

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 12 September 2019 at 1.00 p.m.**

Present:

Councillor C Kay in the Chair

Members of the Committee:

Councillors D Bell, J Considine, S Dunn, D Hicks, K Hopper, S Hugill, K Liddell, R Ormerod, J Shuttleworth, A Simpson, K Thompson, J Turnbull and M Wilson

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Bleasdale, S Morrison and P Sexton.

2 Substitute Members

There were no Substitute Members.

3 Declarations of Interest

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

4 Providence Row, Durham City - Off Street Parking Places and Parking Charges

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services regarding a proposal to amend a section (approx.10 bays) of 'Pay and Display Parking' which would see the introduction of a 'Market Traders Permit Holders Only parking on Saturday's from 6am-10am' at Providence Row, Durham (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that a request had been received from the outdoor market traders and market manager to accommodate their high sided vehicles to park on Saturday market days. The proposal would see the introduction of a location to unload and park along Providence Row, following the closure of The Sands car park which had resulted in market traders faced with issues of where they could park their vehicles for the Saturday market day and farmers market, having previously utilised The Sands car park.

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that one objection was received during the initial consultation from the City of Durham Parish Council. There were three further objections during the formal stage of consultation. The objections were summarised for the Committee and detailed in the report.

The Strategic Traffic Manager explained that whilst the car parks were close together, it resulted in a slightly further walk from where people had parked previously. In terms of the Saturday market, traders would go to the market and unload their goods and then try to locate a space in the former Sands Car Park. Under the new proposal's traders would have a reserved space in Providence Row but would have a slightly longer walk back to the market.

The farmers market was slightly different, given that it was held every third Thursday. In terms of the legal order and signage it was difficult to relay this information, therefore to avoid any confusion, the bays would be coned off and suspended.

The full moon market occurred on Friday afternoon. The Strategic Traffic Manager was of the view that it would be unfair to suspend bays from 6am in the morning until 2pm which was when the traders used them. Generally those Traders used Sidegate car park which adequate capacity on Friday afternoons, an arrangement that appeared to be working adequately at the present time.

In terms of the objections, the City of Durham Parish council were concerned that the offer of the parking was on Saturday's only and people were walking further away which would potentially cause implications for residents who would have to move their cars. The Strategic Traffic Manager explained that whilst there were some properties located directly opposite, it was felt that there was an adequate amount of kerbside parking for residents, therefore it was felt that this would not be an issue.

All matters had been discussed with the Market Manager and all parties agreed that the offer of reserved parking on a Saturday morning and the informal arrangement for the farmers market would give traders something that they didn't have before – i.e. somewhere to park, a reserved bay, albeit slightly further away.

A second objection from the City of Durham Parish Council related to the Farmers Market and the Full Moon Market. The Parish Council had suggested that Fowlers Yard could be used to accommodate parked vehicles for market traders.

A picture of Fowlers Yard was shown to the Committee on a typical Friday afternoon. The Strategic Traffic Manager felt that the County Council could not accommodate this request and informed the Committee that Fowlers Yard was a very congested area, which contained a bin store and a loading area for the back of Silver Street. Highways Officers had visited the area on a regular basis to see if it

could be used as an alternative to house larger vehicles, however, following review, it was not considered appropriate due to road safety issues.

A third objection came from a market trader from the Farmers Market who expressed concerns that they would have a longer distance to walk. Concerns were also expressed regarding the revised proposals taking additional time to drive. The Strategic Traffic Manager explained that this would not be the case and that time to drive and find a space time was being significantly reduced in this instance.

Other objections were of received of a similar nature suggesting that the proposals were not as good as the arrangement that was being lost, however, the matter under consideration for the Committee was whether to agree to putting the parking bays in or not.

An objection received from St. Nicholas Community Forum expressed concern that traders with mobility issues would have difficulty walking once they had dropped their vehicle off and that the Council should be doing more to encourage market traders coming into Durham. They also expressed concern that non-market traders would park in the bays.

The Strategic Traffic Manager explained that similar arrangements operated in Bishop Auckland and if a vehicle parked in an allocated bay on a market day, they would be issued with a parking ticket. It was felt that many motorists understood the signs that the Council used.

The Committee then heard from Councillor E Scott, Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council. Councillor Scott had supplied a copy of a photograph which showed a temporary order sign made of cardboard which was tied around a tree. Councillor Scott felt that the example shown was inadequate and had resulted in some residents receiving parking tickets. Councillor Scott asked that if the proposal was agreed, could the Council ensure that the associated signage was up to standard and clear for everyone to observe.

