DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 13 January 2023 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor R Ormerod (Chair)

Members of the Committee:
Councillors A Bell, T Duffy, K Earley, J Higgins, J Howey, G Hutchinson (Vice-Chair), E Mavin, E Peeke, K Robson, A Simpson, A Sterling, F Tinsley, M Wilson and D Wood

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Kay, D Oliver and I Roberts.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Simpson confirmed that he was the Local Member for the Esh and Witton Gilbert division.

Councillor Sterling advised that whilst she had a firm view on Agenda Item 5 due to her children attending the local schools, she was willing to listen to the debate. C Cuskin, the Senior Lawyer, Regulatory Enforcement Officer confirmed that this was acceptable.

5 Lanchester and Langley Park, Parking and Waiting Restrictions Amendment Order 2023 - Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy & Growth

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which advised Members of objections received to the consultation concerning changes to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in Lanchester and Langley Park and requested that they considered the objections made during the informal and formal consultation period (for copy see file of minutes).

D Lewin, the Strategic Traffic Manager gave a detailed presentation which included site location plans, aerial photos and photographs of the sites and details for the following restrictions;

- To introduce 'no waiting at any time' and 'restricted waiting (Monday – Friday, 8am-4pm)' restrictions to prevent obstructive parking in areas of significant road safety concern. Two objections were received in the formal consultation period.

- To introduce 'no waiting at any time' restrictions on the A691 Durham Road, the A6076 Howden Bank and Bishops Meadow to prevent obstructive parking, particularly at school pick-up and drop-off times, in the area which has caused issues with visibility, access and road safety. Six objections were received in the formal consultation period.

In relation to location two, the Strategic Traffic Manager clarified that seven letters of objection were received in total but two letters were from the same objector.

The Chair advised that although the Local Members were not present at the meeting, they were in full support of the proposals for both locations.

Mr A Hampton addressed the Committee. He confirmed that he was not in objection to the changes to the TRO explaining that his concern was the number of displaced vehicles that would park in St Bede's Court because of the change to the TRO. Although specifically targeting location two, he explained that his comments were equally applicable to location one. He advised that he had lived at St Bede's Court for many years and had witnessed an increased number of vehicles in the last five years waiting on the A691 and the A1076 restricting the traffic flow. He added that school drop-off and pick-up times added to the traffic chaos and whilst he accepted that parking at schools was a County wide issue, he believed that the issues within this area were likely to escalate. He explained that vehicles parking in St Bede's Court stopped the two-way flow of traffic and forced vehicles to drive onto private driveways and gardens to pass and explained that pedestrian access was already limited. The residents of St Bede's Court appreciated that there was not an easy solution to address the issues in the village but as it was highly likely that the proposed changes to the TRO would increase the number of vehicles waiting in St Bede's Court, Mr Hampton requested that the current proposals were extended to include St Bede's Court. He suggested restrictive parking notices were displayed at vehicle eye level which restricted parking Monday to Friday between the hours of

8.30am and 9.30am and 2.30pm and 3.30pm. He stated that relying on Durham Constabulary to enforce illegal parking was not appropriate and noted that it would be beneficial for the Education Authorities, St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form and Durham County Council to form a working group to consider sustainable solutions for parking within the village of Lanchester. Mr Hampton thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak and asked that they gave due consideration to his comments and support an amendment to the TRO to include St Bede's Court.

The Strategic Traffic Manager highlighted that introducing parking restrictions without the use of yellow lines were not legally enforceable. He noted that parking restrictions were introduced to address concerns with road safety and congestion and explained that the issues faced by residents unfortunately did not meet the required justification.

Councillor Sterling explained that the photographs included in the presentation for locations one and two did not reflect the severity of the parking problems within Lanchester. In terms of location one, a high number of parked vehicles restricts the flow of traffic and often stops larger vehicles from passing through. As a result, drivers become irate and at times mount the pavement to pass, endangering pedestrians including many young children. She advised that two large car parks existed within the vicinity, one being the social club car park which parents had been given permission to use. In terms of location two, Councillor Sterling explained that vehicles at school drop-off and pick-up times mount the grass verge and although St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form had an excellent traffic management system in place, some parents chose not to use it due to the slight delay of the lane system. Councillor Sterling sympathised with the residents of St Bede's Court and agreed with Mr Hampton that restrictive parking notices, despite not being legally enforceable, would be beneficial. Councillor Sterling stated that the proposed changes to the TRO would make the village safer and reiterated that there were alternative car parks that could be utilised.

