
Meeting: Delegated Decisions by the Executive Member for Community Services on Traffic Regulation Orders

Date: 9 December 2014

Subject: Biggleswade Road, Potton – Consider Objections to Proposed No Waiting at any time

Report of: Paul Mason, Head of Highways

Summary: This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Community Services for the implementation of No Waiting on a length of Biggleswade Road, Potton.

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman
nick.chapman@amey.co.uk

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Potton

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The proposal will improve road safety and improve traffic flow by prohibiting parking on this length of road.

Financial:

These works are being funded from the Council budget allocated to minor traffic management and parking schemes.

Legal:

None from this report

Risk Management:

None from this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None from this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None from this report

Community Safety:

The proposal will improve road safety for all road users.

Sustainability:

None from this report

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. That the proposal to introduce No Waiting at any time on a length of Biggleswade Road, Potton be implemented as published.**

Background and Information

1. Biggleswade Road is the main road into Potton from the south and forms part of the B1040 route, so carries a reasonable volume of through traffic. The specific location where restrictions are proposed is close to the junction with the B1042 at Station Road/Blackbird Street.
2. There are a number of terraced properties alongside this length of road which have limited off-road parking available. In recent years, increasing numbers of vehicles have been parked on the road, which has prompted complaints from road users. The parked cars are located on the inside of a bend which obstructs visibility for approaching drivers, which creates vehicular conflict. Queuing traffic backs up to the nearby junction, which causes issues with turning movements. The parked cars also restrict visibility for drivers emerging from the adjacent filling station.
3. In September 2013, the historic double yellow lines were extended in an attempt to address concerns that were being raised. Those proposals were very much a compromise solution aimed at removing parking closest to the junction of the B1040 and B1042, but still retaining some on-street parking to help residents. Regrettably, this did not resolve all of the issue and the Council has continued to receive complaints about parking at this location.
4. The current No Waiting proposal was formally advertised by public notice in October and November 2014. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, Potton Town Council and the Ward Member. Residents living alongside this length of road were individually consulted.

Representations and Responses

5. A total of fourteen representations have been received, which comprise four objections, six in support of the proposals and four other comments. Copies of the correspondence are included in Appendix D and the main comments received are summarised below:-
6. The main points of objection are summarised below:-
 - a) The parked cars act as traffic calming and the yellow lines will increase traffic speeds, which are already high in Biggleswade Road.
 - b) The parked cars create only a short and insignificant delay to traffic.

- c) The parking restrictions and resultant increase in speeds would create difficulties for pedestrians, so a crossing should be provided.
- d) Biggleswade Road is being targeted for waiting restrictions, but similar difficulties occur at other locations in Pottun, but no action is being taken to address those issues.
- e) The yellow lines will result in parking being displaced to other areas thereby simply transferring the present issues and irritating residents of those roads.
- f) Parking is already in short supply in the town and the Council should do more to provide better parking facilities.

7. Central Bedfordshire Highways' response to the points above are as follows:-

It is accepted that the introduction of double yellow lines over a significant length of road can result in an increase in traffic speeds. However, the proposal is to extend the existing double yellow lines by only 31 metres, which together with the close proximity of the junction, is unlikely to have a significant impact on speeds. The traffic speed data quoted was collected outside no.52 Biggleswade Road, which is some distance further south of the section of road where the double yellow lines are proposed where we would expect speeds to be higher. There are plans to build a roundabout to serve a new development off Biggleswade Road, which will help moderate traffic speeds.

The current level of on-street parking does not generally cause significant time delays for traffic. However, because the cars are parked on the inside of a bend they obscure visibility for approaching drivers, which creates obvious vehicular conflict which has road safety implications. These difficulties extend back to the nearby junction, which turning difficulties and causes driver frustration, particularly at busier times of the day.

The provision of a pedestrian crossing with its associated zig-zag marking would result in even more severe parking restrictions; i.e. drivers would not even be able to stop to load and unload, so would not help residents.