Councillor R Cornwell, Parish Councillor commented that the proposals had been clearly designed to mitigate the effects of the closure of the Sands car park and thanked the Council for acknowledging that something needed to be done in terms of the Farmers Market. Councillor Cornwell pointed out that Providence Row was further away from the Market Place than the Sands, possibly around 100m, which may not have seemed a lot further, however consideration had to be given to the amount of time stalls would be unattended which would potentially increase the risk of theft from stalls. Councillor Cornwell felt that Providence Row wasn't necessarily the correct solution and suggested that it would be sensible to review the scheme after operation and that the Council should consider perhaps several different sites and it was important to continue searching for alternative options. Both the Parish Council and the market traders would like to work together to find closer places to the market place to solve the problem.

In response, to the points made by Councillor E Scott, the Strategic Traffic Manager explained that the permanent signage used to suspend parking bays were of a standard design and would be fixed. The current temporary suspension signage highlighted in the photograph provided by Councillor Scott was used on an ad-hoc basis. The permanent signs would consist of a series of posts at end of the allocated parking bays. Anyone wishing to appeal a parking ticket could do so through the appropriate procedures that were in place.

In terms of current operation and future sites, the Strategic Highways Manager explained that the temporary proposals were generally working well, however, it was important to look at how the situation evolved and managed in the future. The main aim was to ensure that market traders were catered for as well as they could be within the constraints of the City Centre.

Councillor R Ormerod, felt that for background and context the Council would not have found itself in the position regarding this matter had they not made the decision to build on the site for the new HQ, but accepted that it wasn't a matter for the committee. Councillor Ormerod felt the recommendation was sound and was assured by the Strategic Traffic Managers comments that the scheme would be monitored throughout its operation. Councillor Ormerod felt that this needed formalising as part of the recommendation.

The Strategic Traffic Manager explained that he would be happy to provide a report to the Committee in the future which would provide feedback, including its impact, operation and the views of the traders.

Councillor Considine informed the Committee that she had received representation from traders of the farmers market who had expressed similar concerns regarding the amount of time that stalls may be left unattended but was assured that the Council would keep looking at alternative site and hoped that there would be more convenient spaces for the traders in the future.

Councillor S Dunn explained that he welcomed the proposals and was assured by the permanent signage which was wholly appropriate to avoid confusion. Councillor Dunn also acknowledged the comments from traders regarding leaving stock and replenishing stalls throughout the day, however, in practice traders often looked after each other's stalls for small periods. Councillor Dunn could not understand why spaces were reserved from 6am to 10am and queried whether a longer period would be more appropriate. Councillor Dunn also felt that six bays appeared a low number.

The Strategic Traffic Manager clarified that there were ten bays as opposed to six and the suspension period appeared to be pitched at the right level and was consistent with feedback from the Markets Company. Many traders chose to park in cheaper areas away from the City Centre. The timing was felt sufficient, however, it

the situation turned out to be a problem then the Council would be happy to look at the issue again.

In response to a historical parking arrangement at the flats opposite the Sands area the Strategic Traffic Manager explained that the current regulation order had been in place for 12-15 years and was all pay and display. Residents could park with their residents permit on street, or in the pay and display.

Moved by Councillor R Ormerod, **Seconded** by Councillor A Simpson and

Resolved

That the Committee endorse the proposal as presented, subject to a progress report being provided to the Highways Committee within six months of operation and recommended to the Corporate Director to proceed with the implementation of the Providence Row, Durham, Off Street Parking Places and Parking Charges Order on that basis.

5 Green Lane, Gilesgate - Parking and Waiting Restrictions Order 2019

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which proposed the introduction of 'no waiting at any time' restrictions (double yellow lines), at Green Lane, Gilesgate (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that several requests had been received to address ongoing obstructive parking, visibility and safety issues along Green Lane, Gilesgate, a residential area off Sunderland Road in Gilesgate.

The street was a narrow one-way road with terraced residential properties to the south east of the road. The remaining properties were mainly bungalows occupied by elderly people and people with mobility issues. There was one single footway to the south east, next to the terraced properties. Most properties had no off-street parking.

There was one objection from a resident of Green Lane. The objector alleged that there was no alternative parking and that Green Lane was not a dangerous road which everyone travelled slowly.

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that the site visit made by traffic officers highlighted that the parking situation was obstructive. In some cases, vehicles were parked up to the walls of the properties, and wheelchair and pushchair users would not be able to use the footway. There was no alternative footway on the opposite side of the carriageway so the single footway leading onto Sunderland Road to access local amenities and the bus stop was necessary for

pedestrian safety. The Committee then viewed a presentation which provided location plans of the area, together with examples of some of the parking observed. During the site visit it was felt that there was not enough space for larger delivery vehicles to pass parked vehicles, indeed a van was bumped onto a small section on kerbing on the west side of the carriageway. Obstructive parking to the extent observed could cause difficulties for emergency services gaining access.

The North East Ambulance Service were also in support of the proposals. There was alternative unrestricted parking available to the north of Green Lane and in surrounding nearby streets. Having considered all this information in the round it was felt that the 'no waiting at any time' restrictions should be introduced in the interest of pedestrian and road safety.

