
Meeting: Traffic Management Committee
Date: 19 June 2012
Subject: Residents' Petition for the Removal of Parking Restrictions in Capron Road, Dunstable
Report of: Basil Jackson, Assistant Director of Highways and Transport
Summary: The report provides Traffic Management Committee with details relating to a request made within the petition to remove the single yellow line (7am – 7pm) parking restriction in Capron Road, Dunstable. The report seeks the approval of The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services to consider a relaxation of the operating times of the restriction.

Contact Officer: David Bowie, Head of Service, Traffic Management
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Dunstable, Northfields
Function of: Highways and Transport

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Council priorities affected by this paper are:

- creating safer communities; and
- managing growth effectively.

Financial:

There is currently no budget allocation for the amendment of parking restrictions in Capron Road, Dunstable. Potential changes to the current parking restrictions will require the advertising of a new Traffic Regulation Order and the amendment of signs and road markings. The cost of changes is estimated between £8k – £10k depending upon local surveys.

Legal:

Central Bedfordshire Council is the highway and traffic authority for the road network in area of Central Bedfordshire. An important function of the Authority is to manage on and off-street parking. To be legally enforceable, parking services must be compliant with the Traffic Management Act 2004

Risk Management:

Failure to deliver efficient and effective parking enforcement would be detrimental to the safe and expeditious use of the road network and could be damaging to economic growth. Failure to deliver a cost neutral parking enforcement service could have detrimental financial implications to the Authority. Failure to deliver an effective approach to parking may result in reputational damage to the Council.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as part of this report.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Creating an attractive and accessible public realm has a part to play in getting people out and about. One objective of enforcing traffic restrictions is to ensure that the most vulnerable members of the community have fair access to the public realm. Disabled people, in particular, place a high priority on the provision and enforcement of disabled parking bays and the provision of dropped kerbs.

An efficiently managed parking system is therefore crucial for allowing equality of opportunity.

Community Development/Safety:

Removal of the existing parking restrictions is likely to have a detrimental effect on road safety and free flow traffic conditions in Capron Road.

Sustainability:

None as part of this report.

RECOMMENDATION:

That, following consideration of the matters raised within the report and petition, the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services grants permission to temporarily reduce the enforceable hours to 8.00 am – 6.00 pm Monday to Saturday. If, as a result of these changes there are problems with unsafe and obstructive parking in Capron Road, then normal enforcement hours will be immediately re-introduced.

Background and Information.

1. Capron Road in Dunstable has a relatively narrow carriageway and is one way working from Olma Road to the A5 High Street North. As parking on the carriageway cannot be facilitated on both sides of the carriageway without blocking the road a single yellow line, operative between 7am and 7pm (everyday), was introduced (in October 1997) along the south eastern side of the road. Due to the type of the housing in Capron Road not all residents have, or are able to have, off-street parking.
2. At night residents park along the south eastern side of the road and, to avoid blocking the carriageway, generally park half on and half off the footway. In some instances parking on the footway has been such that an obstruction to pedestrians (particularly wheel chairs users) has occurred. However, as footfall in the evening is significantly reduced after 7pm, parking in this way can be allowed to occur.
3. During the day the road must serve its normal function and usual day-to-day activities need to be facilitated (for example deliveries, refuse collection etc as well as providing emergency service access to the road). In addition, uncontrolled parking on the footways cannot be permitted due to the issues of obstruction to pedestrians.
4. As with any narrow road residents will always be concerned about emergency service access and, during the day, this can be more problematic than during the evening. The reason for this is that during the evening there is a better chance that residents are at home and therefore able to move their vehicles if required to do so in an emergency.
5. Having checked with Waste Services, refuse collection in Capron Road does not occur until after 8.00am. The extent of the working day is now generally considered to be 8.00am to 6.00pm with a working week being Monday to Saturday. In the absence of any other compelling information, it could be reasonably be concluded that the existing parking restriction in Capron Road is unduly prohibitive.
6. As with any parking restriction there is a risk that there will be detrimental effects if the restriction is reduced or removed. In the instance of Capron Road it would be entirely inappropriate, for very obvious road safety and obstruction reasons, to remove the restrictions entirely from the south eastern side of the carriageway.
7. A more amenable approach would be to enforce the restrictions on a trial basis between 8am and 6.00pm Monday to Saturday. The trial should last a minimum of 6 months in order to determine whether or not the new enforcement times have given rise to a detriment to safe and unobstructed use of Capron Road (including the footways).

8. If after the trial period it is apparent that there has been no detriment to the use of Capron Road then the Traffic Order can be advertised and amended accordingly (funds permitting).
9. Longer term, the Council is looking to introduce a policy to allow formalised part on and part off footway parking in narrow residential streets where the footways can facilitate this without obstructing the passage of pedestrians. Capron Road may be suitable for this type of approach which would result in parking provision on both sides of the road in marked bays only throughout the day. There would be a cost to the Council to do this which is estimated at £12k.

Conclusion and Way Forward

10. In the short term, permission should be granted to trial, for a minimum of a 6 month period, a reduction in the enforceable hours from 'No waiting 7am to 7pm' to 'No waiting 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday. If the trial proves successful the traffic order and signs should be amended accordingly (subject to funding).
11. Longer term, subject to the Council adopting the policy to allow half on and half off footway parking, Capron Road is recommended for formalised part on and part off footway parking (funds permitting).

Appendices:

Appendix A – Capron Road Residents' Petition

