



Cambridge City Council

To: North Area Committee 18/12/2014

Report by: Simon Payne,
Director of Environment

Wards affected: Kings Hedges

KINGS HEDGES ROAD AND RAMSDEN SQUARE VERGE PARKING PROHIBITION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (EIP) PROJECT

1.0 Executive summary

- This report asks the Committee to consider local public responses to a proposed Traffic Order that would prohibit parking on highway verges within Ramsden Square and the south-eastern extent of Kings Hedges Road, and determines whether it wishes to move forward with the scheme in whole, or in part, or not.

2.0 Recommendations

The North Area Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Consider local consultation responses to a proposal to prohibit verge parking in Ramsden Square and part of Kings Hedges Road;
- 2.2 Determine whether to proceed with the proposal to formal statutory draft Traffic Order stage on both, or either, of these two roads.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 At its meeting of 1 August 2013, North Area Committee considered a list of potential new Environmental Improvement Programme (EIP) projects across the four north area wards. The Committee was asked which projects it would like to see progressed within the funding available.
- 3.2 Area Committee agreed to support a bid for a scheme to introduce a verge parking restriction for Ramsden Square and the south-eastern

end of Kings Hedges Road, in Kings Hedges ward (**Appendix A**), in order to reduce vehicular damage and enable the condition of verges in these areas to recover to a good standard. Officers indicated that the likely cost would be in the region of £3,000, and the Committee approved the allocation of this level of funding to the project.

4.0 Development of proposals and consultation

- 4.1 Cambridgeshire County Council acts as Highway Authority for all publicly adopted local roads within Cambridge (excluding the M11 and A14) and its advice was sought on the form of draft Traffic Order needed to introduce a restriction as requested. The effect of the Order would be to make it an offence to park on areas of highway grass verge within the area identified. Enforcement would be undertaken by County Council Civil Enforcement Officers as with other parking restrictions across Cambridge.
- 4.2 Given that vehicular obstruction of footway areas also constitutes a parking offence, the area restricted under the Order would include adjacent areas of footway, to ensure that these areas can also be kept clear by the Highway Authority. Whilst notable damage is also being caused to areas of verge adjacent to property driveway entrances, driving over highway verges does not constitute a highway offence and so cannot be enforced under the Order. Consequently it would not prove practicable to address this issue as part of this project. A separate Environmental Improvement Programme bid could, however, be considered to improve the condition of such damaged areas in any future potential programme round.
- 4.3 A public consultation exercise was undertaken with residents and ward councillors between 21st August and 10th September 2014. Consultation leaflets were distributed to all local addresses within the respective areas (**Appendix B**), and respondents were asked to indicate whether they were supportive of the proposal, or otherwise, for their respective area.

5.0 Consultation feedback

- 5.1 A summary of responses to this consultation exercise is attached as **Appendix C**. The response rate was encouraging, with questionnaires being completed and returned for approximately 18% of those residencies having received one.

- 5.2 The key findings were that for Kings Hedges Road the majority of respondents (approximately two thirds) would be in favour of introducing a formal restriction on verge parking, but in Ramsden Square opinion appears to be evenly balanced at 48% support both for and against.
- 5.3 **Appendix C** also sets out the most frequently raised comments from residents in response to the proposals; and there are differences as well as similarities in responses for each road concerned. Common themes include concerns about access and safety, and potential knock-on effects likely to arise; but also support for improvements to the verges as a valuable local amenity.

6.0 Officer comments

- 6.1 Whilst damage from vehicular parking occurs to verges in both Kings Hedges Road and Ramsden Square, the extent differs, and the environmental character of the area differs too. As a significant transport corridor across the north of the city, Kings Hedges Road is wide and has a mandatory cycle lane running along the north side and short sections of the south, which prohibits parking on the carriageway in these areas. Some marked on-street parking bays exist, where there are no on-street cycle lanes marked, and in many cases these extend in front of property entrances. Most properties either have, or have the opportunity to establish, some capacity to park off-street – but this may be insufficient to meet the level of local demand.
- 6.2 Ramsden Square is a residential loop with two points of access and egress and, although narrow, there is some evidence of traffic using it as a short-cut to avoid congestion and delay on Milton Road and Kings Hedges Road. Again most properties have established off-street parking facilities, either within the property itself; or via dedicated parking areas on each of the estate's four corners. In around half a dozen cases residents are parking within the curtilage of their properties but due to the lack of properly constructed facilities, the associated vehicle ingress/ egress is resulting in damage to verge areas. This is a comparatively low speed environment and parking on the road generally functions satisfactorily, though can restrict forward visibility for traffic travelling around the estate corners.
- 6.3 The degree of current verge parking in both roads may be as due to convenience as practicality. The introduction of restrictions, as proposed, might encourage residents lacking off-street parking facilities to establish such facilities, either through the proper