It is accepted that the implementation of more waiting restrictions would mean that parking would transfer to other roads in the area and it is acknowledged that on-street parking is in relatively short supply in the area. The proposed restrictions will result in the loss of 5 or 6 parking spaces. The expectation is that parking will transfer to lengths of road where it will not create the same difficulties as occur on the length of road where restrictions are currently proposed.

The provision of off-road residential parking facilities is not a priority for the Council and funding is generally not provided for that purpose. The Council's Highway Service is primarily concerned with the safe and efficient management of the highway network.

8. Those offering support for the proposed restrictions identify a number of issues such as near misses, delays and visibility concerns.

9. Regarding the other representations received; two of them are generally in support of the published restrictions, but are concerned that they will result in parked cars migrating to other length of Biggleswade Road, such as further south on the west side. They consider that the restrictions should be extended further to address these potential problems.

A resident of The Ridgeway supports the published restrictions, but is concerned that if they are introduced more cars will be parked in their road. Parking is already heavy in that road.

The other representation suggests that the restrictions that were introduced in 2013 should be removed since the road is wider at that location.

10. We know from experience that parking restrictions result in the migration of parking to other roads, but it is often difficult to predict exactly what will happen. At this stage it is recommended that the published restrictions are implemented and monitored to see if any significant concerns develop. Further restrictions could be considered if deemed necessary.

The Ridgeway is a residential street, located adjacent to the length of Biggleswade Road where the yellow lines are proposed and is the obvious place where displaced cars could be parked. The Ridgeway already has parking restrictions on the section that extends directly from Biggleswade Road, which were designed to ensure that traffic is still able to pass. It is possible that parking may become heavier further into The Ridgeway and if this causes significant difficulties then more restrictions may need to be considered.

Given the previous comments in this report about parking at this location, the removal of any existing double yellow lines could not be recommended.

11. Bedfordshire Police have raised no objection to the proposals.

Conclusion

12. It is acknowledged that the proposed restrictions will result in a marginal increase in traffic speeds and will create some parking difficulties for adjacent residents. However, it is considered that in the wider interests of road safety and efficient management of the highway that the proposed restrictions should be implemented as published.
13. If the approved the works are expected to take place within the current financial year.