Councillor Dunn informed the Committee that as a former resident of Gilesgate and lived a few hundred metres away from Green Lane. In his experience the street had always been the same. There had always been enough space for cars to park on the road and for cars to travel down the lane. There were 24 houses with absolutely no parking at all at nearby Wynyard Grove. Councillor Dunn explained that if the parking restriction was imposed on Green Lane, any cars from those properties would park in the nearby bungalows and potentially make those properties suitable for people with either no cars or become student only houses. Councillor Dunn felt that the pictures which displayed vehicles parked on footpaths demonstrated illegal parking because it would not allow access for pushchairs or buggies and under those circumstances felt that they should be appropriately ticketed and fined. Councillor Dunn did not feel the parking order was appropriate and could not support it and **Moved** rejection of the proposal. Councillor J Turnbull also supported the view expressed by Councillor Dunn.

In response to a question from Councillor K Thompson regarding pavement parking. The Strategic Traffic Manager explained that the vehicle could be given a ticket by the police for parking in the manner viewed on the presentation, however, it was highly unlikely that the police would allocate any resources to do so. Indeed, it was the Police who had lobbied the County Council to put yellow lines down which would stop people parking their vehicle in the manner observed. The scheme had also been supported by the local members, the police and the residents in the area.

Councillor Dunn explained that the local police office was around 200m away from Green Lane and suggested that it was easily enforceable and this should not be an argument. Councillor Dunn apologised to the three local members but felt that the road had been wide enough for the last 50 years. The cars obstructing the footpath were not doing so unnecessarily and the width of the carriageway was suitable enough to travel down the road, including coal wagons. Cars would be displaced into a sheltered bungalow development which would not be appropriate.

The Legal Advisor advised that the proposal was to either support the recommendation for or against and advised the Committee to vote on that basis.

Upon a vote being taken the number for and against being equal at 6 votes for and 6 votes against, the Chair in accordance with of the Constitution exercised his casting vote and it was

Resolved

That the Committee agree to endorse the proposals and recommend to proceed with the implementation of the Green Lane, Gilesgate Parking and Waiting Restrictions Order 2019. With the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.

6 Shotley Bridge - Parking and Waiting Restrictions Order 2019

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services regarding a proposal to introduce traffic regulations in two locations at Shotley Bridge (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that one of the locations (Church Bank) had received no objections, therefore the presentation would focus on the Benfieldside Road proposal which had received an objection.

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that Benfieldside Road was a relatively busy road which had issues, such as it being on a hill and on a bend. The Committee received a presentation which comprised location plan and pictures of the area. The Committee noted an existing school keep clear on one side of the road and the proposed introduction of another 'keep clear' area on the other side of the road.

The Committee were informed that several requests had been received to reduce obstructive parking and improve road safety during school drop off and pick up times, including representations from the Headteacher of the School and Durham Constabulary.

The proposed restriction would operate from Monday to Friday between the hours of 8am-9am in the morning and between 3pm to 4pm on the afternoon on the opposite side to the existing 'School Keep Clear' markings which operated from Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm near to Shotley Bridge Infants School.

The objector was unable to be present at the meeting. The Strategic Traffic Manager explained that the objector agreed that there should be some parking restrictions in place and agreed that school gate parking and keeping pedestrians safe was of importance. However, the objector felt that operating the restriction through the entire year was too much and suggested that restrictions should be to ban parking during school term time and school days only.

The Strategic Traffic Manager explained that legally this was not an option that could be taken in that all School 'Keep Clears' were permanent orders. The signage could also be quite complicated, and it was simply not possible to impose a restriction in place solely when the school was sitting, even though this was the time that obstructions occurred. There was no legal mechanism to achieve this outcome. In any event, it was not viewed as a good place for anyone to park, however, residents were able to park at the location outside of school times. The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that additional correspondence had been circulated from the objector prior to the meeting. These representations reiterated points made previously regarding the importance of road safety and there had been a suggestion that illuminated signage should be used at school times and enforcement powers used if vehicle were parked during this time.

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that this was cumbersome because the sign would have to be programmed each year with the school holiday times. It would also mean that no one could be prosecuted for parking there. Therefore, the proposal set out in the report was the only way forward to achieve the desired outcome.

Councillor D Hicks informed the Committee that he knew the area very well and felt that the proposal was extremely important for the area in terms of road safety. The location was extremely busy and a main bus route. Councillor Hicks suggested that the entire length of Benfieldside Road should be looked at some point because the whole area was a nightmare. However, he accepted that the scheme was focussed on one area and offered his support for the proposal outlined in the report.

Resolved

That the Committee agree to endorse the proposals and recommend to proceed with the implementation of the Shotley Bridge Parking and Restrictions Order 2019. With the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.