proposal:

I have recently spoken to Councillor McVicar about the proposal to extend the double yellow lines along this residential road. He will, I am sure, put forward my views during the meeting re. the proposals.

My main concern is the waste of scarce funding. I live in a cottage on Bedford Road (which was recently hit by a car speeding along Bedford Rd) and I am very concerned about the safety of pedestrians and residents along this 'race track'. Councillor McVicar assisted to organise the replacement of the one concrete bollard which had been sheared by the impact of the car, but told me that there was no funding for further protection, eg, further bollards along the roadside or speed cameras. Having been a resident here for 24 years I cannot see that the extension of double yellow lines up Bidwell Hill Road will have an impact on the improvement of road safety in this area given the history of the accidents here. All the incidents & accidents that I am aware of have occurred at the St Michael's Avenue junction, or on Bedford Road itself - simply due to excessive speeding and / or overtaking.

Please, if there is funding available, can it be used effectively in promoting improved road safety and adherence to the speed limit - where it is genuinely needed.

However, I am highly encouraged and pleased that the Council are, at long last, committed to "promoting road safety" in the area.

Thank you