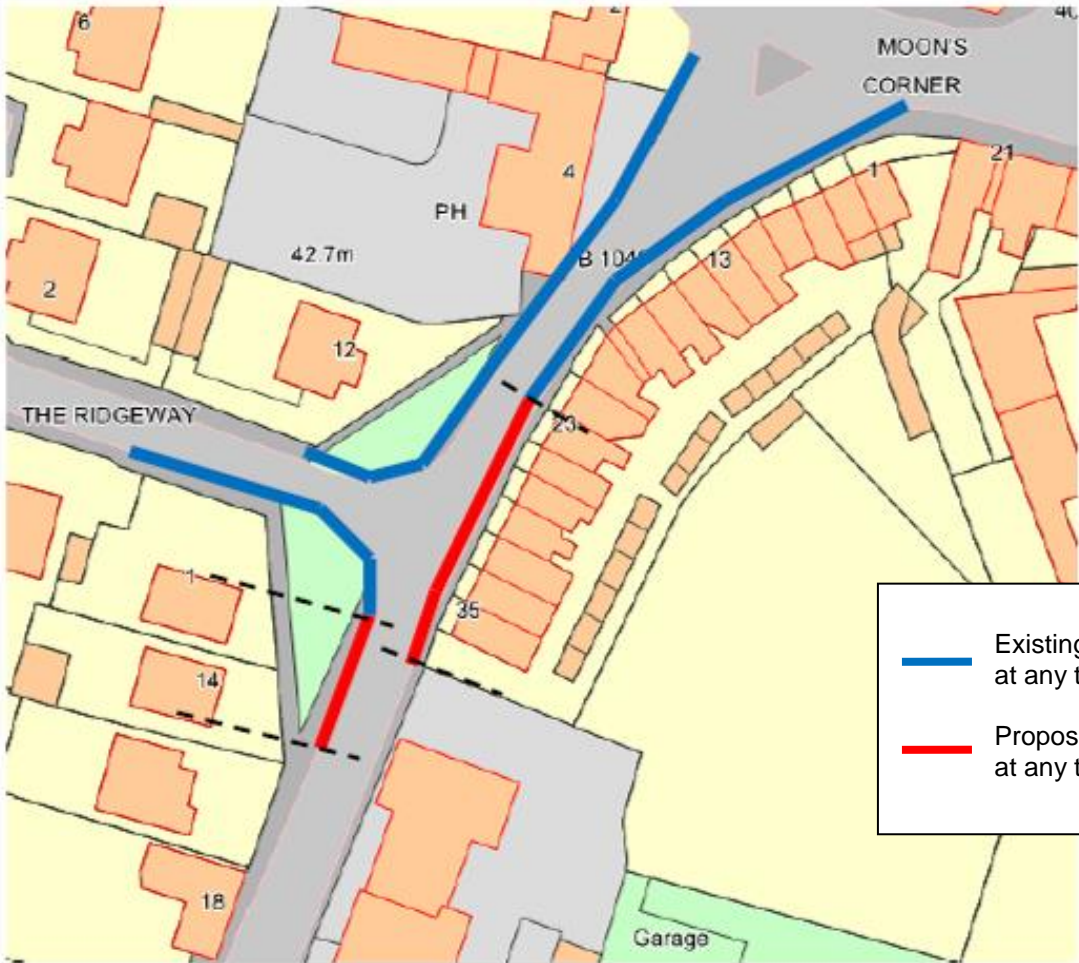
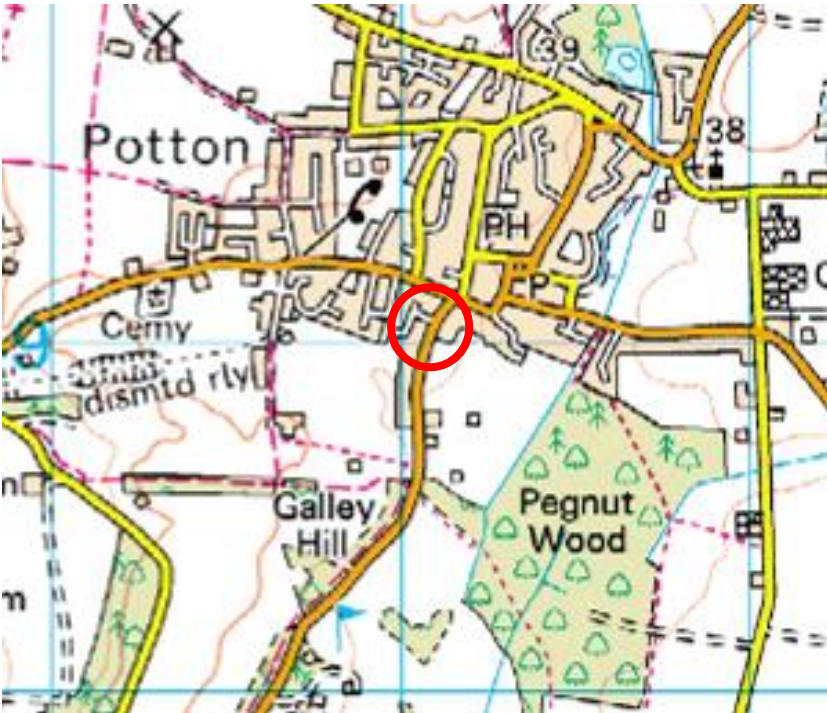
Appendices:

Appendix A – Location Plan and Drawing of Proposal

Appendix B – Public Notices of Proposals

Appendix C – Objections and Representations

Appendix A



Existing No Waiting at any time
Proposed No Waiting at any time



PUBLIC NOTICE

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO INTRODUCE NO WAITING IN BIGGLESWADE ROAD, POTTON

Reason for proposal: The proposed Order is considered necessary in the general interest of promoting road safety and/or facilitating the passage of traffic on the road. The on-street parking that takes place at this location obstructs the movement of traffic and obscures visibility for drivers emerging from side turnings. The proposals would ensure that this length of road remains clear of parked vehicles.

