

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Planning and Regulation Committee
Date:	14 February 2022
Subject:	Lincoln, Bailgate and Chapel Lane - Proposed permit parking scheme

Summary:

This report considers the outcome of statutory and public consultation for the introduction of a residents permit scheme in Bailgate and Chapel Lane.

Recommendation(s):

There are three options for the Committee to consider:

1. Proceed with the scheme as advertised so that the existing 1 hour limited waiting bays in Bailgate north of Westgate and on Chapel Lane, as shown at Appendix B, are made available to permit holders for an unlimited period.
2. Abandon the scheme so that on street parking in the area remains unchanged.
3. Agree to further work to identify a means by which a permit scheme may be introduced in some form, but with less potential impact on Bailgate's economy and community.

Background

The City of Lincoln Council administer the residents parking zones throughout Lincoln. Following requests from residents in 2017 they asked the County Council to consider an extension to existing Zone 4B and a new Zone 4G, as shown in blue and orange at Appendix A. Subsequently the City of Lincoln Council carried out surveys on kerbside usage in these areas to test if the criteria in LCC's guidance on the introduction of residents parking schemes were met in this respect. To gauge the support required to ensure a financially viable scheme, the County Council sent a questionnaire to all those properties potentially eligible for permits, should a scheme be introduced. Both these criteria were met and the statutory consultation and public advertisement of proposals to introduce these schemes on the periphery of the Bailgate area were progressed. It was during this period that the City of Lincoln Council requested consideration to be given to a permit scheme (Zone 4H) in Bailgate.

In line with guidance, all residents and businesses within this potential new zone were canvassed via a questionnaire in 2019 and sufficient support was received for a scheme to be viable. Given that the bulk of residents on Bailgate live to the north of Westgate and the vast majority of businesses are located to the south, and to acknowledge the importance of on street parking to local traders, the final proposal was to apply the scheme to the north of Westgate only. Importantly all the bays in this area would still be available to all for a one hour stay but for permit holders, the stay would be unlimited. The bays would in effect be of dual use and are indicated in blue at Appendix B.

The statutory consultation for the traffic regulation order for the scheme in Bailgate began in March 2020. However, this coincided with the start of the pandemic, and it became clear that the constraints brought about by lockdown would compromise the consultation process. It was not deemed reasonable to continue the process at that time and a decision was therefore taken to suspend further works on the scheme.

The process for the traffic regulation order relating to the other two zones in the area had been completed at this point, although the works to introduce them on site was delayed until October 2020. Given the impact of the pandemic on trade and business, the statutory consultation process promoting Zone 4H in Bailgate did not resume until April 2021. In response to consultation the City of Lincoln Council requested the addition of the limited waiting bays in Chapel Lane to the scheme, as well as the inclusion of additional residencies here. The scheme was therefore amended to include these, after which it was publicly advertised last October. All potential permit holders were directly consulted at this point along with the statutory consultees again, due to the inclusion of amendments to the bays on Chapel Lane.

The deadline for representations on the scheme was 26th November. A total of 33 responses in favour of the scheme were received. Objections to it numbered 59 responses, including a detailed submission from the Bailgate Area Guild, who also presented a petition compiled online and gathered in hard copy form at businesses in the area.

Summary of support

Comments submitted in support of the scheme make the point that Bailgate between Newport Arch and Westgate is predominantly a residential area. The proposed scheme as advertised reflects this and will be of great benefit to residents. Currently the parking offer in Bailgate discriminates against residents whilst visitors have the use of car parks as an alternative to on street parking. They believe that the current parking situation impacts on the quality of life of residents and reduces property values. Prior to the introduction of permit parking for Zone 4G in Church Lane and Northgate, residents of both Bailgate and Chapel Lane had the option to park in these streets, but this has now been lost. As a result, residents often have to park some considerable distance away from their properties. Three residents say they intend to retain their current arrangements for off road parking even if the scheme is implemented, as they are concerned that availability of on street for permit holders may be limited.

