

Report to: Regulation Committee

Date: 12 March 2010

Subject: Objections to the Proposed Prohibition of Waiting
Lockett Road / Redgate Road / Bryn Road, Bryn

Report of: Interim Executive Director of Environmental Services

Contact officer: Heather Mulliner Telephone: 01942 404692

Purpose/summary: To advise the Committee of objections received to the proposed prohibition of waiting restrictions in the vicinity of the South Lancashire Industrial Estate.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:

- 1) Introduce the amended proposed prohibition of waiting as detailed in appendix D.
- 2) Progress the proposed prohibition of waiting as advertised.
- 3) Abandon the proposed prohibition of waiting.

Recommendation/decision: Option 1 recommended, to progress the amended prohibition of waiting restrictions as detailed in appendix D.

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision.

Risks/Implications:

Financial:	Traffic Group Budget
Staffing:	Within existing resources.
Policy:	Road Safety Strategy.
Equal Opportunities - has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	N/A
Wards affected:	N/A
	Bryn

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

No

Has the Director of Legal and Property Services confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes**

Has the Director of Finance and IT confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? **Yes**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

For Cabinet reports only:

Categorisation of the report:			
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	X
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview and Scrutiny	Regulation	Council
		December 2009	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Document	Date	File Reference	Place of Inspection
TMU Report Appendices to this report have been placed in the Members Room to be viewed	16 December 2008	19.2i	Civic Buildings, New Market Street Members Room

Proper Officer Gillian Bishop

Date November 2009

1 Background

- 1.1 Griffin House is situated on the South Lancashire Industrial Estate and houses both the Department for Works and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus. In recent years there have been a number of problems in the area which have generated from the overspill parking from Griffin House.
- 1.2 Parking restrictions were introduced in 2005 to address some of the concerns that resulted from the parking situation in the area. Whilst this resolved the parking problems in some areas, staff continued to park in an inconsiderate manner, causing access problems for other premises on the estate. Complaints were received from companies on Redgate Road about parked vehicles in the area. These companies all have large vehicles that require access to their premises and were experiencing difficulties due to vehicles parked at, or opposite their entrances.
- 1.3 Further attempts were made to resolve the parking problems on the South Lancashire Industrial Estate in March 2007 when a report was taken to the Wigan Traffic Management Unit to seek approval for a proposal to extend the parking restrictions in the area. The report was not approved as it was felt that the proposals were overly restrictive.
- 1.4 Since this time the parking situation on the industrial estate has worsened as a number of new units have opened at the southern end of the estate. Vehicles are now parking at the southern end of the estate and are obstructing entrances to units and visibility and complaints have been received regarding this issue. It is thought that a large proportion of this parking is staff from the new units and other companies located at the southern end of the site. A local MP has also raised concerns about the parking situation at this location and requested that we try to resolve the problem.

2 Proposals

- 2.1 A report was taken to the Wigan Traffic Management Unit on 16 December 2008 (see Appendix A) to seek approval for the introduction of parking restrictions at a number of locations within the vicinity of the South Lancashire Industrial Estate on Lockett Road, Redgate Road and Bryn Road. Restrictions were proposed at the entrances to each unit within the estate and where parked vehicles caused an obstruction on the highway. The proposed restrictions would allow parking to continue in areas where it would not obstruct the highway or access to any of the units on the estate.
- 2.2 The proposal addressed the concerns of the companies who raised the issue of parking from the Griffin House site and the concerns of the businesses at the southern end of the estate and the local MP.

3 Objections received

- 3.1 During the objection period 73 letters of objection have been received by the Director of Legal and Property Services, and these are contained in Appendix B.

