

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

Report title: Proposed No Waiting at Any Time restrictions, Willingale Road & Sandford Avenue, Loughton	
Report to: Councillor Bentley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	
Report author: Andrew Cook, Director for Highways and Transport	
Date: 01 July 2020	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: Chigwell and Loughton Broadway	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Essex County Council (the Council) has formally advertised its intention to implement No Waiting at Any Time restrictions on Willingale Road and Sandford Avenue, Loughton (the Proposal). As objections have been received to the Proposal, the Cabinet Member is now asked to decide whether the restrictions should be implemented.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the implementation of the No Waiting at Any Time restrictions on Willingale Road and Sandford Avenue, Loughton, as formally advertised and set out in Appendix 1.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 Willingale Road is classified as a Priority 2 (PR2) route in the Essex Functional Route Hierarchy. The part of Willingale Road under investigation for this Proposal is at the southern end, at its junction with the Broadway (another PR2 route).
- 3.2 While Willingale Road serves mostly residential properties and areas, the part in question is within a busy location. This is due to the close proximity with the Debden Underground Tube Station, the large shopping Parade on the Broadway and the Thomas Willingale Primary School, which is sited on the land adjacent to the Proposal. It is also worth noting that Willingale Road is also part of local bus routes.
- 3.3 At its junction with The Broadway, Willingale Road has a series of bus stops, No Waiting at Any Time restrictions and School Keep Clear parking restrictions in order to protect and facilitate free vehicular movements at the junction, particularly during school pick up and drop off times. Slightly further

Proposed No Waiting at Any Time restrictions, Willingale Road & Sandford Avenue, Loughton

north west from this junction, the restrictions come to a halt while Willingale Road begins to veer off in a north easterly direction, taking a near 90 degree bend.

- 3.4 Throughout the duration of this bend, there are a total of four priority working build-outs in place by means of traffic calming, which feature small sections of marked out cycle lanes. These build outs narrow the carriageway so that it is wide enough to facilitate single file traffic only. Upon each build out, the give-way signage and markings alternate so that the direction of oncoming traffic that has priority is changed.
- 3.5 With the exception of the build out nearest to the junction with the Broadway, there are no enforceable parking restrictions protecting these features, along with most of this large bend on Willingale Road. The current layout of parking restrictions in this area can be seen in more detail under Appendix 1, showing existing and proposed Parkmap tiles that were used to advertise the Proposal.
- 3.6 Whilst some properties on Willingale Road, and its adjacent side roads, benefit from having a driveway, many do not and are therefore required to park their vehicles on the public highway. On street parking is often very congested, particularly on the adjacent side roads and areas to Willingale Road, such as Sandford Avenue and Doubleday Road. It is anticipated that another potential factor for this can be attributed to commuter parking, as this area is a short walk away from Debden Tube Station.
- 3.7 In 2016, an Epping Forest Local Highway Panel request was received for safety improvements along Willingale Road, from the then County Councillor Knapman for Chigwell and Loughton Broadway. This was following concerns over inappropriate vehicle speeds when passing the build outs, partly because of poor visibility for oncoming vehicles on approach to the features.
- 3.8 Essex Highways engineers subsequently reviewed this request, and took it through the scheme validation process and feasibility study for investigation, exploring all of the possible options for improvements at the location.
- 3.9 Several site observations and reports have all shown persistent vehicular parking along Willingale Road, with vehicles often parked wholly in the carriageway, or across the adjoining footways in a way that significantly infringes upon a suitable level of pedestrian space. It has also been observed that in some cases, vehicles have parked right up to the build outs, directly in the way of the existing give-way and cycle lane markings and therefore preventing proper use of the features for oncoming traffic.
- 3.10 It is for the above reasons, combined with the overall volume of vehicles utilising on-street parking in this area, which were deemed significant factors contributing to visibility and manoeuvrability issues for oncoming traffic within the area. This is particularly important, given the 90-degree style bend that Willingale Road takes between some of the build-outs. Oncoming traffic using the build-outs need to see far ahead to check whether there is a vehicle approaching that they may need to pull over for in the marked space.