Effect of the Order:

To introduce No Waiting at any time on the following length of road in Pottton:-

1. Biggleswade Road, east side from a point in line with the property boundary of nos.21 and 23 Biggleswade Road extending in a southerly direction to a point approximately 4 metres south of the south flank wall of no.35 Biggleswade Road.
2. Biggleswade Road, west side from a point in line with the north flank wall of no.1 The Ridgeway extending in a southerly direction to a point in line with the south flank wall of no.14 Biggleswade Road.

Further Details may be examined during normal office hours at the address shown below, viewed online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices or tel. 0845 3656116.

Comments should be sent in writing to the Transportation Manager, Central Bedfordshire Highways, Woodlands Annexe, Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7NU or e-mail centralbedsconsultation@amey.co.uk by 4 November 2014. Any objections must state the grounds on which they are made.

Order Title: If made will be "Central Bedfordshire Council (Bedfordshire County Council (District of Mid Bedfordshire) (Civil Enforcement Area and Special Enforcement Area) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2008) (Variation No.*) Order 201**"

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Chicksands
Shefford SG17 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait
Director of Community Services

10 October 2014

Appendix C

OBJECTIONS

In response to your proposed extension of the double yellow lines on Biggleswade Road in Potton I would like to raise a few points and ask some questions:

1) I have yet to see any evidence that the parking is dangerous. Do you have any details of a safety analysis taken on Biggleswade Road? There is a serious worry from myself and other residents that speeding traffic coming into Potton and leaving the town is dangerous. By parking on the road it acts as a natural speed deterrent and makes the road safer. After speaking to the Potton Speed Watch coordinator we have discovered that approximately 20% of all vehicles speed already on Biggleswade Road. Do you have any other ideas about dealing with those drivers? (I don't believe the roundabout if/when it is built will have any effect on traffic coming round the corner from Blackbird Street).

2) Why is Biggleswade Road being targeted for such restrictions when many other, equally busy, roads in Potton don't have parking restrictions? eg. King Street, Royston Street (where peak time restrictions are in place only and off-street parking is provided), Sandy Road (where on-street parking is provided for residents).

3) Do you have any kind of policy for providing parking for residents in small towns? Living in Potton it is necessary to own a car, especially as the provision of public transport is virtually non-existent. If you restrict parking completely you could make it almost impossible to live in the houses on Biggleswade Road.

4) I believe that there should be an 18 month evaluation period when trialling new road schemes. The current double yellow lines haven't been in use for that long, so how can you fully judge their effectiveness?

5) Further to point 1. here are some figures from the Potton Speed Watch:
"Regarding speeding we have an approved speedwatch location at the opposite end of Biggleswade road at a position local to No 52 to monitor incoming traffic into the town. This is one of our most frequented sites and we try to be there at least once a month, usually early mornings. Typical results are as below. – All of our results are forwarded to the Police and are then taken into the Beds Police / Mid Beds Council road safety initiative for consideration.

24th July 14 – 42 speeding vehicles out of a total of 250 over 2 hour period.

4th September 14 – 51 speeding vehicles out of a total of 233 over a 1 ½ hour period. "

I hope you take this independent information into consideration – it proves that our claims of speeding traffic isn't exaggerated and it is a serious concern to be dealt with.

