

Highways Committee

7 October 2013



STANLEY Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Prohibition of Loading / Unloading Amendment Order 2013

STANLEY One way Streets / No Entry Order 2013

Report of Ian Thompson Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic development

Councillor Neil Foster, Portfolio Holder Regeneration and Economic Development

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To advise Members of the objections received to the formal consultation on the proposed traffic regulation orders relating to the re-opening of the northern end of Stanley front Street to vehicular traffic.
- 1.2 To request members consider the objections made during the consultation exercise.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In February 2012 the Stanley Masterplan was published. Outlined within this document were a number of challenges that the County Council had identified for the Town.

The focus of the Masterplan is primarily to address a range of issues which fall within the following themes:

- Revitalising the town centre
- Improving the attractiveness of the town centre
- Increasing accessibility to and within the town centre

One of the key locations identified for improvement within the plan was the northern end of Front Street and Beamish Street. Vehicular entry, parking access and pedestrian movements were all identified as areas that could be improved in this area.

- 2.2 With the above in mind, it is proposed that the northern end of Front Street be re-opened to vehicles to encourage increased economic activity within this section of the Town Centre. Amendments to the road alignment in the High Street / Front Street junction area are also proposed so as to better utilise the available highway and to improve the entrance to the town centre and increase parking opportunities for potential visitors. It is anticipated that pedestrian flow to and from the High Street will be aided by the amendments to this junction.
- 2.3 As a consequence of the above actions, increased parking provision within easy reach of the town centre will be created. This parking will be a mixture of disabled and short stay to improve custom to the local businesses and facilities.

In providing this new layout some areas of the existing surrounding highway will need to be amended to suit. It is proposed that traffic will flow in a southerly direction on Front Street, exiting via Anthony Street or Thorneyholme Terrace. It is proposed that Thorneyholme Terrace also be made one way with access only available from its western end.

- 2.4 An initial consultation letter was delivered to all residential properties and businesses on Front St, Beamish St, Anthony St and Thorneyholme Terrace immediately affected by the proposal. This letter was delivered on the 16th May 2013 with comments to be received by the 7th June 2013. Questionnaires inviting comments were also placed in the Town Council offices and Louisa Centre within the town during this period. These forms were to be completed and submitted by the 14th June 2013.

The formal consultation exercise for this scheme commenced on the 25th July 2013 and closed on the 15th August 2013.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that a new slip road be constructed to the front of Benton Terrace / Elite Buildings for traffic entering Front Street from the A6076 High Street. Vehicles will then be permitted to travel in a southerly direction on Front Street before exiting via either Anthony Street or Thorneyholme Terrace. It is anticipated that the provision of two possible exit routes for vehicles using the Front Street will reduce the impact on the surrounding residential streets.
- 3.2 Limited waiting bays (Mon – Sat, 1 hour no return 2 hours) and disabled parking (Mon – Sat, 3 hours no return before 6pm) will be provided on the Elite Buildings slip road and Front Street. It is also proposed that length of limited waiting (Mon – Sat, 1 hour no return 2 hours) be provided on the northern side of Thorneyholme Terrace at its westernmost end. All restrictions will be operational, Monday to Saturday, 8am – 6pm.

- 3.3 No waiting at any time (NWAAT) restrictions will be provided on the western side of Front Street.
 - 3.4 Wide footways (2 metres minimum width) will be provided on Front Street. These footways will be widened further in areas where pedestrian volumes are expected to be higher. Pedestrian barriers will also be provided to enhance road safety in this area.
 - 3.5 Traffic Calming in the form of speed tables and speed cushions will be provided on the Elite Buildings slip road and Front Street to manage vehicular speeds.
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- 3.6 Following the extensive consultation process, we received 22 objections. Twelve of these objectors live in the area immediately affected by the scheme, 5 lived in the wider Stanley area and the remaining 5 were anonymous.

4 Objection 1 – Front Street should not be opened up.

- 4.1 A number of objectors do not want to see the northern end of Front Street opened up to vehicles. The objectors state that this will have an adverse effect on road safety, particularly in light of the nearby primary school and church.

5.0 Response

- 5.1 The Stanley Masterplan identified the northern end of Front Street as one of its key locations for improvement. In opening up this section to vehicular traffic it is hoped that economic activity will be increased in this section of the Town Centre.
- 5.2 Wide footways will be constructed on either side of the Front Street, particularly at the northern end in the vicinity of the school. Guardrail will also be introduced in areas where increased pedestrian movements are considered likely.
- 5.3 Traffic Calming in the form of Speed Tables (Front Street) and Speed Cushions (outside of Elite Buildings) is to be installed to keep vehicular speeds low.

