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

Date: 1 June 2016

Subject: Drovers Way, Dunstable – Review representations to Proposed Waiting Restrictions

Report of: Paul Mason, Head of Highways

Summary: This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Community Services for the implementation of waiting restrictions in Drovers Way, Dunstable

Contact Officer: Gary Baldwin
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Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Dunstable Northfields

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The proposal will improve road safety, traffic management and the amenity in the affected roads.

Financial:

The works are being funded by the Council Traffic Management and Parking scheme budget

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):

That the proposal to introduce No Waiting at any time in Drovers Way, Dunstable be withdrawn and an extended H bar marking be installed.

Background and Information

1. This matter was considered at the meeting held on 4 February 2016 and the decision was “That the proposal to introduce No Waiting at any time in Drovers Way, Dunstable be deferred to allow officers to consider alternatives which would minimise the loss of parking space.”
2. To summarise; the proposal to introduce no waiting was published in October 2015 and attracted two objections. The main points made were that the proposals appear to be appeasing one resident rather than providing a wider solution to parking issues in the area. In addition, it was pointed out that there is very little justification for introducing the restrictions and the reason given were inappropriate.
3. Officers’ response acknowledged that the request for parking restrictions was made by a nearby resident. However, the present parking problems have been created, in part at least, by the installation of concrete bollards which were intended to address an issue with footway parking. The bollards have resulted in parked cars being positioned in such a way that they obscure visibility for drivers emerging from adjacent accesses. It is a fact that this location coincides with the end of a footpath where pedestrians are likely to want to cross Drovers Way. The proposed yellow lines would improve inter-visibility between drivers and pedestrians.
4. Following the February meeting, officers have considered alternatives to minimise the loss of parking space.
 - (i) Withdraw the No Waiting at any time proposal and install a H bar marking across the driveway of no.95 and extending for approximately 1 metre on either side. This would not be as effective as the double yellow line proposal, but would provide more manoeuvring space and better visibility for emerging drivers. H bar markings do not carry the same legal significance as yellow lines, but have proved successful at other locations where they have been used.
 - (ii) The only practical means of providing more parking would be to convert the grass area to the front of property nos.79 to 93 Drovers Way to an off-road car park. This is a sizeable area that could potentially provide up to 20 parking spaces. It is Council owned land, rather than highway. The matter has been discussed with Housing Services who have funded this type of work in the past.

They asked for the initial views of the Planning Officer, whose observations were *“There are a number of quality parcels of amenity land along Drovers Way which include mature and good quality trees, the loss of the open space and landscaping would result in an unacceptable visual impact which is not outweighed by the potential benefit to off road parking provision. As such I would not see an application for this being supported in planning terms.”*

Consequently, it would appear that there is very little prospect of an off-road parking solution being successful.

Conclusion

5. The conversion of the grass area to parking appears to be unacceptable, so it is recommended that alternative solution of installing an extended H bar marking be implemented.
6. If approved, the works are expected to take place within the 2016/17 financial year.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Drawing of Proposals
Appendix C – Written representations

Appendix A



Grass area for possible conversion to parking referred to in paragraph 4.

Appendix B

Dear Sir/Madame,

I would like to object strongly to proposals to place double yellow lines outside numbers 95 to 97 Drovers Way, Dunstable this action seems to be to appease one particular resident! rather than providing a long term solution to resolve the parking issue permanently for all residents such as losing part or all of the council green outside our houses to provide off road parking, please see attached previous correspondence with the council.

I acknowledge receipt of your somewhat impersonal letter dated 13th October regarding the proposed waiting restrictions that the above refers to.

You are no doubt aware that I have already written to the Authority with regard to this matter and will therefore be familiar with my observations highlighted therein. I will therefore restrict my comments, in the main, to addressing the "Reason for proposal" and the narrative written above the map on the reverse of the "Public Notice". That said I do enclose a copy of the letter referred to above.

1. "The proposed Order is considered necessary for facilitating the passage of traffic on the road..."; I'm sorry but as an argument this is, quite frankly, nonsense. If this is true in respect of a 20 metre stretch of Drovers Way then it is true in respect of the rest of the road. I would point out that, in law, any vehicle parked on a road or any other highway causes an obstruction, whether the relevant Sections of the Road Traffic Acts are enforced is another matter of course.

2. "...or improving the amenity of the area through which the roads run.", without imposing the restriction along the entire road as outlined above, how on earth can this be used as a justification.

3. "The restrictions are generally intended to address indiscriminate parking which creates an obstruction to other road users." As I have already pointed out, every vehicle parked on a road, in law, causes an obstruction but what is suggested here is that the few vehicles that park on the south west side of Drovers Way between numbers 79 and 93 particularly fail to "facilitate the passage of traffic" in a way that other vehicles parked in the same road do not? and park "indiscriminately", frankly this is insulting.

4. "The double yellow lines are intended to keep an area of road clear of parked cars that create issues for drivers emerging on to Drovers Way and pedestrians using the adjacent footpath"; the only "drivers" so affected are those living at number 95 Drovers Way (unless you are in a position to tell me otherwise) and the reference to

pedestrians has been included, in my view, simply to lend weight to what is a very flimsy argument in support of this proposal.

The greater danger to road users on Drovers Way, and indeed Brewers Hill Road comes not from parked cars but from drivers who fail to comply with the 20 mph speed limit as, apart from a single speed enforcement camera, there is nothing that actually inhibits speeding motorists.

In encouraging Local Authorities to introduce 20 mph speed limits on urban roads Central Government suggests that roadways be engineered to ensure that such limits are effective; some engineering suggested includes road humps, rumble strips, roundabouts, road narrowing and "Give Way" gateways.

Had Central Bedfordshire not opted for the cheapest possible option, i.e. putting up a few speed limit signs, the risks to 'drivers emerging on to Drovers Way' would have been significantly reduced and possibly non-existent.

The last thing I would include is that I am a Blue Badge holder and in the normal course of events our car is kept on the road during the day although garaged at Pascomb Road overnight.

Forwarded for your information in the hope that serious and considered notice be taken of the observations I have made.