6) In my 11 years as a resident of Biggleswade Road I believe that traffic is moving more slowly past my house and it's certainly easier and safer to cross the road since cars have been parking here. Equally, as a driver I've never had to wait more than a few seconds to get past the parked cars – it's not a problem to see approaching traffic and anyone keeping to the speed limit is not in danger. I have a feeling that those people complaining about the parked cars are more upset that they now have something to stop them speeding up to and away from the junction with Station Road and Blackbird Street. I would like to see some road calming measures in place at that junction as it is extremely dangerous for any pedestrians crossing towards The Ridgeway – are there plans in place to improve this junction?

In summary: I object to the extension of the double yellow lines as I don't believe a full consultation or planning has been completed. The safety concerns of residents have not been addressed. Without a proper safety review there are no grounds to extend the lines.

I look forward to receiving a response and would like to invite the people involved in making this decision actually come to Potton and view the problem for themselves.

I write in objection to the proposed waiting restrictions on Biggleswade Road in Potton, as per your reference above. The reasons are as follows:

More lines will facilitate speeding along this stretch of road Cars approaching from the centre of Potton often are already travelling at inappropriate speeds around this wide sweeping corner before this stretch of road. Cars entering Potton (already noted as speeding by the local speedwatch at 21.89% of 233 cars in a 2hr period) make little effort to slow down before the junction in the absence of parked cars. In the past two years as parking here has become common vehicles have slowed down and there have been **NO** recorded accidents. I have grave concerns if yellow lines are implemented with no traffic calming that pedestrians will be at great risk.

Extending lines will simply displace parking to other areas not resolving the aim of placating irritated drivers that demonstrate impatience It appears in Nick Chapmans' Letter of 7 October 2014 that a strategy of simply adding restrictions ad hock in the future is both ignorant and nonsensical. Potton is a growing town with increased numbers of cars per household. Intelligent strategies in many other small towns similar has been to allow parking to slow the flow of traffic, deter them as a 'rat run' for those cutting through the town and prioritising the town as a place to live as opposed to a place to drive through.

No provision for extra parking has been forthcoming With a large new estate planned there has been no suggestion of provision of additional parking.

I request the following information as a matter of urgency:

1. Your evidence that this stretch of road has become more dangerous since parking here became common?
2. The Councils long term strategy for dealing with increased vehicles utilising roads as short cuts and provision for residence parking?
3. Evidence that adequate parking provision has been made for the planned building development

I would also like a response from Nick Chapman as to his inference that our legitimate concerns over speeding are disingenuous. (This can be clearly seen in his dismissive nature of the first two paragraphs followed by the third regarding provision of parking, stating 'This is a genuine concern') His dismissive attitude towards both concerns and suggested resolutions I find unacceptable.

The following letter outlines the objections we have relating to the proposed extension of the double yellow line on Biggleswade road.

As a resident with no access to off road parking, just like the the other houses on the effected terrance of Biggleswade road I would like to bring forward to your attention the following points.

In respect of the statement regarding that the extension of the yellow lines from their current status would have no effect on the speed of vehicular traffic due to the proximity of the station road junction. This may be correct for vehicles entering into central Potton, but takes no account of vehicles exiting the town. Clearing the road, taking away the natural speed limitation generated by the parked cars will enable vehicle to increase speed earlier on the exit of Potton, which its self changes to becomes a national speed limit.

Needless to say there are numerous dangers that removing the speed calming measures this would cause to both the residents of the Biggleswade road, some who have young children, some who are

elderly and require nursing aid. Access to the town for residents who live on the Ridgeway would be more dangerous as there is no provided crossing facilities, and increased speed on this road with a pub would also not be the most favorable option in my opinion, with the young nursery at the end of the Biggleswade Road, the prospect of this project causes serious concern.

There is a current ongoing issue of speeding of this road already and we feel that Bedfordshire Council, although are aware of this issue have not taken this into account.

The below figures are taken by the Potton Speedwatch community and represent vehicular movements in Potton during early mornings. The results are collected from number 52 Biggleswade Road and highlight once again the seriousness of our campaign that there is a speeding issue on this road. Our fear is that by removing the parked cars, there for removing the natural traffic calming in place, this speeding issue will carry on further down the Biggleswade Road.

