

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 8 March 2012 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor G Bleasdale (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Robinson (Vice-Chairman), B Arthur, A Bainbridge, D Burn, D Hancock, S Hugill, D Marshall, A Naylor, P Stradling, L Thomson, R Todd, J Turnbull and A Wright

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Taylor, E Tomlinson, C Woods and R Young

Also Present:

Councillors D Southwell and M Wilkes

1 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

2 Various Streets, Chester-le-Street - Proposed Waiting Restrictions

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services regarding the proposed introduction/alteration of waiting restrictions in five separate streets in Chester-le-Street (for copy see file of Minutes).

The report gave details of the proposed parking restrictions in the following locations:-

Crichton Avenue
Unc Plantaganet Avenue
Unc South Burns
Unc Wesley Terrace
Unc West Lane

The Strategic Highways Manager briefed Members on the representations received in relation to each of the five proposals, and the Committee heard from Marie Alderson and Mr Chowdhury regarding the scheme for Unc South Burns.

Marie Alderson spoke on behalf of ABA Taxis. She was concerned that at present up to 3 taxis could be parked outside their premises at any one time and therefore one parking permit would not be enough. Alternative parking provision had been suggested, including at Tesco and Lucy Street but these locations would not be feasible. The company had operated from South Burns for a number of years without any road safety problems and

she was concerned that if agreed the proposals would have a detrimental effect on the future of the business. She also noted that market stall holders would be allowed free parking.

Mr Chowdhury who owned a takeaway at South Burns was concerned about the effect the proposals would have on his business. Customers parked outside his premises to collect food and one parking permit would not be enough.

In responding to the comments made the Strategic Highways Manager stated that in accordance with the existing Order 3 vehicles were not permitted outside the taxi premises and that there should be no customer parking for the takeaway as the permits were for business use only. The allocation of one permit per business was in line with premises in Front Street and it would be unreasonable to expect market stall holders to unload their vehicles some distance away from their pitches. With regard to road safety he advised that there were concerns for the safety of pedestrians walking from the market place to Tesco.

In considering the proposals at South Burns Members expressed concern that the restrictions may have a detrimental effect on local businesses in a town that was already struggling economically. The Committee appreciated that any proposals should protect the safety of pedestrians, however they should also protect the viability of local businesses.

It was therefore suggested that a visit to the site be arranged before making a decision on the proposals.

In discussing the remaining proposals for four streets in Chester-le-Street reference was made to the parking restrictions at Unc West Lane. The Committee reiterated their concerns in relation to the potential impact on local businesses if there was no customer pick-up/drop off in front of the premises and were advised that to address this the loading restriction had been removed between the access into Victoria Place and Nelson Street. Customers would also have access to a small car park nearby. Members queried the disabled parking provision which would be limited to 2 hours with no return in 22 hours, and were informed that this was in line with new Department of Transport criteria.

Resolved:

That

- (i) following consideration of the representations, the proposals to proceed with the implementation of the parking restrictions in respect of the following streets, be endorsed:-

Crichton Avenue
Unc Plantaganet Avenue/Rear of Ropery Lane
Unc Wesley Terrace
Unc West lane

- (ii) consideration of the proposals in relation to South Burns be deferred for a site visit.

3 A1086/Unc Cotsford Lane, Horden - Proposed Waiting Restrictions

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services regarding the proposed introduction of waiting restrictions on Unc Cotsford Lane, Horden (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Highways Manager advised the Committee of the representations received, details of which were outlined in the report for Members' consideration.

Resolved:

That having considered the representations, the proposal to proceed with the implementation of the waiting restrictions be endorsed.

4 B6310 and Unc Birch Crescent, Myrtle Grove & Valley View, Burnopfield – Proposed Waiting Restrictions

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services regarding the proposed introduction of waiting restrictions in Valley View, Myrtle Grove/Elm Grove and Birch Crescent/Leazes Villas, Burnopfield (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Highways Manager advised that the local Members were in support of each of the proposals but objections had been received from residents. He outlined the representations received in relation to each area, and additional representations were made to the Committee as follows:-

Valley View

Mr D Peel, a resident of Valley View addressed the Committee. He appreciated that the double yellow line restrictions had been modified but considered that restrictions should also be imposed on the opposite side of the road where vehicles parked at school pick-up/drop-off times. He was also concerned at the indiscriminate parking on the corner of the junction.

