

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the Highways Committee held at the County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 14 June 2007 at 10.00 a.m.**

Present:

COUNCILLOR H DOUTHWAITE in the Chair

Members:

Councillors C Carr, Forster, Gray, Hodgson, Holroyd, Hunter, Knox, Maddison, Mason, Meir, Nugent, O'Donnell, Pendlebury and Young

Other Members:

Councillors R Carr, Williams, Foster NC, Chapman, Lethbridge and Martin

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bell, E Foster, Porter, and Tennant

A1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2007 were agreed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

In relation to minute A3 of the meeting concerning the tables and chairs on the paved area outside of the Court Inn in Durham City, the Corporate Director, Environment advised that since the meeting he had received a letter from Mr H Walker, the owner of the public house. He wished the Committee to be informed that following the meeting there had been much publicity about the issue and he wished to place on record that he had been given the opportunity at the meeting to express his views and in his opinion the matter had been handled by the Committee in a fair and proper manner.

A2 Shincliffe C of E Primary School- Proposed Relocation of bus stop and proposed refuge outside the Seven Stars Public House, Shincliffe

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Environment regarding the re-consideration of a report presented to the Committee in March 2007 on the relocation of a bus stop and proposed refuge outside of the Seven Stars Public House at Shincliffe (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:-

That the County Council's Procedure Rules as set out in Rule 22.1 of the Constitution be suspended in order to allow the Committee's re-consideration of the matter.

The Committee then considered the report of the Corporate Director, Environment that had been presented to the Committee in March 2007 regarding the proposal to introduce a pedestrian refuge on the A177 outside The Seven Stars Public House and consequently to relocate a bus stop (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Corporate Director, Environment advised of an amendment to Paragraph 3.1 of the report in that it had been all of the Parish Council rather than just two parish councillors who had objected to the proposals.

The Committee then heard the following representations:-

Mr Hudson, the Chairman of Shincliffe Parish Council acknowledged that from the traffic surveys that had been undertaken, the number of pedestrians crossing the road was not excessive, and understood that it did not meet the criteria for a formal pedestrian crossing, however, these were only guidelines. He hoped that the Authority would adhere to the Every Child Matters guidelines as he believed that the safety of every child should be taken into account. With children being encouraged to walk to school their safety should be guaranteed.

He accepted that the proposed pedestrian refuge would improve safety, however, he felt that it did not go far enough, and that safety would be much improved if there was a pedestrian crossing. He pointed out that there was a pedestrian crossing further along the road towards Houghall that is used by students and pedestrians.

He questioned why there was a zebra crossing and a lollipop person on Church Street which was a narrow road with a speed limit of 30 mph and due to the number of stoppages along that road, the speed of traffic would be less than 30mph.

He pointed out that 40 years ago when his children went to the school, there was less traffic on the road, however, there was a lollipop person assisting children to cross the road. He questioned how important a child's safety was when there were signs to indicate that the elderly were crossing but there are none for children.

In response the Corporate Director, Environment advised in order to justify a formal crossing point, the criteria to be met was a PV^2 of at least 0.75, however, in this case the PV^2 is 0.12, and was substantially below the national guidelines. He pointed out that if a formal crossing was installed there it could be more of a danger. Children's safety is important to the Authority and the proposed refuge would improve this. He pointed out that there are far more pedestrians that would cross the road in Church Street.

Mrs Curry, a resident of the village for over 40 years, advised of her objections to the proposals. She suggested that although the figures are unfavourable in terms of meeting the criteria, at the times when children are going to and from school the road is very busy. She explained that there has been much new housing in Coxhoe and Bowburn which has caused an increase in the volume of traffic using the road, and they have difficulty in manoeuvring out of the junction. She suggested that most children are taken from the village by car to get to school as it is not safe to cross the road, and she felt that this was not good when there are concerns nationally about child obesity.

The school has a successful walking bus and she considered that those children living in the village are excluded from using it. She also considered the speeds of vehicles along that road are much higher than the 40 mph limit. She asked for part time signals to be installed for a pedestrian crossing to enable children to use it to get to and from school safely. She requested that something be done before a child is injured.