24 Jul 2014	250	42	16.80%
4 Sep 2014	233	51	21.89%

Once again all of the above tackles the entrance and not the exit to the town .

It is to our understanding that as the yellow lines recently added would come under experimental Traffic Regulation Orders bedfordshire councils would be need to leave these as they stand for 18 months to ensure that they work before making any changes. The requirement of hastily pushing through another change to the yellow lines on Biggleswade road before the 18 month period is up signals that the the initial proposed action has not had the required effect. Lengthening the yellow lines could potentially further the displace the parking issue further down the Biggleswade road increasing the likelihood of this issue coming into contact with the nursery at the end of Biggleswade Road.

In regards to the councils response relating to the displacement that this project will cause inevitably, is less than satisfactory. Residents of Potton require stability and the nonchalant responses of the council claiming in respect of our concerns of that lack of available parking in Potton "if we introduce the restrictions in Biggleswade Road and this causes problems elsewhere we may have to consider further parking controls." This is the 21st Century and most households have either one or two cars and this will continue to be a growing issue in Potton with growing younger community.

Would it be possible that Central Bedfordshire Council provide us with their findings relating to how the preposed changes to the Biggleswade road would increase safety?

There are numerous roads in Potton such as King street that have a congestions problem relating to parked cars, it seems that the Biggleswade Road is the only road being singled out, can the councils kindly elaborate as to the reasons behind this?

Is there a Central Bedfordshire policy for increased traffic and parking in small towns, if so could we see a copy of this or could the aims be highlighted?

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SUPPORT

I write IN SUPPORT of the proposal by Central Bedfordshire Council to introduce areas of no waiting at any time on both sides of Biggleswade Road, Potton. This is based on the following observations since the residents of the terrace of houses on the east side of the road started parking outside their properties (within the last two years or so):-

Numerous episodes of severe traffic congestion along Biggleswade Road, extending almost as far as The Hollow,
Problems caused by the road being rendered impassable while brewery drays are delivering to the Royal Oak public house,
Congestion around the Biggleswade Road/Blackbird Street/Station Road junction, resulting in a number of traffic collisions and near-miss incidents,
Egress from the BP petrol station, especially towards Potton town centre is particularly hazardous, as drivers are unsuspected by the parked vehicles.

The introduction of double yellow lines last year, surprisingly only as far as number 23, has been ineffective in curing these problems. The no waiting area should be extended as far as the garage, on the grounds of both road safety and relief of congestion.

I strongly support the parking restrictions proposed in Biggleswade Road, Potton. The current parking presents a hazard to traffic and pedestrians, and causes lengthy delays.

I would like to make it clear that I am fully in agreement with yellow lines being extended up to the BP Garage in Potton Road, opposite the Oak Public House. The current situation is extremely dangerous. As a regular user of that stretch of road, I am amazed that there have not been more accidents! The sooner it is implemented, the better.

The proposed much needed extension of the no waiting restrictions on Biggleswade Road in Potton will address the current issue where, due to parked vehicles, it is not possible to see around the bend and observe any oncoming traffic when exiting Potton towards Biggleswade. The present parking restrictions lead to congestion and regular instances of near misses with oncoming vehicles. If this situation is not addressed it is only a matter of time before a serious accident occurs.

Whilst I understand the residents' concerns about being unable to park outside their houses (which, in fact, only started about two years ago), the danger caused by these parked cars is too great.

Indeed, this morning at about 7:20am, there was nearly a "head-on", as traffic exiting Potton on the south-bound route towards Biggleswade could not see the traffic coming into town as a result of the parked cars blocking their view.

The extension of the "double yellows" is long overdue and must happen soon to prevent any further incidents and problems; I know – from talking to a large number of Potton residents – that the vast majority will be in support of this move.

I am emailing in support of the extension of the double yellow lines outside the Royal Oak Public House in Potton.

The current parking is causing major problems and delays to traffic.

