

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 26 July 2011 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor G Bleasdale (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Robinson (Vice-Chairman), A Bainbridge, N Foster, D Hancock, S Hugill, D Marshall, A Naylor, P Stradling, R Todd, E Tomlinson, J Turnbull, C Woods, A Wright and R Young

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Arthur, D Burn, J Maslin, J Shiell and L Thomson

Also Present:

Councillor J Blakey and M Williams

1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 June 2011

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 June 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2 Declarations of Interest, if any

Councillor Woods declared a personal and prejudicial interest on Item 4 as she ran a business on the Transit 15 route and withdrew from consideration of the item thereof.

3 Objections to the Traffic Regulation Order, North End Parking Area - Report of Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development which advised of representations received following the formal advert of a Traffic Regulation Order for North End Area, the effect of which would be to introduce a Controlled Parking Area (for copy, see file of Minutes).

Concerns had been raised by residents, via local Members regarding parking issues associated with long stay parking by staff and visitors to nearby workplaces such as the hospital, college in the Dryburn Area and commuters to further afield such as Newcastle, resulting in residents experiencing great difficulty parking in their street.

The parking restrictions would apply between 8.00am and 6.00pm, Monday to Saturday and a maximum of three resident's permits would be issued per household. The streets affected by the order were detailed in the report.

Following drop in sessions held at County Hall, proposals were forwarded to residents and a ballot undertaken. The results of the ballot were explained to Members. Although a substantial proportion of residents within the North End area were in favour of the scheme, some streets were not, which included Boste Crescent and Old Dryburn Way. As a result of the ballot, those streets were not included in the final scheme.

Following the advertisement of the Regulation Order, letters of objection were received from 12 residents. A summary of which were outlined in the report.

An email had been received from Mr Hagan, an objector to the scheme stating the following points:

- He was surprised and annoyed that his reasons for objection, and that of the other commuter objections, had been effectively dismissed in the report because the concerns of the residents and local Councillors were about the commuters.
- He felt that the real reason for the proposal was not made clear to him when he was in contact with the Council. He was not aware of the scheme and when asked for the reason for the proposal the information came back that it was for "safety" and "flow of traffic". He was not aware that the whole scheme was because of concerns of Councillors and residents.
- If he had known about the reason for the scheme he would have been interested in the following:
 - Had a study been conducted to highlight the extent of the problem? At least one Objector did not believe there was a problem. The report seemed to indicate that only a ballot had been made.
 - Had any consideration been made to what would happen to the commuters? Although there were concerns by the residents surely the Council should take a responsible approach and identify the impact the scheme would have on those trying to get to work?
 - Would, for example, those commuters currently taking the train start driving to their destination - adding to the carbon footprint the Council was trying to reduce?
- He had raised his objections by raising concerns about the impact of affordable parking in the area and the fact that the Park and Ride scheme was limited to 7am - 7pm with a hefty penalty if returning late. The comments received back gave no indication that any changes were being considered to the Park and Ride scheme or to help commuters.
- Why, when the residents raised their concerns, did the Council not look into a balanced solution? One that would help both the residents and commuters who were, just trying to get to work to earn a living. The Council seemed to have looked at the problem from the point of view of the residents and not addressing the

problem the commuters were facing, such as the lack of affordable parking close to the train station.

In response to the email, Mr Wilcox explained that the Council had looked at a balanced solution and parking was available for staff at the hospital and County Hall, although staff having to pay for parking at the hospital was out of the Council's control. He added that there was a park and ride in operation and parking was available at the railway station.

An objection had been received from Ms Forster who objected to the scheme in its current form. Her concerns related to the belief that residents would have to pave the gardens to provide more parking space to avoid having to purchase permits. It was felt that there could be environmental issues in relation to water not draining away where gardens were paved.

Mr Wilcox explained that legislation was in place and paving could not be installed without drainage being provided.

Mr Timmins, an objector explained that it was the responsibility of drivers to park legally and safely on the public highway. Residents should accept that they did not have the right to park outside their house and it was selfish and unreasonable to exclude other road users.

He had lived in Fieldhouse Terrace since 1995 and owned two cars which he usually parked on the road. He did have a drive and a garage that was full of garden equipment and rarely had a problem parking outside his house, day or night.

St Leonards entrance was close to his home and there was an element of cars parked from 6th form students, people parking to go shopping in the city as well as commuters using the railway station and cars could be left for a number of days. None of which stopped him from parking his car near to his house.

