

PARKING CONSULTATION; LONDON ROAD STATION NORTH, EXTENSION TO AREA J

I am writing to ask that the Highways Committee takes into account the views of my constituents in Hollingdean and Stanmer Ward about the proposed extension to the Area J residents parking scheme and that this letter and the comments contained in it should be considered as responses to the consultation. I wish to speak to this letter when the scheme is discussed at the Committee.

A primary concern is that only those who live in the area to be covered by the scheme have been consulted despite the very obvious fact that, like any proposals for controlled parking, the scheme is bound to have an effect on parking in neighbouring areas because of displacement.

I understood that the Council had agreed to carry out a City-wide review of residents' parking schemes to consider, among other factors, the effect of displacement before establishing further schemes, but for some reason is now seeking to proceed with this current proposal ahead of any discussion on the outcome of that review.

I raised these issues when I met with Council officers in May 2012 before the consultation began and, when it became clear that the Council intended not to seek the views of residents living outside of the proposed scheme, I asked people in my ward living in the immediate neighbouring areas for their views both by letter and through the local residents' community newsletter.

The roads in the areas between Upper Hollingdean Road and Fiveways already have great pressures on parking. They are close to the thriving shops, cafes and restaurants at Fiveways and many houses have been converted into flats and HMOs so there is often more than one car per household.

The overwhelming response was a real concern that the existing pressures both for residents and their visitors in Hollingbury Road, Hollingbury Park Avenue and those parts of Ditchling Road, not included in the scheme will only be made worse by its introduction. Among the many responses are the following;

Hollingbury Park Avenue: "I am worried about the knock-on effects in this road. It is already difficult to find a space." "It seems the Council will

only be happy when the entire City is a residents parking zone and we all pay to park near our own homes.”

Ditchling Road “I shall probably be forced to park in the Dip !”

Hollingbury Road “ This road has so many HMOs it’s already a nightmare to park.” “ Why aren’t we being consulted too ?” “ This road is already used by Cityclean staff to park all day...now we will get the displaced traffic from this lot too”

I have also had many comments from residents living in parts of the Hollingdean Dip who are concerned that many people will be forced to seek parking spaces in that area. There is a primary school, a parade of shops and, already acknowledged by the Council, a high proportion of student households, all leading to existing pressures on residents parking. They want the Council to take account of their views too.

In addition I understand that there is concern on the part of teaching staff at Downs Infants School in Ditchling Road about their parking arrangements during the school day.

A further concern has been expressed by several residents of my ward who attend Stanford Avenue Methodist Church. Many of them are older people who do not live within easy walking distance of the Church so would find it hard to walk there. What provision will the Council make for them to park?

One of the most worrying aspects of this proposal is the position of the Council’s own sheltered housing scheme in Ditchling Gardens and Ditchling Place which is to be included in the proposals. When I met officers it was clear that they did not realise that the bungalows and houses in this cul-de-sac are sheltered housing and that the residents are older people or have disabilities. Some of them have disabled bays outside their own homes and a number of others need parking for regular visits from carers, health- visitors, home helps, and family members.

Residents have complained over the years about the problems caused by cars parked by people who do not live there and who are not visiting residents. This includes parking on both sides of this narrow road, ignoring yellow lines. I am told that there have been problems with access for ambulances and emergency vehicles at times. I have lobbied in the past for a separate free scheme for Ditchling Gardens/ Ditchling

Place, limiting parking to residents and their visitors. Some years ago the Council did put “residents only” signs at the entrance to the scheme but as they are only “advisory” they are often ignored.

I recently attended a meeting with the residents in their community room and there was general dismay at this proposal. If it goes ahead without any amendment, then Ditchling Gardens/Place residents will have an even worse situation than at present. Any permit holder for the Area J scheme will be entitled to park there, undoing the work the Council has acknowledged is needed to deter non-resident parking. If they are not included in the scheme, then they will suffer from displaced parking from Area J. In addition it does seem to me that the requirement for residents to pay to park within the sheltered scheme both for themselves if they are car drivers, and for what are often essential regular visits from family members and friends, is unreasonable.

Obviously if it is decided to go ahead with this extension to the Area J residents parking scheme then I believe that rather than just including Ditchling Gardens/Place in it, the Council should devise separate residents parking proposals which recognise the status of Ditchling Gardens/Place as a sheltered housing scheme and which place no financial burden on the residents. This separate scheme should be in operation first otherwise the residents there will find the parking situation far worse than it is now.

I believe that this proposal to extend Area J will greatly disadvantage many people living in my ward and I support their wishes that their views should be taken into account before any decision is reached.

Jeane Lepper

Labour and Co-operative Councillor

Hollingdean and Stanmer