The Corporate Director, Environment advised that the installation of the pedestrian refuge and changes in road markings would make significant improvements to safety of children using the road. There is already a refuge further down the road and therefore the effect from these two crossings would slow down traffic. During the morning peak hour there are on average 13 children and 10 adults crossing the road, and the refuge would provide a safe crossing point. He advised that it was not possible to put in a part time light controlled crossing for pedestrians.

Ms Lumley, a resident of Shincliffe expressed her objections to the proposals. She explained to the Committee the difficulty that she has in leaving and re-entering her driveway due to the traffic and this would only be exacerbated if the bus stop was moved nearer to her driveway. She suggested that the bus stop remain at its present location and the pedestrian crossing be installed at the site proposed for the bus stop. If a bus was in the new proposed bus stop it would make turning manoeuvres more difficult. She believed that by moving the bus stop residents of the village would have further to walk and this may prevent some elderly residents from using the bus.

The Corporate Director, Environment explained that by moving the refuge north, its value would be greatly diminished, and would have to be moved a significant distance north out of the way of the crossing which would have little benefit to the village. The maximum number of buses per hour was four and therefore the number of times that a bus was in the bus stop when she was either leaving or re-entering her driveway was limited. He advised that although some people may have further to walk to the bus stop others may have less. He suggested that the measures proposed would have the effect of slowing down the traffic on the road and thus should make the turning manoeuvres in and out of her driveway easier.

Maxine Stubbs from Durham Police advised that the measures proposed would be of benefit and would make it safer for children and pedestrians to cross the road.

Councillor Williams, the Local Member, sympathised with the views of the local people, however advised that he supported the proposals on the grounds that the

criteria to justify a formal pedestrian crossing were not met and the police supported the proposals.

Councillor Lethbridge believed that the measures to be introduced would have a calming effect on the road, and the measures proposed would improve safety.

Resolved:-

The Committee agreed to endorse the proposal to set aside the objections and proceed with the scheme.

A3 Objections to the (Durham City) (On Street Parking Places) Order 2007

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Environment about the objections received following advertisement of the (Durham City) (On Street Parking Places) Order 2007 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Corporate Director, Environment pointed out that paragraph 4.1 of the report should be amended to advise that one of the reasons why employees from Sunlight Services Limited objected to the proposals was that public transport was unaffordable, and not affordable as indicated in the report.

The Committee then heard the following representations:-

Ms A Jones, an employee of Sunlight Services Limited at Neville's Cross advised of her and her colleagues objections to the proposals. 9 employees had sent letters of objections and they had also sent in a petition. They objected to the proposals on the grounds that it would cost them approximately £36 per week to park in the vicinity of their workplace. She pointed out that it was on a bus route but not the Park and Ride, and as some employees start work prior to the times that the buses start running, and some live further away than just using one bus, it was not convenient for all employees to use public transport. They already pay for council tax and car tax and with this extra expense they were being penalised further and may have to look for alternative employment.

In response the Corporate Director, Environment advised that it would cost £16 per week to park which would be no different to what other employees parking in the city would have to pay. He suggested that some employees would be able to use public transport. He advised that there are only 90 parking spaces in the vicinity of Sunlight Services Limited and even if all employees were to park in them there would not be enough spaces as 113 employees signed the petition.

Mrs Shelley, a resident of Percy Terrace, believed there to be a discrepancy in the report in that if two 6m parking bays were to be located outside of her property they would overlap the driveway by 2.3 metres. She pointed out that due to the number of vehicles parking on the road, cars have difficulty reversing off their driveways and parking bays in the street would compound the problem. Mr Shelley advised that a computer simulation had been undertaken which showed that it was impossible to reverse off their driveway.

The Corporate Director, Environment explained that the parking bays outside of their property would in total be 9.6 metres in length and would stop one metre short of their driveway. Although the new Manual for Streets suggested parking bays should be 6 metres in length, this size of parking bay has not been used in Durham. He pointed out that the proposal was only for 2 bays rather than a series of bays linked together.

