

Full Council Meeting – 29 November 2018

Agenda Item CC1933/18

Draft response to TRDC proposed Parking Restrictions Consultation

Introduction

Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) informed the Parish Council on 16 October 2018 of its proposals to introduce / change parking restrictions in the Croxley Green Area following on from a parking consultation survey carried out in early 2017.

TRDC provided maps showing the details of the proposed parking restrictions and a survey questionnaire with a request for any comments by 16 November 2018.

This has subsequently been extended to 30 November 2018.

Discussion

The Croxley Green Residents Association (CGRA) organised a public meeting at Harvey Road School on 13 November and has produced a note of the meeting (copy at Annex A).

Three Parish Councillors attended the meeting and contributed to the discussion.

Having carefully considered TRDC's proposals before the public meeting it was suggested that the Parish Council should comment.

The attached draft response has been prepared taking account of comments made at the public meeting.

Recommendation

- That the Council notes the concerns expressed by many residents and writes to TRDC in response to the consultation (as at Annex B).

Cllrs Chris Mitchell and Andrew Gallagher
20 November 2018

Annex A

CGRA meeting on proposed local parking measures held on 13th November 2018

General

The meeting was held with aims of:

- a) making people aware of the overall impact on the community of the proposed parking measures:
- b) ascertaining the overall level of support for parking measures and:
- c) ensuring the Council received informed feedback to its consultation via the CGRA, Parish Council, Three Rivers District Council "TRDC" councillors, individual local residents and other local resident groups.

Having been a focal point for local resident comments on the topic the CGRA considered the staging of a public meeting to be the vital component in the process.

It was estimated that there were 200+ people in the hall. The audience contained 3 Parish councillors, 3 District councillors, our County Councillor and the TRDC Senior Transport Planner. The Chair advised the audience that TRDC had extended the survey deadline to 30th November.

The Chair of the meeting had obtained key information from TRDC to assist him in outlining the genesis of the parking measures and a scheme overview. TRDC had also provided the answers contained in the FAQ sheet had been handed out before the meeting commenced.

The Chair advised that the parking zone maps were indicative proposals only and that they would be subject to amendment following the current consultative feedback. Such schemes typically involve 3 or more rounds of consultation.

At the outset of the meeting a show of hands poll indicated about two thirds of attendees were not in favour of the scheme with the balance split between "in favour" or "unsure".

Another show of hands indicted almost all had off street parking with a majority having off street parking for 2 or more cars. A vast majority were not aware

- a) of the TRDC parking survey in 2017 or
- b) of the results of that survey.

Most of the audience were aware of the current proposals but were unclear as to details for their road.

The review commenced as a consequence of TRDC receiving a total of 39 requests from residents in 26 of our roads. The time period in which those requests had been made was not made clear. However, the statistic did not appear to indicate the need for such wide ranging parking measures.

The above mentioned factors underpinned the meeting as the Chair proceeded to provide information on the background leading to the drafting of the measures - followed by an overview of the scheme.

Feedback highlights

Numerous pertinent questions and statements were made during the course of the meeting. We have attempted to summarise them as follows:

A point that received almost universal concurrence was a requirement for publishing the rationale behind the proposals; a reasoned argument both for the scheme (as a whole) and for the individual elements.

There was overall support for the notion that there be public presentations / displays by TRDC councillors and officers of schemes that reflected majority preferences whilst also outlining overall rationale for the inclusion of specific parking zones within Croxley Green.

The survey results from 2017 lacked key information - number of dwellings in each road - and therefore did not indicate a majority of households were in overall favour of parking measures.

An example of one particular road survey was incorrectly interpreted by the Council and led to a measure that no household in the street indicated they required. It was likely that a review of the results would yield similar defects. Can the Council revisit the 2017 survey results and factor in the number of dwelling per road surveyed in order to derive where there were majority views?

The 2018 survey needed to be withdrawn and reworded in order that:

- a) residents not in favour of (but who would be subjected to) parking measures could have a say in the type of measures preferred and;
- b) residents not in a "proposed measures road" could provide consultation input.

Alternatively, a subsequent survey needed to be formulated that did not automatically assume the measures would be carried forward.

The measures were not a solution, merely moving the commuter parking issue to roads outside of the proposed parking zone.

Residents considered that if an adjacent road was in overall favour of the measures then their road would also have to be included, otherwise it would end up with overspill parking.

Issues raised included commuter parking - but this was by no means a problem for many roads. Issues also included: safety on road corners, school drop off and pickup, inconsiderate parking, partial blocking of dropped curbs, local residents parking for shops and local services, misuse of Community Way public car park, households with 3 or 4 vehicles, A414 road parking for households and shops / pubs / cafe's etc., parking displacement into non permit roads. It was suggested that

- a) some issues needed to be looked into separately and
- b) there were already existing measures in place to deal with most of the aforementioned issues and that
- c) therefore, a completely new perspective was needed to look into the issues raised that included local community involvement and overall agreement.

There was a negative response to the fact that, by law, every part of a zone must be controlled during its operational hours. There was overall disdain for

- a) the fact that parking zones would not include any "unrestricted parking" areas and
- b) the idea of having pay and display areas (with accompanying pay and display machines.

Reduction of short stay bays from 1 hour to 30 minutes (pay and display thereafter) did not appear to have any support and was agreed to be detrimental to shops.

It was remarked that the measures indicated in the parking zone plans would significantly change the nature of our community for the worse.

The Financial aspects raised included:

- a) Local residents being financially penalised (having to pay for permits / visitor permits).
- b) Permit price rises.
- c) Seen as a revenue generator for TRDC.
- d) Funding / resourcing for enforcement

The Chair constantly reminded the audience that it was a primary aim of the meeting to ensure that local residents provided feedback to the current survey form (even in its flawed state). Question 3 of the survey allowed for free format comments and separate sheets of paper could be utilised if required.