It is also very dangerous as the visibility of cars coming the opposite direction is seriously hampered by the parked cars and daily there are near misses.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

I am writing to comment about the changes proposed to introduce No Waiting at any time on sections of Biggleswade Road, Pottton. I live at no.xx Biggleswade Road and have done so since 1988.

I am in support of the changes proposed to Biggleswade Road on the east side. However this will create problems further along Biggleswade Road from the junction. At times when parking here has been fully taken there are problems on the west side of Biggleswade Road opposite the petrol station. In your proposal on the west side of Biggleswade Road you are proposing to extend the no waiting to no.14 Biggleswade Road. There have been numerous occasions when there are cars parked on the pavement outside nos. 16 and 18 Biggleswade Road. This creates difficulties for pedestrians (I have had verbal complaints about this and we do not park on the pavement), the parking obstructs the movement of traffic from the petrol station, the car wash, the properties from no.16 to the lane between no-20 and no.22. There have been times when people have partly parked across the gates of no.18 making it extremely dangerous to exit onto the road. There is a right of access for no.16, no.18 and no.18a onto Biggleswade Road. In my opinion this stretch of Biggleswade Road will become more dangerous as a result of the changes proposed.

I have attached 2 photographs (taken in August) which show the parking problem on the pavement on the west side and the cars parked on the eastern side of Biggleswade Road, south of the petrol station.

To ensure a safer stretch of road could the No Waiting be extended to the lane between 20 and 22 Biggleswade Road to allow all people to enter and exit their properties. The lane also serves houses nos. 22-38 Biggleswade Road with cars frequently exiting from it.

Thank you for reading my comments

We live at xx Biggleswade Road and you may notice from the plan that the front of our house is up to the pavement of Biggleswade Road.

It seems inevitable that the parking will disappear between 23 and 35 Biggleswade Road, which will mean that the vehicles will have to find alternative spaces. Unfortunately there is very limited parking nearby with the Ridgeway already very busy in evenings and weekends. We have lived here since 1988 and it is only recently that parking in front of our house has become an issue. Cars parking in front of our house unfortunately tend to park on the pavement, but they also on occasion park across our drive. The proposed changes will only make this worse.

The visibility as you turn left from our drive is very limited/dangerous when cars are parked in front of it. There is also another issue to consider: if more cars park in front of our house it will make tanker deliveries to the petrol station more difficult. When the tankers leave the cab regularly passes over the pavement in front of our house. It has not been an issue until now because generally people do not park in front of the house for long periods of time. This will not be the case when the proposed changes are implemented.

I would therefore ask you to include double yellow lines in front of our house as well. Our preference would be also to have H marking across our drive (and 18A) to highlight the fact it is a driveway plus double yellow lines in front of our house.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Whilst I agree with the proposal to extend the yellow lines on Biggleswade Road, Potton, the question remains where are all the vehicles that park there now going to park ? "THE RIDGEWAY" !!!!

As a resident of The Ridgeway parking here is a major problem now and this will increase.

Can "Resident Parking" only be considered and applied ?

If not what is the solution ?

I would like to express my concern at plans for yellow lines opposite the Royal Oak.

The lines already in place have caused considerable inconvenience to traffic flow (not to mention residents, presumably).

The current lines are placed on the wide part of the road where two vehicles could pass if cars were parked. This forces parking onto the narrow part, where two cars cannot pass. Traffic then backs up, so that traffic from Sandy cannot turn right, traffic from Potton cannot go left or straight forward and traffic from Biggleswade can go nowhere. Complete grid lock.

This did not happen frequently, if at all, before the lines were placed.

Also the current placement means that the view of the road is impaired, making the section dangerous. This was not the case before, since cars were, safely, further into the centre at the wide part and able to see clearly any oncoming traffic.

Plans to rework the junction in connection with the new development are in my opinion similarly misguided.

The solution is to remove the misplaced existing lines and place lines (only if required) on a very short part of the narrow section.

Thank you