Summary of objections

Many of the businesses in Bailgate have raised concerns about the potential impact of reducing the availability of short term, on street parking in the area. They state that the survival of business here relies heavily on local custom throughout the year which will be deterred if parking bays are persistently unavailable. The variety of shops and services on offer provides a hub for the wider community, encouraging people to shop locally and more sustainably. For those less able, the bays provide a means of parking in close proximity to these amenities. Objectors to the scheme believe

that it poses a threat to the viability of businesses in the area and that a resultant downturn in trade could put livelihoods at risk and lead to the closure of independent shops and cafes. These establishments enhance the offer of uphill Lincoln as a tourist destination and provide an opportunity for visitors to extend their stay. They maintain the footfall which creates a lively, vibrant area, with a character and ambience unique to the city.

Objectors to the scheme state that residents selected Bailgate as a place to live in the knowledge that on street parking is limited during the day. Likewise, businesses came to Bailgate in the knowledge that a turnover of on street parking will support trade. They believe that it is unrealistic of residents to expect access to on street parking in what is also an area of commerce and tourism. Questions have been raised as to the efficacy of the scheme, as residents will be in competition with other permit holders and the public at large and may struggle to secure one of the limited spaces available.

Queries have been raised by both supporters and objectors to the scheme as to possible ways of enhancing the parking offer in Bailgate by varying the provision in nearby car parks.

Comments

The concerns raised by residents of Bailgate and Chapel Lane at the loss of on street parking availability in Church Lane and Northgate following the introduction of Zone 4G is noted. Although the request for a permit scheme in Bailgate was a later submission by the City of Lincoln Council, and did not form part of the original proposals to expand the residents parking scheme, the intention was to pursue a scheme in Bailgate concurrent to the ongoing completion of Zone 4G. The consultation for Zone 4H in Bailgate began in early 2020 but was disrupted by the pandemic and delayed until April last year, by which time the parking bays on Church Lane and Northgate had been restricted to permit holders only for 6 months. This loss of on street parking has been a source of great frustration to residents in Bailgate and Chapel Lane and it is regrettable that progress on a scheme to provide them with permit parking has been unavoidably delayed.

There is strong opposition to the proposals from local businesses and the Bailgate Area Guild, and real concern as to the potential impact on custom and a belief that a reduction in footfall could force premises to close and jobs to be lost. Collectively the traders in Bailgate provide both a service hub for the community and part of the tourist offer in uphill Lincoln. A petition comprising 6700 signatures has been submitted in opposition to the scheme.

Discussions took place with the City of Lincoln Council with regard to the utilisation of their car parks as a possible means of mitigating the reduction of available short term on street parking, should the scheme be introduced. This might be the provision of free, short-term parking within the car parks, or schemes whereby a car park charge could be refunded against a shop purchase. There are costs associated with these options however and no commitment was made by the City of Lincoln Council to take these forward.

Conclusion

The proposed scheme to introduce dual use bays in Bailgate has proved very divisive and has had a negative impact on the relationship between residents and businesses. It would, for the first time, give residents the opportunity to park for an unlimited period during the day, close to their properties. However, it would reduce available on street parking for visitors to the area whose custom supports the businesses and local economy.

In recognition of the concerns raised by businesses, the County Council may wish to reconsider the elements of this scheme so that an alternative proposal, as referred to in option 3 of the Recommendations in this report, may be considered.

Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

See attached Equality Impact Analysis

The statutory consultation for this scheme included: Local Members, Ward Councillors, Lincolnshire Police, Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue, EMAS, City of Lincoln Council, Bailgate Area Guild, Lincoln BIG, Bailgate Methodist Church, RHA, FTA, Stagecoach, PC Coaches, Confederation of Passenger Transport.

Subsequent public advertisement of the proposals was shared with the above consultees and with all residents and businesses within the proposed Zone boundary.

The local Members, Cllr R Parker and Cllr K Lee, are in support of option 3 in the recommendations referred to in this report.

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Existing residents parking zones in the uphill area of Lincoln
Appendix B	Detail of proposed permit scheme in Bailgate and Chapel Lane
Appendix C	Equality Impact Analysis

Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
LCC Guidance on Residents Parking Schemes; survey results; correspondence received	Available on request

This report was written by Jeanne Gibson, who can be contacted on 01522 782070 or TRO@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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