Proposed No Waiting at Any Time restrictions, Willingale Road & Sandford Avenue, Loughton

However, with the presence of multiple parked vehicles interfering with the traffic calming features, forward visibility is significantly reduced, carriageway width is narrowed, and therefore greater difficulty in using the priority working system efficiently is present. It is also worth highlighting that this area is frequently used by pedestrians, many of which vulnerable road users in that of younger schoolchildren due to the presence of the Primary school. Heavily parked vehicles in the area impose greater difficulty on pedestrians wishing to cross the roads, while on street parking may be problematic for those who require the additional footway width such as pushchair and wheelchair users.

- 3.11 Similar issues were also observed to be an issue at junction adjacent to Willingale Road, Sandford Avenue. This was a result of several vehicles parking directly on the corner, obscuring space and visibility for drivers using the junction and thereby obscuring an efficient standard of vehicular movements.
- 3.12 Following the investigation, Essex Highways decided to pursue the concluding recommendations to install No Waiting at Any Time restrictions throughout Willingale Road and on the junction with Sandford Avenue, as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.13 It was also proposed to replace an existing section of School Keep Clear 6-9:30 AM and 2:30-4:30PM Markings on the corner between Willingale Road and the Broadway, however this part was later agreed to be dropped. This was relating to concerns about congestion during school pick up/drop off times, as vehicles will legally be able to load and unload passengers on double yellow lines and therefore risk obscuring the junction at these times.
- 3.14 If implemented, the Proposal is anticipated to protect the most vulnerable points of road in this area from on-street parking, by covering both sides of the other build-outs further up Willingale Road as well as the Sandford Avenue/Willingale Road junction. Thereby contributing to aid the problems identified within section 3.10 of this report and enabling proper use of the traffic calming features.
- 3.15 Additionally, No Waiting at Any Time restrictions will also free up many sections of pedestrian footway that are currently being parked across, enabling a greater width of pedestrian space and visibility when navigating the area. The importance of this is particularly relevant given the amount of pedestrian traffic in the area during school pick up/drop off times, many of whom are vulnerable road users with the presence of schoolchildren.

Consultation

- 3.16 From 21 November to 13 December 2019, Essex Highways formally advertised the Proposal.
- 3.17 The Proposal was advertised on the Essex Highways website and in the Epping Forest Guardian newspaper. Public notices were also displayed along Willingale Road and a letter drop was carried out to nearby properties of the

Proposed No Waiting at Any Time restrictions, Willingale Road & Sandford Avenue, Loughton

site. The letter explained the proposed changes, justification for the proposals, and a drawing of the proposal (as shown in Appendix 1). Several key stakeholders were also consulted directly:

- Essex Police did not support or object to the Proposal, however they did request to ensure that the potential for vehicular speeds to increase because of removing the existing on-street parking was taken into consideration.
- Loughton Town Council made no comment on the Proposal.
- County Councillor Chris Pond for Loughton Central Division and District Councillor for the Loughton Broadway Ward expressed his support for the Proposal.

- 3.18 During the consultation period, one objection was received from a resident of Willingale Road.
- 3.19 The Objector, while acknowledging the need for parking restrictions due to the frequently heavy school traffic, based their concern on the fact that this would make them unable to park outside their property, as the Proposal will significantly reduce the capacity for on-street parking in this area, thus causing an inconvenience. They suggested that a resident's only parking scheme be implemented instead to reduce amount of on-street parking by limiting it only to residents. Alternatively, the Objector suggested a time-bound No Waiting restriction be installed to allow residents to park outside their properties in the evenings.
- 3.20 Essex highways responded to the Objector, stating that time-bound restrictions would be unsuitable because the Proposal has been designed to protect the most vulnerable junctions, bends and build-outs on Willingale Road. All of these features, when obscured by on-street parking, are prone to obstruction and manoeuvrability issues for oncoming vehicular and pedestrian traffic at any time of the day, hence why No Waiting at Any Time restrictions are being proposed.
- 3.21 The full Objection Report can be found under Appendix 2.