The area where he lived was a community and he liked to see people walking around. Gates may as well be erected to stop people using the estate. He added that road safety would suffer as reducing the parked cars would increase speeds. The number of cars parked that morning on his way to the meeting were minimal.

Residents would be expected to pay £30 per year per car to park outside their houses and he did not believe that they should be forced to do it. The local Councillor had suggested that the permit fee was a tax or means of funding the park and ride scheme. If residents were asked to fund the park and ride then all taxpayers should. The residents who voted for permit parking had plenty of spaces to park their cars so would not be affected. His neighbour was in a nursing home and her son had voted for the scheme on her behalf. He therefore felt that the ballot was flawed.

North End was one of the most sought after areas and prospective buyers were not put off by the parking situation. He urged Members to reject the application.

Mr Wilcox explained that he had been requested by local Members to support a scheme in the area following complaints from residents. Traffic levels were much lower at present because of the school holidays. With regard to the increase in speeds, there were traffic

calming measures installed on the estate. There were two other areas using parking control measures and the fee was to cover the administration costs incurred.

Mrs McKay, an objector requested that Mr McKay speak on her behalf. Mr McKay explained that himself and Mrs McKay were objectors 10 and 11 and had been monitoring parking since the scheme was proposed. The average number of cars on a Monday to Friday was approximately three and there was no parking problem on The Grove at present. There were problems elsewhere which when solved would transfer to other areas. He queried if there had been any survey undertaken of the numbers of cars parking in the area and where they had come from for example, Durham County Council, Land Registry or the hospital.

On walking across to the meeting that morning, he had witnessed the average spacing of approximately 10 parked car lengths which was supposedly a problem day. He felt Members should visit the site and view the parking situation on a Monday to Friday. He accepted that there was some problem but thought it needed to be correctly identified and solved in the areas where it arose.

It was felt that there was no problem with parking at weekends and if the scheme was to go ahead he suggested that it should be only Monday to Friday and monitor if there was a problem on a Saturday. Residents had visitors over the weekend who would not be able to park without a permit. He had taken quotes to pave his garden for extra parking space but he did not want to see all the gardens paved.

Mr Wilcox commented that if areas were excluded then other areas would become a target for parking. There was less traffic on the road due to school holidays which could account for the number of cars parked that day. The suggestion of the scheme operating from Monday to Friday was not a consistent approach and would attract shoppers on a Saturday.

Mr Wafer commented that parking was long stay and not attributable to residents. Some parking was from staff in County Hall but no in depth survey had been carried out. He added that the majority of the problem was Monday to Friday but Saturday's attracted people using the rail station as well as shoppers.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Traffic Regulation Order as advertised and the introduction of parking controls in the area as detailed in the report be approved.
- (ii) the parking supply and demand would continue to be monitored and any remedial action taken as appropriate.

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development which provided details of representations made for the two Transit 15 schemes involving proposed Traffic Regulation Orders for bus lanes at A177 Shincliffe and A177 South Road, Durham (for copy, see file of Minutes).

Transit 15 was a major public transport project which commenced implementation during the final year of the Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2) and would continue through early years of the successor plan. Completion of all of the planned schemes comprising the project would see reduced delays and improved reliability for bus services on seven key bus corridors across the County. A number of schemes had been completed as part of T15.

(i) A177 Shincliffe Bus Lane

The scheme was located on the Coxhoe to Durham corridor upstream of the traffic signals at Mill Lane, Shincliffe. Queues occurred in the westbound direction and traffic could tail back as far as High Shincliffe causing congestion and significant delay in addition to presenting a road safety hazard.

It was proposed to widen the A177 to provide a bus lane inbound into Durham from a point east of the traffic signals which would allow buses to pass traffic queuing on the approach to the signals without increasing delays as an inbound lane would still be available for other traffic.

A consultation letter and plan of the proposals were sent to statutory consultees and delivered to 40 properties. 13 responses were received with 7 objecting to the scheme including the Parish Council. The issues raised included concern over the scheme increasing rat running through the village and that the bus lane was not long enough to be effective. Following a meeting with the Parish Council, a survey was carried out which established that there were less than 10 vehicles per day diverting through the village to avoid queues.

Following an informal consultation on the proposed Traffic Regulation Order, 14 responses were received including 12 objections. The objections related to issues over the increased rat running through the village, the effectiveness of the bus lane and the use of funding for the scheme in the difficult economic climate.