The Chair also reminded the audience that this was a community issue (the actions of individual residents and, individual roads having a marked domino effect on neighbour roads) and suggested that local residents may want to get organised in their own road, get an overall consensus (via door knocking) and submit that as a survey response. The CGRA would be available to provide advice to those who wanted to consider this approach.

In summary

It was clear from the meeting that parking measures indicated in the individual parking zone plans were not suitable for remedying the different issues identified.

The plans and associated papers were not easy to locate for residents who received paper versions of the survey.

Residents want to see a scheme rationale based on local resident feedback which is supported by clear evidential survey results. Such a scheme should be made available to all Croxley Green residents.

Residents would expect the joint involvement of local District and Parish councillors and the CGRA prior to being issued with the above.

It was a primary aim of the meeting to ensure local residents provided feedback. The Chair advised the audience that notes of the meeting would be made available to assist residents in their survey responses. If residents had already submitted a survey response to TRDC they could complete a subsequent one, stating it superseded the previous submission.

**Croxley Green Residents Association
18 November 2018**

Annex B

Draft letter to TRDC on car parking proposals

Public consultation on proposed parking schemes – the Croxley Green area wide review

Thank you for your consultation e-mail of the 16 October 2018. Having studied your proposals carefully, and in detail, the Croxley Green Parish Council offers the following comments on the proposed parking scheme.

The Parish Council is opposed in principle to the introduction of parking restrictions or controls anywhere within the Parish except:

- Where they are absolutely necessary for road safety or traffic management reasons
- Where they can be justified to support the local economy or social activities (for example near shops and schools), or
- Where a substantial majority of those residents affected are in favour of the controls or restrictions

The Parish Council wishes to preserve the character of Croxley Green, as far as possible, and therefore wishes to minimise the proliferation of signs and road markings. It is also aware that many residents object to paying to park on the highway near their homes and appreciates their concerns.

The Parish Council is well aware that the demand for on street parking exceeds the available space in a number of places within the Parish, at different times, and appreciates that Three Rivers District Council is trying to find solutions that meet the needs of local residents and businesses as well as the wider community.

In general there are three main types of problem:

- Overnight (and at weekends), where there is insufficient parking off street and on street for the number of houses and cars.
- Daytime during weekdays where commuters or those working in local businesses need to park near the station or their work place and there is insufficient off street parking.
- At busy times near shops and schools when there are more seeking to stop or park than the spaces available in the local area.

There are also more localised problems; particularly near junctions and on some streets where there is a high proportion of dropped kerbs.

There are also problems caused by inconsiderate drivers who park on private land or obstructing entrances or exits, obstructing footways (pavements) and/or obstructing traffic on the streets.

The Parish Council understands the complexity of the parking issues facing Croxley Green and TRDC and remains willing to be involved constructively to assist TRDC to find remedies that are acceptable to the majority of our residents.

Previous consultations

We understand that Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is the highway authority responsible for road maintenance and road safety and HCC has delegated its responsibilities, as the traffic authority, for parking control to Three Rivers District Council (TRDC).

TRDC was made aware of concerns reported to the Parish Council about parking on the Watford Road in the vicinity of the Croxley Metropolitan Line station, and the subsequent investigations carried out by the Parish Council in 2015 and 2016.

We were somewhat surprised that TRDC carried out a questionnaire survey across Croxley Green in early 2017 without consulting or involving the Parish Council in a matter of great concern to local residents.

We requested a meeting to discuss the questionnaire and were told we would be informed, once the findings were reported to the relevant TRDC committee. It appears that the findings were reported in July 2017, but the Parish Council was not made aware of the report or the findings.

Current consultation

The current consultation appears to consist of:

- (i) A document (Appendix B) which purports to include the full results of the initial consultation carried out in 2017 in the streets across Croxley Green
- (ii) A drawing of a scheme area which does not include the whole of Croxley Green
- (iii) Traffic engineering drawings with text that propose specific measures in general terms (Indicative drawings showing the initial proposals)

We consider this to be an inadequate basis for consulting the residents following their responses to a very vaguely worded initial survey.

Firstly, there is no evidence of the rationale for the proposals. Your Appendix B reports the results of the initial questionnaire which was couched in somewhat vague terms. There is apparently no analysis of what the results might mean.

In particular, there are no comments about the number of households consulted (assuming all received the questionnaire) or the response in percentage terms, or how that leads to any particular proposal for parking controls.

There is no explanation of how the particular scheme boundary was selected and some roads included and others excluded.

There is no explanation of why different measures are proposed in different places, what they are intended to achieve, and what the consequences are likely to be for residents, businesses and visitors.

It would be helpful to know the brief for the study; both the general brief and any specific briefs for particular areas. Without any explanation of the rationale behind the scheme or the proposals they appear **unclear, incoherent, confusing and inappropriate**.

Conclusions

The current proposals go far beyond a proportionate response to the concerns originally raised by residents.

The parking scheme as proposed seems to have been generated without any consultative analysis on the conclusions from the initial very broad survey.

Prior to any scheme being proposed the Parish Council and Residents Association should have been partners in a review of the findings from the initial survey.

Based on this consultative review any solutions proposed must meet the basic criteria outlined above. Any new restrictions should only be introduced

- Where absolutely necessary for road safety or traffic management reasons, or

- Where necessary to support the local economy or social activities (for example near shops and schools), or
- Where a substantial majority of those residents affected are in favour of the controls or restrictions.

We feel consultation should be revisited so that a sound basis and rationale for any further parking measures are widely understood and firmly linked to providing effective solutions to the residents' actual concerns.

We look forward to discussing your intentions for more effective public consultation, and any revised proposals, with you at an early stage.