- 3.2 Although 73 letters of objection have been received, 65 of these are variations on three different standard letters. 61 copies of one standard letter and two each of two other standard letters were received. Copies of an article that featured on the Wigan Today website were printed off and included with a large number of the objection letters. A copy of this article has been included with the objection letters in appendix B. A small number of objectors submitted more than one objection to the proposals. The Manager of Job Centre Plus, Mike Davies, submitted an objection to the proposals. A formal objection was also received from Councillor Don Hodgkinson on behalf of the three Bryn Councillors.
- 3.3 71 of the objections received are from staff based at the Griffin House building on the South Lancashire Industrial Estate. No objections have been received from other buildings or industrial units on the South Lancashire Industrial Estate.
- 3.4 The objectors all raise similar issues with the proposals and other points in their objection letters. These can be summarised as follows;
- The objectors feel that there are insufficient parking spaces available at Griffin House and on the industrial estate due to a shortage of spaces on the Griffin House car park and the existing parking restrictions on the industrial estate.
 - They think that the proposed restrictions will force Griffin House staff to park in the Nicol Mere estate which they feel will result in conflict between Griffin House staff and residents.
 - People affected by the proposals pay road tax, income tax and in some cases council tax to Wigan Council.
 - They feel that Wigan Council should provide parking facilities for Griffin House staff, either by funding on street spaces or creating an additional car park.
 - They do not think that the public transport system that serves industrial estate area is adequate and feel that this would pose security issues for female staff walking through the estate unaccompanied to access the public transport facilities.
 - A number of objectors state they need to use the car for work due to child care commitments etc.
 - They feel that Griffin House staff provide a public service therefore staff should be given special consideration with regard to parking.
 - They do not think that the on street parking at present causes a problem and feel that the existing restrictions are adequate.
- 3.5 The objection from Mike Davies, Manager of Jobcentre Plus at Griffin House states that the site employs over 800 staff and has 250 parking spaces. He states that the parking issue at the site has been ongoing for a number of years with input from Griffin House Staff, Wigan Council, local Councillors, Police, Residents and Ian McCartney MP. Mr Davies states that no solution to the problem has been found at present therefore staff are still required to park on the public highway. He claims that the site has tried to introduce initiatives over a number of years to try and resolve the problem, such as car parking policies.
- 3.6 A formal objection was received from Councillor Don Hodgkinson. Councillor Hodgkinson states that his objection is made on behalf of all three Bryn Ward Councillors. There are five particular sets of restrictions that the councillors

are objecting to. These are three sections at the southern end of the estate, one in the central section and one in the northern section. The particular restrictions that Councillors are objecting to are highlighted with a dashed line on the plan in appendix C. The Councillors feel that all of these sections of restrictions are too long and should be reduced in length to allow parking. With regard to the other proposed restrictions the Councillors acknowledge that these will be unpopular with some drivers but are required. The Councillors feel that if the restrictions are introduced the parking problems will move to the nearby Nicol Mere estate and other local residential estates. They state that on three occasions they have suggested possible sites for car parks on the industrial estate but consider their attempts have been met with opposition from Environmental Services or indifference. The Bryn Councillors claim that public transport services for workers to use to access the estate do not exist. They feel that expecting staff to use public transport is unrealistic as many of the staff at Griffin House are female who have family commitments that require them to work flexible hours to drop off and pick up children, and feel that expecting staff to use public transport goes against government initiatives to encourage women to go out to work. The Councillors state that many of the women at the site will not be able to continue to work if we cannot provide parking for them. The Councillors also state that they are concerned that residents in the nearby housing estates have not been consulted, as they feel that many more objections to the proposals would have been received if residents had been consulted.

- 3.7 A letter of support was received from Frank Phillips Builders Ltd. Mr Phillips states that they have experienced difficulties at the entrance to their site for a number of years due to parked vehicles obstructing the entrance to his property.

4 Comments of the Executive Director of Environmental Services

- 4.1 Staff from Griffin House are the only objectors within the industrial estate. Restrictions are proposed in the vicinity of all the units on the estate. Some available on street parking will be removed around all the units on the site. Although many of the objectors feel that there is insufficient parking space within the South Lancashire Industrial Estate it is not the responsibility of the Council to provide sufficient parking areas on the highway or within the estate. We appreciate that due to the lack of parking facilities at some of the premises on the estate there will be parking on the highway. However at present companies in the area are unable to carry out their business in a safe and efficient manner. Parking on the highway cannot be permitted if it is affecting the operation of businesses in the area or affecting highway safety.
- 4.2 Whilst we appreciate that some parking may migrate to the parking areas in nearby Nicol Mere Housing estate, these areas are clearly signed as residential parking areas. Whilst these areas cannot be enforced by the Councils Civil Enforcement Officers as they do not form part of the adopted highway, they can be enforced by Wigan and Leigh Housing who are responsible for the parking areas. With regard to the Bryn Councillors comments that these residents have not been consulted, all the consultation requirements that we are legally obliged to fulfil have been carried out.
- 4.3 Many of the objectors state that the majority of the people who will be affected by the proposals pay income tax, road tax and in some instances Council tax to Wigan Council. Simply because a person pays income, road or Council tax

does not give them the right to park on the public highway.

