

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 16 October 2014 at 9.30 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor G Bleasdale in the Chair.

Members of the Committee:

Councillors C Kay (Vice-Chairman), J Allen, B Armstrong, D Bell, K Hopper, I Jewell, S Morrison, J Rowlandson, P Stradling, O Temple, R Todd, J Turnbull and M Wilkes.

Also Present:

Councillor J Shuttleworth.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H Bennett, O Gunn, D Hall, R Ormerod and J Robinson.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor I Jewell was substituting for Councillor O Gunn and Councillor O Temple was substituting for Councillor R Ormerod.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any item of business on the agenda.

5 Wolsingham - Parking and Waiting Restrictions

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding objections made to a proposed traffic regulation order in Wolsingham (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that the County Council were committed to regularly reviewing traffic regulation orders to ensure that the restrictions held within them were relevant and appropriate. As a result, the Council had held a well-attended consultation event earlier in the year at Wolsingham Library whereby comments were invited as to how waiting restrictions in the town could be improved. A number of suggestions were put forward by those attending the event and added to the initial plan drafted by County

Council Officers for consultation.

Initial consultation letters, plans and response cards were delivered to all properties directly affected by the proposals in April 2014. Following this a request was received for additional restrictions covering the junction of Holywell Lane/Uppertown and was added to the overall proposals. The full scheme was advertised on site between 18 June to 19 July 2014.

Two objections were received to the advertised order which both related to the A689, Front Street and were summarised for the Committee.

The Committee then heard from one of the objectors who raised the following issues:

- the consultation documents that appeared in January 2014, contained no proposal to have double-yellow lines outside his property;
- there had been very little publicity for the consultation event;
- the resident had no rear access to his property;
- when people park properly there was good visibility and the Council installed low bearing paving so that traffic could park on the pavement;

The Strategic Traffic Manager responded to the issues raised by the objector and reiterated that the consultation had been held in the local library and there had been no 'secret meetings'. The Council were always keen to talk about such proposals and discussions were held over a period of time. The Strategic Traffic Manager also pointed out that vehicles were allowed to legitimately load or unload outside the resident's property. The Council also had to ensure that the safety of pedestrians was not compromised and didn't wish to encourage people to park on paved areas.

Councillor Shuttleworth informed the Committee that he had lodged an objection almost two years ago regarding traffic regulation in Wolsingham, based on his own public consultation where had delivered 625 letters, 401 which were returned objecting to the plan and 13 were in support. Since that time, Councillor Shuttleworth had been anxious of the implementation of restrictive parking. Councillor Shuttleworth was concerned that the County Council's consultation mentioned nothing about the cost of the scheme or how many people had attended the consultation event or the reason for the consultation. Councillor Shuttleworth felt personally, that it would have detrimental effect on businesses in the town and felt that his own consultation gave a true view of the people of Wolsingham. Councillor Shuttleworth explained that he had real difficulty in accepting the statement made in paragraph 4.1 of the report that 'officers do not feel the restrictions would have detrimental impact on the local economy in this case', and the business owners appear to support this, yet those people were not referred to in the report.

Councillor Shuttleworth also placed on record his support for the resident present at the meeting regarding his objection to the no waiting at any time restrictions adjacent to the Black Bull Public House and Doctors Surgery.

Councillor Wilkes was unclear on what restrictions were already in place, what was being proposed and asked how many spaces were being lost, how many accidents had been reported in the last 10 years and how many complaints had the Council received.

The Strategic Traffic Manager explained to the Committee that he did not have the

information that Councillor Wilkes had requested and commented that the scheme had been brought about in conjunction with local residents, the local area, the parish council and demonstrated that the Council were reflecting local needs and in accordance with people's wishes.

Councillor Kay speaking as a keen cyclist felt that other road users needed to be considered at this particular location which he viewed as being particularly dangerous.

Councillor Temple felt a degree of sympathy with the local resident who objected to the scheme given that the restrictions directly affected access to his home. He also reminded the Committee that the resident had no vehicular access to the rear of his property and felt it was a step too far in placing parking restrictions outside of his property. Councillor Temple commented that the Committee had heard that there were no proposals of this type in January for this particular area and queried where the proposal had emerged from.

In response the Strategic Traffic Manager reiterated that the scheme was borne out of the wishes of the local community and through consultation, hence the reason why the parking restrictions in the area had been reviewed.

Councillor Stradling felt that the consultation exercise, together with the explanation of the scheme provided enough information to enable him to come to a view regarding the scheme and felt that it should go ahead, on the proviso that it be reviewed in six months' time in terms of its effectiveness and operation, given the concerns expressed by the resident.

Resolved

That the Committee endorse the proposal as outlined in the report and that the operation and effectiveness be reviewed and reported back after six months of operation.

6 Bullion Lane, Chester-le-Street - Parking Permit Order

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding objections received to a consultation about a proposed traffic regulation order which if implemented would see the introduction of permit parking on Bullion Lane (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that requests had been received from residents of Bullion Lane asking if the County Council would give consideration to the introduction of residents parking permits because of the difficulties they were experiencing in trying to park near their properties during the day. Residents were claiming that these problems were being caused by long stay parking by non-residents, most notably commuters using the nearby railway station.