Councillor Earley confirmed that he was in support of the proposals. He commended Mr Hampton on his excellent presentation and hoped that Local Members would be able to discuss his concerns further and provide a wider solution.

Councillor Bell confirmed that he supported the proposals but would like further options to be explored to address the concerns expressed by Mr Hampton. He suggested that schools should be encouraged to send letters to parents detailing the car parks available to them, and in the case of St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form, to encourage the parking lane system.

Councillor Tinsley highlighted that displacement of vehicles was the key issue and requested officers' views on this issue, particularly with location one as the displaced vehicles would significantly impact upon residential areas. In terms of

location two, Councillor Tinsley confirmed that he was in full support of the proposals but that there was a potential for displaced vehicles to park along the A691 and questioned if this would pose a further danger.

Councillor Ormerod, the Chair, agreed that displaced vehicles were an issue and asked the Strategic Traffic Manager to clarify the options available for St Bede's Court.

The Strategic Traffic Manager clarified that a Traffic Regulation Order is designed to improve traffic flow and/or road safety. The proposals to change the TRO in Lanchester and Langley Park are to address concerns with road safety. In terms of location one, he sympathised with the residents of St Bede's Court but advised that there were no valid reasons to introduce parking restrictions. He advised that white lines could be introduced across driveways but explained that the Police would be responsible for the enforcement of these measures. He accepted that there would be displacement of vehicles into residential areas but explained that if vehicles dispersed, it would dilute the current problem and significantly reduce the number of vehicles parked in a main area for pedestrians. With regards to location two, whilst there was a potential for displaced vehicles, he confirmed that no issues had been raised with Highways. He noted that moving traffic further towards Consett was not preferrable and that this may need to be addressed later but stressed that from a road safety perspective, visibility for children leaving St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form and walking towards Lanchester will increase. The Strategic Traffic Manger emphasised that the key issue to be considered by the Committee was road safety.

With regards to location two and the potential of vehicles parking closer towards Consett, Councillor Sterling noted that the A691 was a fast road and some parents parked on the grass verge as it was too dangerous to park on the road, she did not believe the proposals would create any future problems on this road. In terms of location one, she advised that it could be positive if vehicles dispersed as it would naturally enforce vehicles further towards the cricket club where there was a car park available for parents to use.

In terms of the consultation, Councillor Tinsley asked whether officers had consulted with schools regarding the proposed changes to the TRO and asked if data indicating how children travel to and from school was known and whether this had changed over the years.

D Morgan, the Senior Technician clarified that for location one, the schools had been formally consulted and supported the proposals. With regards to location two, he confirmed that the schools had not been part of the consultation.

Mr Hampton highlighted that the concerns expressed by residents at St Bede's Court were not solely in relation to the obstruction of driveways and although this was a nuisance, most people if asked, would agree to move their vehicle. He

stressed that safety was a key issue and explained that when two vehicles parked opposite each other in St Bede's Court, it restricted any other vehicle from passing.

Councillor Sterling **moved** the proposals to be endorsed. This was **seconded** by Councillor Howey.

Before proceeding to a vote, the Chair appreciated that Mr Hampton did not have a resolution to his concerns and asked the Strategic Traffic Manager to provide further advice. The Strategic Traffic Manager confirmed that he would request that officers contact the Local Members to address residents' concerns at St Bede's Court.

Councillor Wood was pleased that further discussion was planned with Mr Hampton outside of the meeting and welcomed any measures that could be put in place at St Bede's Court. Councillor Wood believed that local schools should also be involved in the discussion alongside Local Members and the Council as schools have a role in communicating messages to parents. He also noted that if schools could communicate the key issues with their students, this could help strengthen the message to parents.

The Strategic Traffic Manager advised that the Road Safety Team had excellent relationships with the schools and advised that there were campaigns each month regarding road safety. The Strategic Traffic Manager agreed to request additional engagement by the Road Safety Team with the schools in question.

The Chair confirmed that Councillor Sterling had moved the proposals to be endorsed and that this had been seconded by Councillor Howey and confirmed that the concerns expressed by Mr Hampton would be discussed further outside of the meeting.

Resolved

That the proposal, in principle, to amend the Lanchester and Langley Park Parking and Waiting Restrictions Order 2023, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers be endorsed.