The Traffic Regulation Order was advertised in April 2011 and 6 representations were received including 2 from local Members which were detailed in the report.

Mr Wilcox explained that an email had been received from Mr Phillips expressing concerns regarding the cost of diverting public utilities, subsequent revisiting and the affect it would have on traffic. He had suggested that the utilities be confined to the footway.

(i) A177 South Road, Durham

The scheme was on the Bishop Auckland to Durham transport corridor and was located on South Road in Durham south of the New Inn traffic signals. Queues occurred in the northbound direction and traffic could tail back as far as the park and ride site near Mount Oswald golf course.

It was proposed to widen the A177 to provide a bus lane inbound into Durham from a point south of the New Inn signals to a point north of the signalised pedestrian crossing at the pedestrian access of St Mary's College. The bus lane would allow busses to pass traffic queuing on the approach to the signals without increasing delays for other traffic as a single inbound lane would still be available for other traffic.

A consultation letter and plan of the proposals were sent to statutory consultees and delivered to 9 properties. 6 responses were received, 2 from members of the public, 1 from Elvet Residents Association, 1 from Durham Branch of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and 1 from Durham Constabulary. 4 of the responses objected to the scheme.

The main issues raised included concern over the perceived limited benefits of the scheme and the loss of a row of lime trees in the wooded area to the east of A177 where the road was being widened. The representations were detailed in the report.

Councillor Williams commented that he was alarmed that only 40 residents had been consulted about the scheme. South Road was horrendous at peak periods and traffic was often back up the the Cock of the North roundabout.

The New Inn traffic was a continuation of the traffic from the Shincliffe area. Traffic lights had been installed at Shincliffe for road safety and now a bus lane was proposed. Shincliffe Village would be used as a rat run to avoid the traffic lights and a speed limit of 20 mph was not supported through the village. The garden centre in Shincliffe generated a lot of traffic and he did not accept that only 10 vehicles used the village as a rat run. The A177 was treacherous in icy conditions and there were lengthy delays at High Shincliffe. Only 3 busses used the route in 1 hour. The X1 was not supported due to the lack of students using the service and another service was being withdrawn from Bowburn.

Mr Bainbridge explained that 40 properties in Shincliffe were consulted whom it was felt could be affected by the scheme and associated construction works. The bus lane would not affect the pedestrian crossing and the refuge would be maintained. The bus usage information had been obtained from the public transport unit.

Councillor Foster queried how the scheme was funded. Mr D Wafer explained that T15 was funded by central government's regional transport allocation to be used on bus improvements.

Councillor Turnbull commented that he lived in an area which had a bus lane installed which caused more problems especially in rush hour when the traffic was trying to merge at the end of the bus lane.

RESOLVED that

(i) the Traffic Regulation Order for the implementation of the A177 Shincliffe Bus Lane order be refused.

(ii) the Traffic Regulation Order for the implementation of the A177 South Road, Durham Bus Lane order be approved.

5 C10A St Ives Road, Leadgate - Report of Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services which gave details of representations received to the proposed traffic calming measures for the C10a St Ives Road, Leadgate (for copy, see file of Minutes).

Following a number of ongoing complaints from local residents and an accident in April 2010 involving a motor vehicle being driven at excessive speed, the driver lost control and caused considerable damage to a property on St Ives Road, funding was identified for a possible traffic calming scheme.

Further investigations showed that the stretch of road had an ongoing speed complaint profile and an accident profile which would benefit from the implementation of traffic calming measures. Community Speed Watch was also active at various locations and Durham Constabulary Road Policing Unit had undertaken specific enforcement.

The last speed survey undertaken in the vicinity of the school showed only 35% of vehicles travelled below the posted 30 mph speed limit, equating to approximately 1600 vehicles of the 4500 average daily flow Monday to Friday. The pattern was also the same on a weekend; 1250 vehicles of the 3700 on a Saturday and 1060 vehicles of the 3040 on a Sunday. The mean speed Monday to Friday was 33 mph. The mean speed on a Saturday and Sunday was 32.7 mph.

A review of the accidents between the 1st January 2007 and 31st October 2010 showed 6 number accidents. 5 of which were damage only and one was a slight injury. Three, when investigated by Durham Constabulary showed speed as a contributory factor to the accident.

The proposed scheme included for the provision of 8 sets of triple cushions and 1 set of quadruple cushions as per the plans detailed in Appendix 2. The scheme also included a reduction of the sign clutter at the eastern end of the scheme. This being designed to re-iterate to motorists that they were entering a built up area.