4. Options

Option A – Continue with the Proposal as advertised

- 4.1 This option would support the recommendations made by Essex Highways engineers from the initial feasibility. It would also satisfy the Epping Forest Local Highway Panel, Loughton Town Council and Councillor Pond. This is the preferred option to deliver the requested improvements to visibility, pedestrian access and free movement of traffic through the priority working

systems, as well as the general environment for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. However, this option would not satisfy the Objector, as it would reduce the capacity for residents to utilise on-street parking outside their properties.

Option B – Investigate alternative parking solutions

- 4.2 This option would support the Objector, if a Residents Parking scheme or other time-bound restrictions that would still allow residents to park in the given areas were implemented instead.

However, as stated to the Objector, this option has not been deemed suitable for the reasons identified within 3.20 of this report, and will therefore not achieve the expected benefits the Proposal was set out to solve. Investigating alternative solutions will also require new designs to be investigated and advertised, bearing significant financial costs and time delays. This option will therefore not be the preferred option by the stakeholders referred to above.

Option C – Abandon the scheme

- 4.3 This option may be supported by the Objector and other local residents, as they would be able to continue to use the existing areas of Willingale Road and Sandford Avenue for unrestricted on-street parking. However, this option will go against officer recommendations as visibility and obstruction issues for local vehicular and pedestrian traffic that are caused by on-street parking is likely to continue to persist. Vehicles will still be able to park wholly across the footways, on the corner of the Sandford Avenue junction and in a way that obstructs the traffic calming build-outs, thereby preventing proper use of them.

This option is therefore not the recommended option, and will not be supported by the stakeholders referred to above.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 This scheme is to be funded by the Epping Forest Local Highways Panel with an estimated cost of £24,500.

5.2 Legal implications

6.2.1 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("RTRA 1984") gives the Council the power to make an order regulating the use of roads where it appears to the Council that it is necessary for facilitating the passage of any class of traffic (including pedestrians). Specifically, S2(2)(c) of the RTRA 1984, provides that a Traffic Regulation Order ("TRO") may include any provision prohibiting or restricting the waiting of vehicles.

Proposed No Waiting at Any Time restrictions, Willingale Road & Sandford Avenue, Loughton

A traffic regulation order which imposes any restriction on the waiting of vehicles in a road and may include provision with respect to the issue and display of certificates or other means of identification of vehicles which are excepted from the restriction, whether generally or in particular circumstances or at particular times.

The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 ("the Regulations") provides that, before making an order, the Council is required to publish a notice of the Proposal.

Any person or Authority required to be consulted by the Council may object to the making of an order by the date specified in the notice, or, if later, the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the date on which the Council has complied with all the requirements of the Regulations. Any objections must be made in writing, state the grounds on which it is made; and be sent to the address specified in the notice of proposals.

Whilst there does not appear to be any requirement to hold a public inquiry under the RTRA 1984, in the specific circumstances, the decision of the Council to make the order, despite the objections received, may be subject to judicial review.

Proposed No Waiting at Any Time restrictions, Willingale Road & Sandford Avenue, Loughton

6. Equality and Diversity implications

6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

6.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

7. List of appendices

- Appendix 1 – Parkmap Tiles
- Appendix 2 – Objection Report
- Appendix 3 – Site Photos
- Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

8. List of Background papers

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Councillor Kevin Bentley, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	02/09/2020

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Director Highways and Transportation Andrew Cook	28/08/2020
S151 Officer Nicole Wood	Consent not needed

Proposed No Waiting at Any Time restrictions, Willingale Road & Sandford Avenue,
Loughton

Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer) Laura Edwards on behalf of Paul Turner	 01/07/2020
Head of Network and Safety/Traffic Manager Liz Burr	 28/02/2020
Head of Design Vicky Presland	 27/02/2020