

**BETTER BUS AREA FUND: HISTON ROAD, CAMBRIDGE PARKING CONTROLS**

*To:* **Cabinet**

*Date:* **4<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

*From:* **Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment**

*Electoral division(s):* **Castle and Arbury**

*Forward Plan ref:* **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **To determine objections to proposals to control parking and loading in Histon Road, Cambridge that would improve conditions for cyclists and bus users.**

*Recommendation:* **Cabinet is asked to:**

- 1) Determine the objections without holding a public inquiry**
- 2) Agree to implement the restrictions as shown in Plans 1 and 2, including a change to the proposed maximum stay to 3 hours in the pay and display area in Linden Close**
- 3) Inform the objectors accordingly.**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The County Council made a successful bid, securing £1.7 million worth of funding from the Department for Transport (DfT)'s Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF). The aim of the Fund is to increase bus patronage in busy urban areas, to help deliver the DfT's aims of creating growth and cutting carbon emissions.
- 1.2 In compiling the bid for funding, unpredictable delays on Histon Road between Gilbert Road and Victoria Road were identified as an issue. Like most radial city routes, the mixed use of the road-space contributes to the delays, along with queuing at the signalised junctions at Gilbert Road and Victoria Road. The mix of cycles and larger vehicles in limited carriageway space is considered to have a significant impact on the movement of buses; motor vehicles do not have sufficient road-space to pass cycles against on-coming traffic. This is particularly the case at busier times, and results in motor vehicles (including buses) travelling at the speed of the slowest cycle, or drivers attempting to pass cycles when there is insufficient space giving the perception that it is not a safe cycle route.

## **2. DETAIL**

- 2.1 Generally the road is reasonably wide (around 8.5 metres) but residents', pay and display and some uncontrolled on-street parking reduces this by up to 2 metres. If this parking were to be removed, the space available for all traffic could be increased, affording greater opportunity for larger vehicles to pass cyclists with greater clearance.
- 2.2 In the 5-year period 2008-2012 there have been 42 reportable injury accidents, including 1 fatal and 4 serious accidents. Half of the 42 involve cyclists. Removing parking offers the opportunity to introduce measures to help cyclists and some measures to improve safety and the environment for cyclists have been incorporated into proposals.
- 2.3 Addressing parking-related journey time and safety issues would however be at the cost of parking used by residents and businesses and a balance has to be reached between the need to assist traffic flows on a key radial route and allowing parking for local resident and businesses. Proposals were developed recognising that outside the working day, traffic flows are lower and delays are less likely as there is greater opportunity for opposing flows of traffic to pass cyclists when necessary. This would also enable residents and visitors to park on Histon Road overnight.
- 2.4 Residents' parking from Histon Road would be displaced during the day into neighbouring side streets which are within the same residents' permit parking (Benson) zone. The zone is one of the most undersubscribed in the city. There are approximately 235 available spaces in the zone and currently 148 permits issued. This proposal would see approximately 35 spaces removed from Histon Road. Outside the hours of the residents' parking scheme officers have visited the area and numerous spaces could be found.

- 2.5 In spring 2013, lead members considered the issue and recognised the difficult balance that needs to be made between improving bus reliability and improving conditions for cyclists on a strategic route, against the demand for parking of occupiers of premises on Histon Road. Lead members supported the consultation on proposals for Histon Road between Gilbert Rd and Victoria Rd to:
- Prohibit parking between 7.30 and 18.30
  - Prohibit loading between 7.30 and 9.30 and 16.00 to 18.30
  - Establish some controlled pay and display parking to cater for visitors to area.
- 2.6 The proposals also included the installation of advisory cycle lanes and modifications to approaches to the junction at Gilbert Road to improve conditions for cyclists.
- 2.7 It is difficult to model local impacts of parking on traffic accurately. Bus operators continue to report that the current situation is making journey times unreliable and officer observations would support this view, although traffic conditions vary unpredictably during the day.