6.0 Objection 2 – Thorneyholme Terrace should not be opened up.

- 6.1 A number of objectors do not want to see Thorneyholme Terrace opened up to vehicles. Again, the objectors state that this will have an adverse effect on road safety, particularly in light of the nearby nursery school, primary school and church. A number of those objecting to opening up Thorneyholme Terrace live in the street and also raise concerns that the proposal may increase parking problems for residents.

- 6.2 A comment was also received stating that the splitting of Front Street could result in parts of the street not being used.
- 6.3 A comment was also received stating that the restrictions should only be in place during school hours with the restriction not being in force on a weekend thus avoiding problems for church goers.
- 6.4 A further objection stated that there was no need to open up Thorneyholme Terrace as part of the scheme. It was suggested that Thorneyholme Terrace remain closed and traffic be directed along Front Street / Anthony Street and Beamish Street instead.

7.0 **Response**

- 7.1 Wide footways will be constructed on either side of the Front Street, particularly at the northern end in the vicinity of the school. Guardrail will also be introduced in areas where increased pedestrian movements are considered likely.
- 7.2 Numerous vehicles currently park in Thorneyholme Terrace on a daily basis. Vehicles enter from Thorneyholme Terrace North and because of the single entry / exit point to the street are required to turn in the area at its north western end. The proposal will regulate traffic flow into a one way system and as such will remove the majority of the reversing and turning manoeuvres which are currently undertaken on this street. It is envisaged that the additional parking facilities provided outside of the Elite Buildings and Front Street will relieve some of the existing parking problems in this area.
- 7.3 At present the business owners at the northern end of Front Street are expressing concern because of the lack of trade at this location. Some of the more established businesses are located at the other end of Front Street where pedestrian through flow is more prevalent. It is anticipated that the opening up of this section of Front Street will assist the businesses in this part of the town.
- 7.4 It is proposed that there be a short section of limited waiting bays on the northern side of the western end of Thorneyholme Terrace. These bays will be in operation Monday – Saturday, 8am – 6pm. These days / times are considered the most appropriate to control long stay parking by commuters and should therefore enable the spaces to be used by potential customers to the town centre.
- 7.5 The option of only directing the traffic flow along Anthony Street / Beamish Street was considered. However it was concluded that this could potentially have a detrimental effect on traffic flow. The aim of the scheme is to encourage passing trade into the street and it is considered that two potential exits should make this a more convenient option for people. It is envisaged

that those heading back towards Stanley will exit via Thorneyholme Terrace whereas those heading north will use Beamish Street.

8.0 Objection 3 – One Way System is Wrong Direction.

8.1 Comments were received stating that the one way flow on Front Street and Beamish Street is pointless and potentially dangerous to both pedestrians and motorists.

8.2 A further objection to the direction of the traffic flow stated they thought a safer route of travel would be to direct traffic from the A6076 roundabout, south on Thorneyholme Terrace north, round the southern side of the Health Centre before returning north and entering the western end of Thorneyholme Terrace to the rear of the Job Centre. From this point vehicles could then enter Anthony Street or travel north up Front Street.

9.0 Response

9.1 As previously mentioned in this report, the aim of the proposal is to generate passing trade to the northern end of Front Street to encourage economic activity. Traffic Calming, Signage and appropriate lining will be provided to ensure that both motorists and pedestrians are made aware of the various new restrictions and traffic flows that will be put in place.

9.2 The route suggested by the objector is not considered to be a viable option. The majority of motorists would prefer to take advantage of a convenient route to the local amenities and facilities and it is considered that by providing access from Royal road that this is the case. The alternative route suggested is approximately 3 times longer than the proposal and would also require some land acquisition to enable larger vehicles to turn onto Thorneyholme Terrace adjacent to the Job Centre.

10.0 Objection 4 – Thorneyholme Terrace / Thorneyholme Terrace North Junction

10.1 Concern has been raised with regards the potential for traffic congestion at the junction of Thorneyholme Terrace / Thorneyholme Terrace North Junction

11.0 Response

11.1 As it stands we do not consider this to be a likely issue. That said, if congestion problems did become apparent at this location then consideration could be given to implementing measures to rectify the situation

12.0 Objection 5 – Parking Problems for Residents

12.1 Comments raising concerns for residents parking in Thorneyholme Terrace were received. It was stated that the road gets extremely busy at present with vehicles accessing the school, nursery and church as well as using the area to park when using Front Street.