- 4.4 The Bryn Councillors refer to attempts they have made to suggest possible sites for car parks on the industrial estate. These options have all been considered when suggested, however the South Lancashire Industrial Estate is a primary employment site within Wigan borough and land on this estate must be reserved for industrial employment use. It is the responsibility of each employer on the industrial estate to identify and fund parking facilities for their staff and not the responsibility of Wigan Council.
- 4.5 With regard to the Bryn Councillors objection to five particular sections of restrictions (shown by the dashed lines on the plan in appendix C), these sections of restrictions have been proposed due to concerns from businesses on the industrial estate. Safety and access concerns have been raised by businesses in the vicinity of some of these restrictions as parked vehicles have been obstructing their entrances and restricting visibility. At the southern end of the estate the highway is narrower than at other locations along the estate and access for heavy goods vehicles can be obstructed when vehicles park on the highway. Restrictions have only been proposed in this area at entrances to industrial units and where areas of the highway become obstructed by parked vehicles. However these lengths can be reduced in some areas to take into account the Bryn Councillors concerns whilst still maintaining safety and ensuring that the highway and access to the industrial units is not obstructed. The amended restrictions are shown on the plan in appendix D.
- 4.6 With regard to the Bryn Councillors objections to the restrictions at the northern end of the estate (shown by the dashed lines on the plan in appendix C), this particular section of carriageway is adjacent to the site entrance of Liebherr. Liebherr is a company that specialises in moving large and heavy plant and construction vehicles, some of which can be up to 24 metres in length. The company has experienced a number of problems in recent years due to parked vehicles on Lockett Road obstructing the access to their premises. There have been a number of instances where they have had to arrange for particularly large machinery to be delivered after 6 o'clock and outside normal working hours, when the number of parked vehicles on Lockett Road reduces. This results in additional costs to the company being generated. In some instances when large vehicles have been unable to access the site due to parked vehicles, they have had to unload onto the public highway. This causes a temporary obstruction on the carriageway and in some instances results in damage to the grass verges in the vicinity of the company entrance, for which the company must pay to be repaired. A large crane was recently damaged when attempting to access the site due to the presence of parked vehicles on Lockett Road. The photographs in appendix E show the difficulties that the vehicles face when accessing the site. To accommodate the large vehicles and facilitate turning movements at the site entrance a minimum length of restrictions is required. The proposed restrictions can partially be reduced in length (as shown in appendix D) to address some of the Bryn Councillors concerns whilst maintaining access for vehicles to the Liebherr premises.
- 4.7 When the original planning application for the Griffin House building was approved it was envisaged that the site would create 250 jobs. There are now 832 employees at the site, 410 of which are full time and 422 part time. This is considerably greater than the number of staff that the building was originally

intended for. Current planning guidelines in the Unitary Development Plan show there should be 1 parking space per 35 square metres of B1 office unit, with Griffin House being of B1 classification. With these guidelines the site should have 199 parking spaces. It should also have 1 cycle parking space for every 400 square metres giving a total of 17 cycle parking spaces. The actual number of parking spaces is 265 and there are 12 cycle parking spaces. The allocation of parking spaces at the site is considerably greater than current guidelines allow and the number of cycle parking spaces is less than required. As a result of this, should the Department for Works and Pensions wish to create an additional car park at this site the application could not be approved as the current parking provision exceeds guidelines.

- 4.8 The 1999 White Paper “A New Deal for Transport” stated that all central Government buildings should have a travel plan in place by 2000. To date, no travel plan has been presented by the Department for Works and Pensions to Wigan Council. Until 2004 no discussion had taken place regarding such a plan being produced. Therefore Wigan Council agreed to work with the Department for Works and Pensions to produce a Travel Plan.
- 4.9 Until recently Wigan Councils Sustainable Travel Plan Officer was working with the Department for Works and Pensions to help produce their Workplace Travel Plan to tackle their travel and transport issues. The intention of the proposed Travel Plan will help make the organisation more sustainable, more productive and more efficient and address identified problems at the Griffin House site. The Department for Works and Pensions appointed a member of staff to be the Workplace Travel Plan contact with the Council. However in August 2009 the Workplace Travel Plan contact informed us that the management at the Griffin House site have suspended any involvement in the Travel Plan process until further notice. This is obviously a disappointment not just in terms of Council resources used but also because the Sustainable Travel Plan officer feels it remains their only realistic chance of making their site work in its current location. Whilst the Sustainable Travel Plan officer will continue to work on sustainable travel issues around the area, and assist businesses on the South Lancs Industrial Estate, we cannot feasibly continue doing much with the Department for Works and Pensions specifically unless they are a willing participant.
- 4.10 Clearly we are very mindful of the current situation relating to the Department for Works and Pensions and want to work with them in developing their Workplace Travel Plan. Furthermore, we want to assist them in the identification and delivery of a range of innovative solutions which will assist in making their workplace more sustainable. However, during the interim period we will also continue to monitor the impact of their establishment on the adjacent highway network.

5 Ward Members comments

- 5.1 Councillor Wilkes has stated in addition to the formal objection from the Bryn Ward Councillors detailed in section three of this report, he feels that we are causing more problems for the staff at Griffin House by adding to the current parking restrictions on Lockett Road. He feels that a more long term and sensible approach needs to be agreed by Wigan Council and Griffin House before any more parking restrictions are introduced on the South Lancashire Industrial Estate.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 To introduce the measures as shown on the plan in appendix D. The measures if implemented will assist in improving road safety and the flow of traffic along the roads within the industrial estate. They will also assist in maintaining access to the industrial units on the estate and ensuring that businesses in the area can operate efficiently.