### **3. CONSULTATION, OBJECTIONS AND COMMENTS**

- 3.1 In July 2013 a consultation was undertaken on proposals. The residents of the Histon Road and the adjoining side roads were consulted directly and notices were placed in the local papers, on buses and on the County Council's website.
- 3.2 The consultation generated 359 responses, of which 38% supported the proposals with 42% opposed, and 20% uncertain. Generally the opposition was from residents and businesses in the area with support largely from cyclists. Bus operators have continued to support the proposals. The opposition was generally on the grounds of inconvenience to residents and customers of the businesses, the impact that a loss of parking will have on local business, a possible increase in speeds if parking were to be removed and the traffic delays that might result from removing a traffic lane from the approaches to the Gilbert Road junction to improve cycling conditions.
- 3.3 After consideration of the consultation response by Lead Members, a draft traffic regulation order (TRO) to implement the proposed changes to parking arrangements was advertised in December. In total 26 objections, including one signed by 61 people, were received, along with 1 letter of support. The objections and comments are summarised in Table 1, attached as Appendix 1, along with officer comments.
- 3.4 The formal objections received largely reflect the comments made at the consultation stage detailed in 2.2.
- 3.5 A local business has suggested that the maximum stay in the new pay and display parking in Linden Close, proposed to off-set that removed from Histon Road, is extended from 2 hours to 3 hours as it would better cater for customers and visitors that require more time, for example those visiting

hairdressers. This could meet the needs of some local business and it suggested that this change is implemented when the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is made.

- 3.6 Following the comments on the impact of removing a lane on the approaches to the Gilbert Road junction, further modelling work has been undertaken. This has shown that it would have a detrimental impact on capacity at the junction which would be difficult to mitigate within the scope of the BBAF. Following discussion with Lead Members, it has been agreed that changes to the junction will not be implemented at this time, but further work will be undertaken to see how improvements to cycle safety can be incorporated into the junction without impacting on delays, particularly to bus services, and capacity.
- 3.7 The formal TRO objections were considered by the Lead Member for Highways and Community Infrastructure at a determination meeting. In the event, the Lead Member considered that given the strategic objective of the proposals and level of local objection, that the decision would be more appropriately made by Cabinet.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 It should be noted that removing parking from Histon Road will not resolve all delay issues on the route and some junction delays will still occur. However, small reductions in delays across the bus route network have a positive cumulative impact in making journey times more predictable and services more reliable, which encourages greater bus use in line with County Council objectives. The advisory cycle lanes will highlight to drivers the likelihood of cyclists and should improve the cyclists' perception of the route.
- 4.2 Although it is recognised that Histon Road comprises of both residential and business development, it is also a key radial route into the city, carrying all types of traffic including buses and cyclists. Whilst the impact on local use is important, its part in the strategic network must be considered, particularly in the light of increased use from future development. It is therefore recommended that the prohibitions of waiting and loading and the on-street parking arrangements shown on **Plans 1 and 2** are implemented.

#### **5. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING**

##### **5.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

The removal of pay and display and uncontrolled parking from Histon Road will result in less convenient parking and could impact on businesses. However, some alternative parking for visitors is provided in adjacent streets to mitigate the impact. Improvements in bus journey times may be considered to have a positive impact on the wider economy as the scheme contributes to reducing congestion.

## **5.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

Encouraging greater use of sustainable modes of transport contributes to improved air quality. Encouraging more people to cycle contributes to improved fitness and wellbeing

## **5.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

## **5.4 Ways of working**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

# **6. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

## **6.1 Resource and Performance Implications**

No significant impacts.

## **6.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

No significant impacts.

## **6.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

No significant impacts.

## **6.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications**

See Section 2 of report.

## **6.5 Public Health Implications**

No significant impacts.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Better Bus Area Bid Consultation response Draft Traffic Regulation Order Letters of objection	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor A Wing Castle Court