- 12.2 A request was also made for residents parking permits as it was stated that the effect of the scheme was likely to be too great for the residents of Thorneyholme Terrace.
- 12.3 Comments were also received indicating that residents of Benton Terrace should receive permits so that they could park to the front of their properties at all times.

13.0 Response

- 13.1 There are currently high numbers of vehicles parking within the Thorneyholme Terrace area. It is not anticipated that the proposals will increase these levels. The introduction of the short stay parking bays on Front Street and outside of the Elite buildings could potentially reduce vehicle numbers of non-residents parking in this area.
- 13.2 At present there are a number of vehicles that enter Thorneyholme Terrace from the eastern end, who park, and then turn at the western end of the street before exiting from the same point at which they entered. The introduction of the one way system in this street will eliminate the need to reverse / turn which in turn should have a beneficial effect on road safety and congestion.
- 13.3 Residents permits are only introduced when the current parking conditions meet the criteria as detailed in Durham County Councils Parking Strategy. The criteria states that for permits to be applicable that more than 40% of kerbside space must be occupied by non-residents for over six hours in the survey period and more than 85% of kerbside space must be occupied by any vehicle(s) during the same six hours.
- 13.4 At present there are 'no waiting at any time' restrictions to the front of Benton Terrace. We would not look to introduce permit parking into any of the parking bays created in this area. These bays are being provided to generate a turnover of vehicles for the economic benefit of the Front Street.

14.0 Objection 6 – Noise Pollution

- 14.1 Representation was made that opening up the Front Street to vehicles would increase noise levels and thus lead to disturbance for residents of Front Street.

15.0 Response

- 15.1 The noise levels associated with the re-introduction of vehicles into Front Street are not expected to cause unreasonable disturbance to residents.

16.0 Objection 7 – Money would be better spent elsewhere

- 16.1 Suggestions were put forward that the money available for this scheme could be better spent elsewhere in the town.

17.0 Response

17.1 This scheme has been proposed following its identification and subsequent inclusion in the Stanley Masterplan. A comprehensive consultation exercise was undertaken prior to the publication of the Masterplan for the town.

18.0 Objection 8 – Would prefer alternative limited waiting times

18.1 During the initial consultation period, the consultees were asked whether the new parking provision in this area should be restricted to a 1 hour limit. A number of the responses suggested that 2 or 3 hour parking bays would be preferable.

18.2 In addition to the above, it was also suggested that we should give consideration to making the limited waiting restrictions Monday – Friday, 9am - 4pm only.

18.3 A further suggestion was made that the limited waiting restrictions should be 8am – 8pm.

19.0 Response

19.1 The intention of the scheme is to generate a turnover of vehicles within the newly created spaces. In introducing a 1 hour restriction we anticipate that the new spaces will be utilised to their maximum potential, thus encouraging more potential customers to use the area.

19.2 As noted above, the intention of the scheme is to generate a turnover of vehicles visiting the town centre. We feel that the restrictions should remain as Monday – Saturday, 8am – 6pm to ensure that this is the case.

19.3 The intention of the works is to improve the ease of access to the area during times when the nearby shops and facilities are open and therefore we do not consider 8am – 8pm to be appropriate times in this instance.

20.0 Local member consultation

20.1 The Local members Cllrs Marshall / Dearden / Milburn / Charlton / Nearney / Hodgson / Davinson and Hampson have been consulted and offer no objection to the proposals.

21.0 Recommendation

21.1 It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee endorse the proposal having considered the objections and proceed with the implementation of the Traffic Regulation Orders;

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And

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Background Papers

Correspondence and documentation on Traffic Office File and in member's library.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – DCC Capital

Staffing – Carried out by Strategic Traffic

Risk – Not Applicable

Equality and Diversity – It is considered that there are no Equality and Diversity issues to be addressed.

Accommodation - No impact on staffing

Crime and Disorder - This TRO will allow effective management of traffic to improve economic activity, reduce congestion and improve road safety

Human Rights - No impact on human rights

Consultation – Is in accordance with SI:2489

Procurement – Operations, DCC.

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications: All orders have been advertised by the County Council as highway authority and will be made in accordance with legislative requirements.