

Extension of Suspension of Disabled Parking Bays, Lichfield City Centre

Cllr Elizabeth Little

Date: 17 September 2021

Agenda Item:

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Key Decision? **NO**

Local Ward Members All



Cabinet Member Report

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report concerns the extension of current arrangements regarding the suspension of disabled parking bays on Market Street, Tamworth Street, Conduit Street and Bore Street in Lichfield City Centre.
- 1.2 In July 2020, the on-street parking bays were suspended by the District Council in consultation with the Highway Authority, Staffordshire County Council in line with Covid guidelines. This was to enable additional pedestrian space to be provided for residents and visitors to socially distance during the Covid 19 Pandemic and to encourage shoppers safely back into the city centre.
- 1.3 The current arrangement is due to expire on 30 September 2021 and the District Council wishes to extend the suspension of the bays to 30 September 2022 to help support the local economy.
- 1.4 During the pandemic, The Business and Planning Act 2020 enabled businesses to apply for outside space to accommodate customers and aid their recovery. If applicants were successful, Businesses were granted permission to use the pavement licence until September 2021. Lichfield City Centre saw 18 businesses apply for additional outside space.
- 1.5 The Business and Planning Act 2020 (Pavement Licences) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 has now extended temporary pavement licence provisions to 30 September 2022.
- 1.6 By Lichfield District Council extending the current suspension we will be helping to support local businesses and the local economy in the recovery period of the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 1.7 The Bays will be suspended until 30 September 2022, subject to the county councils approval, in line with the government's initiative to extend pavement licenses until 30 September 2022.
- 1.8 Before seeking approval of the suspended bays we will communicate effectively with local residents and stakeholders to ensure they are aware of the alternative provisions in place.
- 1.9 Disabled bays have been relocated to Bird Street car park and Lombard street car park to ensure no loss of car parking.
- 1.10 An Equality impact assessment report has been undertaken and the situation will continue to be monitored by officers to ensure successful delivery.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the current arrangement to suspend 21 parking bays on Market Street, Bore Street, Conduit Street and Tamworth Street are extended to 30 September 2022 to help support the local economy recover from Covid19.
- 2.2 That Bird Street Car Park and Lombard Street Car Park continue to provide for alternative blue badge parking whilst the above suspensions are in place.

3. Background

- 3.1 Since the Business and Planning Act 2020, Lichfield District Council has granted 18 pavement licences to enable the hospitality sector to reopen with outside dining space. We expect the majority of the businesses to reapply for the extension of their pavement licenses. We have received correspondence from cafes already regarding keeping the suspension in place. Many businesses have invested in infrastructure to be able to serve customers outside all year and have had a positive response.
- 3.2 Due to the suspension of disabled parking bays, the businesses have had sufficient space to be able to serve customers safely and effectively. There are currently four businesses on Bore Street which are making use of the suspended disabled bays, two businesses on Tamworth Street and two on Conduit Street.
- 3.3 The on-street car parking is suspended and space has been made available using large wooden planters that have been planted up with seasonal flowers to enhance the public realm of the city centre.
- 3.4 The Emergency active travel fund (2020), announced on May 23rd, was introduced as part of the government's efforts to combat the Covid19 pandemic. This fund allowed local authorities to support short term projects for the Covid19 pandemic. Staffordshire County Council working with the District Council chose to extend the disabled parking bay suspension arrangements in the city centre to enable residents and visitors more space as Lichfield has a very historical core with narrow footpaths. The county council also installed temporary highways measures on Upper St John Street and Greenhill.
- 3.5 The Extension of suspending the disabled bays will allow the cafes and businesses who are currently using the on street spaces, to continue to use them to aid their recovery.
- 3.6 In making the decisions to suspend parking availability, it was recognised that this would have an impact upon blue badge holders. As such, in introducing the arrangements work was undertaken to determine how the needs of blue badge holders could alternatively be met. The outcome was to ensure sufficient car parking spaces were made available in the most accessible and closest car parks to the city centre, being Bird Street and Lombard Street. The provision for these car parks to serve blue badge holders will continue.
- 3.7 The District Council engaged with an advisory body, AccessAble to determine the impact on blue badge holders of the proposal.
- 3.8 The District council has also undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment report to understand any implications this decision may cause and mitigate any effects.

Alternative Options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To not extend the current arrangements that are due to expire in September 2021. It is not considered this would be appropriate as the lockdown restrictions have only recently started to be relaxed and consequently business and the local economy has not had the chance to recover from the effects of CV19 on trading.
Consultation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In July 2020, a consultation took place between AccessAble and the District Council to ensure the council took in the needs of disabled blue badge holders. We have also consulted with AccessAble on this decision.
Financial Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> We estimate the loss of income for the period October 2021 to March 2022 to be £34,000, with the same amount for the period April 2022 to September 2022. Making the total estimated loss of the proposal £68,000.
Approved by Section 151 Officer	Yes
Legal Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> None.
Approved by Monitoring Officer	Yes
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Suspending the on-street parking would assist local business and the local economy recover from the impacts of CV19.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In introducing the original suspensions, the District Council engaged with an advisory body, AccessAble to determine the impact on blue badge holders of the proposal. The Council duly made provision for alternative parking provision which could help meet the needs of blue badge holders, these being facilities within Bird Street Car Park and Lombard Street Car Park both located in close proximity to shops, cafes and other facilities. This dedicated provision will continue to be kept for blue badge holders whilst the suspensions are in place. An Equality impact assessment has been carried out.
Crime & Safety Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The suspended parking bays are currently blocked with large wooden planters to ensure people cannot park in them or use them without consent. The planters are very heavy and cannot be moved.
Environmental Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The proposals are a response to the impacts of CV19 on the local economy and a desire to help local business become economically active again generating income and supporting jobs. The reduction in parking spaces will see a change in the character and appearance of those streets where cars would have previously have parked and overall the look and feel of the city centre.
GDPR / Privacy Impact Assessment	Not applicable

	Risk Description & Risk Owner	Original Score (RYG)	How We Manage It	Current Score (RYG)
A	Managing business and blue badge holders expectations	Yellow	Ensure clear communications to business and local residents well ahead of the changes	Likelihood Yellow Impact Yellow Overall Yellow
B	Blue Badge spaces within car parks are misused or made unavailable in other ways	Green	Ensure good communications in advance and also where practical introduce new signage and physical means of demarcating the spaces available to blue badge holders.	Green Likelihood Green Impact Yellow Overall Green
C				
D				
E				

Background documents

Any previous reports or decisions linked to this item

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-active-travel-fund-local-transport-authority-allocations>

<https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/performance-efficiency/strategic-plan>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/business-and-planning-act-2020-pavement-licences-coronavirus>

Relevant web links

Any links for background information which may be useful to understand the context of the report