An informal consultation was carried out with the affected residents, businesses and statutory consultees. Out of the 98 letters sent to affected residents and businesses, 36 responses were received. 28 were in favour of the proposals and 8 were against. Durham Constabulary and the North East Ambulance Service responded to the informal consultation, both were in full support of the proposals.

The Statutory Notice for the implementation of the road cushions was advertised and during the period, one further letter of objection was received from a resident who also objected at the informal stage.

The representations received were detailed in the report.

A further email had been received raising the following concerns:

- the short notice given for the meeting and felt that the Council was going through the motions.
- Going against the 20 mph zones outside schools.
- Had the council carried out a Disability Impact Assessment
- Had bus companies been consulted
- How many of the accidents were in inclement weather
- A system should be introduced whereby objectors are informed when items were to be considered at committee.

In response to the email, Mr Wilcox explained that the objector had been advised that the Highways Committee was a properly constituted meeting that determined Highway matters and adhered to the Access to Information rules. There was no policy in place for 20mph zones outside of schools. It was appreciated that traffic calming measures may affect some residents more than others. Bus companies were a statutory consultee and the Police had confirmed the speed had been an influencing factor in three of the accidents.

Councillor Marshall referred to the effectiveness of speed humps in general. Some humps could be driven over and cushions were ineffective. He was concerned that the Council were introducing measures that were ineffective.

Mr Wilcox explained that the Council used chicanes, speed humps and speed cushions for traffic calming. Where there was a bus route, cushions were required. He referred to a scheme in Seaham that used pre formed rubber cushions which had caused some complaints because motorists had to slow down. The cushions had remained but would be reviewed after 12 months. He accepted the criticism that the pre formed cushions were creating problems and investigations to build on and improve the specification were continuing.

RESOLVED that the implementation of the (traffic calming cushions) on (C10a St Ives Road, Leadgate) as per the plan in Appendix 2 be approved.

6 Objections to the Traffic Regulation Order advertised The County Council of Durham (Various Schools, Sedgefield, Teesdale, Wear Valley and Burnhope) (No Stopping on School Entrance Markings) Order 2011 - Report of Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development which gave details of the representations received following the formal advert of a Traffic Regulation Order for School Keep Clear Markings in the South of Durham Area (for copy, see file of Minutes).

The Order consisted of 81 schools within the Sedgefield, Teesdale and Wear Valley area. The purpose of the School Entrance Markings was to protect the pupils and provide a clear area where a child could cross safely.

At present, the existing Keep Clear markings at the 81 schools enclosed within the Order did not have a Traffic Regulation Order or signage and therefore were unenforceable.

The proposals advertised for all the schools reflected the existing restrictions that currently applied in each location. The existing zig zags may need slightly extending or reducing to comply with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002.

As a result of the formal advertising of the Regulation Order known as "The County Council of Durham (Various Schools, Sedgefield, Teesdale, Wear Valley and Burnhope) (No Stopping on School Entrance Markings) Order 2011", one objection was received and detailed in the report.

RESOLVED that the Traffic Regulation Order be approved.

7 Unc Burnhall Drive, Seaham - Report of Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services which gave details of the extension to the existing parking restrictions (for copy, see file of Minutes).

Representations had been received from Seaham School of Technology and Durham Constabulary with regard to inconsiderate parking during school opening times.

Vehicles had been observed parking on the southern kerbline opposite the entrance to the car park. This in turn had obstructed vehicle movements into and out of the car park. The school also used buses to transport children to and from school and the parking was obstructing the free flow of vehicles.

The proposals include the extension of the existing 08.30 am to 4.00 pm on the southern side of Burnhall Drive from the existing restriction to its junction with Neasham Road. On the northern side of Burnhall Drive, the restrictions would be between the access and

egress points of the car park allowing for free flowing traffic and manoeuvring of larger vehicles safely.

Informal consultation included the affected residents, school and statutory consultees. Out of the 6 letters sent to affected residents, one response was received which was in favour of the proposals. No responses were received against the proposals at the informal stage. Durham Constabulary and Seaham Town Council responded in favour to the informal consultation.

The scheme was put on hold due to the preparation of Traffic Regulation Orders for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement. During the statutory advertisement, one e-mail of objection was received which was outlined in the report.

RESOLVED that the implementation of the (no waiting between 8.30am and 4.00pm) on (Unc Burnhall Drive, Seaham) as detailed in Appendix 2 be approved.