He understood that Durham County Council were now responsible for the enforcement of parking restrictions and whilst some action had been taken at first, this had stopped in recent weeks. He believed that his alternative proposal to introduce 'No Motor Vehicles Except for Access' would be more effective. Only residents and visitors used this road as there was no vehicular access beyond Valley View, and the proposal would not impede access to the Public Right of Way.

In replying to the comments made the Strategic Highways Manager stated that DCC was now in a position to respond to any concerns relating to contravention of parking restrictions and that enforcement action would increase. The Police would continue to deal with any issues regarding obstruction. The proposal to include the restrictions on the other side of the road could be investigated and considered as part of a future scheme, and he would examine the concerns raised about parking at the junction.

In discussing the proposal Members felt that in view of the problems outlined by Mr Peel, consideration should also be given to implementing a waiting restriction on the opposite side of Valley View, a suggestion that had been supported by the local Members.

Birch Crescent/Leazes Villas

The Strategic Highways Manager referred to e-mails received from 2 residents, Mr Allison and Mr Smith who objected to the proposals for the following reasons:-

- Disruption for local residents
- School traffic only caused a small disruption for a short period of time twice a day
- A 24/7 restriction on this small stretch of road was unreasonable
- To access his gated drive to the rear of his property Mr Allison had to move his vehicle and currently parked on the road to be restricted
- The parking problem would be moved elsewhere in the village which was already a congested environment
- There was existing legislation in place to deal with parking issues and residents should not be penalised for problems caused by people who did not live in the area
- The proposal only seemed to be supported by one resident out of six properties affected
- They had not been consulted on the proposed removal of the restriction at the other end of the street, Birch Crescent. As a through route this would cause a much higher risk to vehicles and pedestrians due to the volume of passing traffic.

Members considered the representations put forward and it was suggested that the proposed no waiting restriction at any time be amended to Monday to Friday between 8am and 4pm. However Members felt that there should be consistency with the other areas of the village where 'no waiting at any time' was proposed. They also took into account the views of local Members who had expressed their support to the proposals.

Resolved:

That following consideration of the representations, the proposal to proceed with the implementation of the waiting restrictions in the three streets in Burnopfield, be endorsed, and consultation be carried out with regard to the implementation of waiting restrictions on the western side of Valley View.

5 Unc Aldin Grange Terrace, Bearpark - Proposed No Entry

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services regarding proposals to introduce a no entry restriction at the junction of Aldin Grange Terrace and the C17 in Bearpark (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Highways Manager outlined the representations received as detailed in the report and advised of additional correspondence received from Mr S Lynn, a local resident. Mr Lynn was concerned that if the proposals were approved traffic speed would increase beyond the speed limit and that traffic calming measures should be considered. He also felt that there was enough room for 2 cars to park safely on the corner.

Mr Gardiner, local resident addressed the Committee and expressed concern at the lack of communication by DCC with residents on this proposal. He considered that a one way system would result in an increase in the speed of traffic using the road to access the C17. Deliveries to his property would be difficult as larger vehicles would have to reverse into the street. The proposals would increase the risks to pedestrians, and to children in particular. There had been no accidents on the corner in the last 42 years and an alternative proposal would be to impose 'Access to Garstone House Only'. This would maintain a two way flow of traffic but would prevent vehicles turning into the terrace.

Mrs Virgo reiterated the comments of Mr Gardiner and added that her property was situated on the blind corner making exit onto the C17 difficult. Vehicles used the wrong side of the road when approaching the bend and her wall had been damaged in the past. She was also concerned for pedestrians and considered that if the proposals were approved traffic calming measures should be introduced.