channels; or not. As a classified road, applications for new vehicular accesses in Kings Hedges Road would require planning consent; which could dissuade residents. It is likely that a significant proportion of displaced vehicles would park on other areas of highway; most likely uncontrolled adjacent roads and verge areas. This, unfortunately, appears an inevitable consequence of taking a localised, rather than area wide, approach to the issue.

- 6.4 In Ramsden Square it seems most likely that displaced vehicles would remain parked within the estate on areas of carriageway. This might help discourage use of the estate as a short-cut, as suggested in a number of resident responses. In Kings Hedges Road, parked vehicles appear likely to displace into adjacent areas including Ramsden Square, Campkin Road and roads off it, Lovell Road, St. Kilda Avenue and Garry Drive – which themselves all face some parking pressures of their own.
- 6.5 Prior to introducing any Traffic Order restriction on verge parking in these areas, the County Council would need to undertake due statutory process, including a further round of local and statutory consultation, and formal advertisement. Objections received at that stage would require determination, most likely by the new Cambridge Joint Area Committee, before a legal Traffic Order could be made, sealed and the restrictions introduced.

7.0 Implications

(a) Financial

Some £3,000 has been allocated by North Area Committee from its budget for Environmental Improvement Programme projects and this will be sufficient to cover the costs of public consultation, formal statutory Traffic Order making process, and implementing the restrictions as proposed. The County Council would be responsible for all ongoing maintenance and enforcement costs, and consequently no ongoing revenue implications to the City Council are currently foreseen. It is hoped there would be a reduction in overall spend in the longer term as the need to repair areas of damaged verge reduces.

(b) Staffing

The project delivery team within the Streets and Open Spaces Service will provide the staffing for the project. County Council resources will also be required to progress the legal Traffic Order process.

(c) Equal Opportunities

Please refer to equalities impact assessment (**Appendix D**).

(d) Environmental

If implemented, and adhered to, the project could deliver a significant improvement to the condition of verge areas in these two roads, enhancing their amenity and aesthetic value, and reducing surface water run-off. This would be slightly offset by a minor addition to highway signing to indicate the restrictions. Overall, therefore, the proposal has been rated as +M (medium positive environmental impact).

(e) Procurement

Highways works associated with the project will be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

(f) Consultation and communication

It is recognised that consultation, communication and engagement contributes significantly to the success of any project. The approach employed in this instance is set out in this report. Since only a relatively small area within Kings Hedges ward is included in this proposal it was considered appropriate to target informal consultation just at those residents directly affected. Should the proposal progress to a more formal Traffic Order stage, more comprehensive consultation would be undertaken.

(g) Community Safety

Overall, officers consider that the proposal would have a neutral impact on community safety. Whilst some respondents to the recent consultation exercise have suggested that road safety would be reduced if more vehicles were to park on-street, there is no direct evidence to support this. Ramsden Square, particularly, is a low speed (20mph maximum) solely residential environment. Vehicles manoeuvring on and off highway verges are considered to pose an equal if not greater hazard to other highway users, and a greater

hazard to pedestrians and cyclists (particularly children) than vehicles parking on-street.

8.0 The way forward

- 8.1 Of the two areas considered, damage to verge areas as a result of vehicular parking, along with local resident support for improvements, is more evident in Kings Hedges Road than in Ramsden Square. Given that these two roads lie immediately adjacent to one another, however, it is very likely that the introduction of restrictions in one street would result in some displacement of parking into the other.
- 8.2 Area Committee is asked whether, in light of the consultation feedback received and outlined in **Appendix C**, and the potential implications set out in this report, it wishes to proceed to formal Traffic Order stage with a scheme to introduce a restriction on verge parking in either of these roads, either in whole or part, or not at all.

9.0 Background papers

Agenda and minutes of North Area Committee meeting 01/08/2013

10.0 Appendices

APPENDIX A

EIP bid as supported by North Area Committee on 01/08/2013

APPENDIX B

2014 Resident consultation leaflet

APPENDIX C

Summary of 2014 consultation responses

APPENDIX D

Equality Impact Assessment

11.0 Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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