In relation to Bullion Lane, 12 residents were in favour of the proposals and 4 were against. Nine did not respond. The response rate for the Station Lane/View was less than 50% and therefore, did not meet the criteria to progress any further.

Six objections were received which were summarised for the Committee.

The Committee then heard from a local resident who was not in favour of the proposals and was a resident of Bullion Lane. Her objection was summarised as follows:

- parking had never been a problem for her personally
- concern about the problem being moved elsewhere as had happened at the opposite side of the railway station
- other roads in the area were narrower
- the introduction of residents parking would likely to move the problem elsewhere
- as a long term resident she had no real problems with parking

Councillor Wilkes felt that the objections detailed in the report had provided a balanced view. The potential overspill and transferring of the problem in and around neighbouring streets was extremely concerning.

The Strategic Traffic Manager explained to the Committee that the issues raised were not particularly a highways problem but more of an issue of inconvenience to residents and that the consultation had been carried out at the request of local residents.

Councillor Wilkes felt that the Council would be doing unnecessary work, spending unnecessary money and setting an expensive precedent of potentially being faced with having to devise another scheme for neighbouring streets in 6-12 months' time to deal with traffic displacement.

Councillor Allen commented that the scheme was an attempt at solving an issue which residents perceived to be a problem and felt that there was very little evidence to support the scheme.

Resolved

That Committee reject the proposal for parking restrictions detailed in the report

7 Bishop Auckland - Parking and Waiting Restrictions

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding objections received to a proposed road traffic regulation order in Bishop Auckland (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that the County Council were committed to regularly reviewing traffic regulation orders to ensure that restrictions held within them were relevant and appropriate. Requests for permit parking in the area concerned had been received on a regular basis for many years from residents who lived close to the town centre and the local hospital. The County Council had given assurances that such areas would be looked at once civil parking enforcement came into operation.

Several streets in Bishop Auckland were eligible for parking permits under the Council's policy and a ballot of residents had been undertaken on that basis. Three streets had been identified as to where the majority of residents voted for the introduction of parking permits, those being Regent Street, Victoria Avenue and Escomb Road.

The Committee were informed that initial consultation letters, plans and response cards were delivered to directly affected properties in November 2013 with proposed restricted parking to residents for one hour in the morning between 10-11 a.m. and one hour in the afternoon between 2-3 p.m. for all areas. Following this initial consultation it had been highlighted that

the proposed times may not be appropriate for the Escomb Road area.

Escomb Road was adjacent to Bishop Auckland Hospital and was subject to increased levels of parking at all times of the day and the hours of the restriction were reviewed and amended following representations made by residents. An additional ballot was undertaken to amend the hours of the permit scheme on Escomb Road to 12-1 p.m. and 5-6 p.m. which residents felt would be more beneficial and give them a greater chance of obtaining a parking space once they returned home from work.

Three objections had been received and were summarised for the Committee.

Councillor Kay commented that he had much sympathy for people living on Escomb Road given that people were parking on all day, everyday, on Escomb Road, which was essentially because the nearby hospital charged £2.50 per hour to park.

Councillor Allen, speaking as local Councillor for the area commented that the scheme was vital for the area and would be welcomed by residents and for those people who wished to use businesses nearby.

Resolved

That the recommendation in the report be agreed.

8 Sedgefield - Parking and Waiting Restrictions

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding objections received to a proposed change to a traffic regulation order in Sedgefield (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that the County Council were committed to regularly reviewing traffic regulation orders to ensure that restrictions held within them were relevant and appropriate.

The Committee were informed that a request had been received from a local business to consider the introduction of some limited waiting bays near their shop to make it accessible for passing trade. A proposal to implement a Monday-Saturday 9am-6pm, 30 minute, no return with 30 minutes restriction was consulted upon. Three objections had been received, all of which stated that the introduction of the limited waiting bays would be detrimental to businesses.

Councillor Allen supported the views made by the Dunn Cow Public House and explained that the pub had a very small car park and a 30 minute restriction was too restrictive for their lunchtime trade, especially if people wanted to visit another shop at the same time.

Councillor Stradling felt that the 30 minutes was a relatively short period of time and could potentially be problematic for the local barbers shop (if it was busy) and suggested that it may be more appropriate to have the waiting restriction increased to one hour.

As a result of these discussions the Committee asked officers if the proposed restriction could be amended to one hour, rather than 30 minutes legally, without the need to re-consult, re-advertise and incur further costs.

The Legal Adviser and the Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that relevant legislation would have to be checked to confirm whether this was possible.

The Committee requested that this course of action be undertaken, however, if it was not possible legally, the Committee asked for the matter to be deferred and brought back for consideration to the next meeting.

Resolved

- (i) That the proposed restriction be amended to one hour, as opposed to the 30 minute restriction outlined in the report, providing this could be legally introduced, without the need to re-consult, re-advertise and incur further costs; and
- (ii) If the proposed scheme as amended, could not be implemented without the need to re-consult, re-advertise and incur further costs, that the issue be deferred and brought back for consideration by the Committee.