In responding to the comments made, the Strategic Highways Manager apologised that residents felt that there had been a lack of communication. He did not expect traffic speeds to increase because of the layout of the road which would remain a two way system, however traffic calming measures could be considered in future if necessary. Vehicles tended to cut the blind corner because of poor visibility. Unfortunately it would not be possible to implement Mr Gardiner's suggestion of 'Access to Garstone House' only and Members were advised that delivery vehicles would be able to reverse into a small parking area.

Councillor M Wilkes, Local Member stated that given the large number of residents who were concerned about the blind bend he was minded to support the proposals, however he did sympathise with the views expressed by Mr and Mrs Gardiner and Mrs Virgo. He also acknowledged that whilst none had been carried out to date, speed tests could be undertaken in future if necessary.

In discussing the proposals Members considered possible alternatives to address the local residents' concerns. These included moving the No Entry signs further up the lane to allow access from C17 to Garstone House or the erection of a mirror on the blind bend.

In response D Wilcox advised that moving the No Entry sign would negate what they were trying to achieve at this corner. Unfortunately the provision of mirrors was strictly limited by the Department for Transport and this location did not meet the relevant criteria. Speed tests could be undertaken if necessary following implementation of the scheme.

Resolved:

That having considered the representations, the proposal to proceed with the implementation of the No Entry restriction, be endorsed.

6 Closure of Footpaths - St Marys Close, Bishop Auckland

It was noted that this report had been withdrawn.

7 A690, Kepier Crossing, Gilesgate

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services regarding proposals in respect of the A690 Kepier Crossing, Gilesgate (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee was advised that at the meeting of the Highways Committee held on 1 November 2011 Members had asked that consideration be given to the request to lower the speed limit on the A690 and provide street lights at the crossing.

Following consideration of all relevant factors and the environment Officers felt that the current speed limit was appropriate to the road and that a reduction would be unworkable in this location due to the resources needed for enforcement. The benefits of introducing a system of lighting would be to improve pedestrian visibility and reduce night time accidents with no glare to drivers. However in this case the lack of lighting actively discouraged pedestrians to use this crossing point which did not lead to a lit path.

The Strategic Highways Manager advised that since the report had been published further representations had been received from Madeleine Walker. She considered that the crossing was in a serious state of neglect which she believed was a huge factor in her son's death. She also felt that the Officers views in relation to lighting were absurd and that the crossing was dangerous to use day or night. The accident in 1997 was serious and she felt that there was a high chance that it would happen again. She concluded by thanking the Committee for its support.

Councillor Southwell, local Member spoke on behalf of Madeleine Walker and reiterated her concerns about the street lighting and the speed limit. He noted that the road markings had not been improved and that the vegetation was still overgrown, despite these issues being raised at the meeting in November 2011. With regard to the speed limit, he believed that this stretch of road warranted a reduction to 50mph in line with other sections along the A690 as it served a number of junctions. He requested that the 50mph limit be imposed permanently or for a trial period of 6 months.

Councillor L Thomson, local Member concurred with the views of Councillor Southwell and added that the speeds along this stretch of road were excessive particularly by vehicles leaving Durham City. He agreed with Officers' views in relation to street lighting but asked that a 50mph speed limit be imposed for a trial period.

In response to the comments made the Strategic Highways Manager advised that hazard warning markings had been marked along the centre of the carriageway and the vegetation had been cut back. It would not be possible to implement a 50mph speed limit for a trial period and he reiterated that in line with Department of Transport criteria, 70mph was appropriate for this stretch of the A690 which was in a rural environment. The 50mph limit had been imposed on other sections because of the at-grade junctions accessed by the A690.

In considering the proposals the Committee acknowledged the views of the local Members and expressed their sympathy to the family. A Member stated that he was in agreement with Officers on the grounds that works had been completed to improve safety at the crossing and that there was no evidence to suggest that it was used at night. However

having discussed all the relevant factors the Committee considered that speeds should be curtailed along this stretch of road by the introduction of a 50mph limit. They agreed with Officers' views that street lighting should not be introduced.

RESOLVED

That the findings of the assessment be noted and the decision that street lighting be not introduced at the location of the crossing point, be endorsed but that consultation be carried out on the proposal to reduce the speed limit to 50mph.