Mr Potilliege, a resident of Wardles Terrace advised of his objections to the scheme. He explained that Allergate is a narrow street and due to the geography of the area they sometimes have to park in the streets that are currently in Zone O. He was aware that those in Zone I cannot park in streets in Zone O, however parking by residents from Zone O into Zone I was to be permitted. He felt that this was unfair and would compound the problems for residents in Zone I.

The Corporate Director, Environment advised that this situation already exists and this is merely consolidating the existing places orders. He explained that Zone O was brought into the parking control order as there are pressures on parking in those streets.

Maxine Stubbs of Durham Constabulary advised that the police did not have any comment to make in terms of the increase in charges, however, in relation to the additional streets being added to the scheme, this was welcomed. There had been a number of complaints about cars causing an obstruction in some of the additional streets which were to be included in the Order, and in Farnely Hey Road and Highgate there had been two occasions when the police had arranged for cars to be removed.

Councillor Martin, the Local Member for Neville's Cross, advised that he did understand the concerns of the employees of Sunlight Services Limited, however he must represent the interests of local people. They were suffering from the knock on effect from being on the edge of the parking control order where vehicles were parking in the Neville's Cross locality to avoid paying charges for parking in the city. He explained that it was the local residents who had requested their inclusion in the scheme. In relation to the concerns about Percy Terrace, he requested that the situation be reviewed if the problems envisaged are realised, and that the parking bays be taken out if the situation needs to be re-addressed. Finally Councillor Martin requested that officers examine the potential to develop an additional Park and Ride site to the west of the city.

The Corporate Director, Environment confirmed that there are demands in the St John's Road area for parking not only with employees from Sunlight Services, but with vehicles being left by people going into the city. A Transport Innovation Study is being undertaken in conjunction with the Department of Transport where assessments were currently being undertaken. In the autumn it is envisaged recommendations which could include additional Park and Ride sites may be made to the Committee. He pointed out that this would need significant capital investment but that traffic coming from the west of the county is one of the pressure points in the city.

Councillor Pendlebury supported the proposals in the report, however, sympathised with the objections made by the employees at Sunlight Services Limited. He suggested that the Authority discuss with the employer some alternative arrangements for their staff to park, possibly whether they could use the Park and Ride site and transport their employees to work, or whether they could assist them in finding a piece of land for their employees to use as a car park.

The Corporate Director, Environment would request that an officer from the Travel Plan section contact Sunlight Services Limited to discuss a suitable way forward.

Resolved:-

The Committee agreed to endorse the proposal to set aside the objections and to confirm the implementation of the Traffic Regulation Order (subject to amendment of indicated tariffs for Hallgarth Street).

A4 Proposed 40 mph Speed Limit- Unclassified Burnhill Way, Newton Aycliffe

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Environment about the objections to the proposed implementation of a 40 mph speed limit on Burnhill Way, Newton Aycliffe (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Gray advised of his objection to the statement in paragraph 5.2 of the report, in that he had never 'campaigned' for this speed limit to be introduced in Burnhill Way. He did advise of his support for the scheme. He also pointed out that he is a member of Great Aycliffe Town Council and had declared an interest in this item during its meetings.

Councillor Gray requested that a strong letter be sent from the Education Authority to these schools to advise pupils to use the underpasses rather than the roads.

The Corporate Director, Environment apologised for the error in the report and advised that he would follow this up with the Education authority and would look in to whether they had school travel plans.

Resolved:-

The Committee agreed to endorse the proposal to set aside the objections and to proceed with confirmation of the 40 mph speed limit.

A5 Public Footpath No 9 Mickleton Parish

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Environment about an application to divert part of Footpath 9 Mickleton which had been considered by the Highways Committee in June 2005 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Pendlebury declared an interest in this item as a member of the Rambler's Association, took no part in the discussion and did not vote.

The Corporate Director, Environment advised the history including the Rights of Way Inspector's decision on the diversion order made in November 2005, legal framework and the outstanding objection.

Resolved:-

The Committee agreed to make a Diversion Order under the provisions of Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980.