

## Highways Committee

16 October 2014



### **BISHOP AUCKLAND PARKING & WAITING RESTRICTIONS ORDER**

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#### **Report of Ian Thompson, Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development Councillor Neil Foster, Portfolio Holder Regeneration and Economic Development**

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#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To advise Members of objections received to the consultation concerning changes to the proposed traffic regulation order in Bishop Auckland.
- 1.2. To request members consider the objections made during the consultation period.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Following successful implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement in Durham District in 2008 and County Durham North in 2011, the County Council expanded this practice into the South of the County in June 2013. Enforcement of all waiting restrictions within the town was undertaken by the County Council from this time.
- 2.2 The County Council are committed to regularly reviewing traffic regulation orders to ensure that the restrictions held within them are relevant and appropriate.
- 2.3 Requests for permit parking have been received on a regular basis for many years from residents of the town who live close to the town centre and the hospital. The County Council gave the assurance that consideration would be given to such a scheme once Civil Parking Enforcement came into operation. In October 2013, vehicle occupation surveys were undertaken in all streets thought likely to be affected by commuter and visitor parking. The results of these surveys were assessed in line with the Council's permit criteria and a list of streets where permits could be introduced was drawn up.
- 2.4 Several streets were deemed suitable and a ballot of all residents in these areas was undertaken. At the end of this exercise, there were 3 streets where the majority of residents voted for the introduction of parking permits.

2.5 Initial consultation letters, plans and response cards were delivered to all properties to be directly affected by the proposals. This letter was delivered on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

2.6 In summary:

Regent Street / Victoria Avenue	28 address points 18 replies 15 in support 3 in opposition
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Escomb Road	26 address points 18 replies 17 in support 1 in opposition
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2.7 The County Council's approach to permits is to displace long stay commuter parking but not short stay visitors. These type of permit schemes do this by restricting parking to residents only for 1 hour on a morning and 1 hour on an afternoon. The proposed times associated with the permit scheme were initially 10-11am and 2-3pm for both areas. These times assist in preventing long term parking in the streets by vehicles belonging to non residents whilst also allowing some flexibility for visitors to the area.

2.8 During the consultation period it became apparent that the times quoted above may not be appropriate for the Escomb Road area. Escomb Road is adjacent to Bishop Auckland General Hospital and as such is subject to elevated levels of parking at all times of the day, not just the core (9am-3pm) hours. Reservations were therefore expressed by the residents over the quoted 10-11am and 2-3pm hours for the proposed scheme. An additional ballot was therefore undertaken in January / February 2014 with the residents and as a result it was decided to amend the hours of the permit scheme on Escomb Road to 12-1pm and 5-6pm. Residents stated that these times would be more beneficial as it would give them a greater chance of obtaining a parking space when returning home from work.

2.9 The scheme was advertised formally in the local press between 11<sup>th</sup> July – 1<sup>st</sup> August and on site between 8<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

2.10 Between the initial and formal consultation periods outlined above, a request to amend waiting restrictions near to the former Fire Station site was received. These changes were consulted upon with the statutory consultees and as a result there was a slight delay in progressing the formal consultation. Both the waiting restriction amendments and the permit schemes were formally advertised at the same time.

### **3 Objection 1**

3.1 An objector from Escomb Road does not see the benefit of introducing a permit scheme that only operates for 2 no. 1 hour periods per day.

## **4 Response**

- 4.1 The Council's approach is to displace long stay commuter parking but not short stay visitors. Once a commuter problem is established then a permit area may be introduced for 2 no. one hour periods per day, Monday to Saturday. This has the effect of removing long stay parking whilst having a minimum impact on residents and their visitors.

Further consultation was undertaken with residents of Escomb Road to try and implement a permit scheme with times that would be beneficial to them. It was decided to progress the scheme with 2 hourly slots of 12-1pm and 5-6pm as this offers the best chance of keeping the area clear when residents are returning from work.

It should also be noted that by providing a scheme which restricts use in 2 hourly periods we are not excessively affecting potential trade to nearby businesses. There should still be ample opportunities for customers to use the areas in question outside of the permit times.

## **5 Objection 2**

- 5.1 A resident of Victoria Avenue states that the town is dying due to the lack of available commuter parking. They also note that there should be more parking provided not less.

## **6 Response**

- 6.1 During the consultation period, the majority of the residents of Victoria Avenue supported the proposals. Victoria Avenue is located on the periphery of the town centre and as a result is occupied for prolonged periods of the day by vehicles belonging to non-residents. The proposed scheme will mean that these vehicles are unable to park on Victoria Avenue for 2 hourly per day. Ample opportunity is therefore afforded to potential visitors to the area to park. It should also be noted that there are a number of public car parks in the vicinity that town centre workers / visitors could use.

## **7 Objection 3**

- 7.1 The objector feels that the cost of the business permits is extortionate and in addition to this is unhappy that each business can only purchase 1 permit.

## **8 Response**

- 8.1 This scheme has been borne out of the frustration of residents at not being able to park near to their homes because of long stay parking in the street by non-residents. The County Council currently charge £30 per year for a residents parking permit and £375 for a business permit. Residents may purchase up to 3 permits per property but businesses are restricted to 1 permit per business.

This is to deter the parking of vehicles associated with businesses from parking for prolonged periods in the residential areas. The benefit of this is that much more space then becomes available for both residents and potential visitors / customers for the town centre.

#### **9.0 Local member consultation**

The Local Members have been consulted and offer no objection to the proposals.

#### **10.0 Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee endorse the proposal having considered the objections and proceed with the implementation of the Bishop Auckland Parking & Waiting Restrictions Order.

#### **11 Background Papers**

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

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**Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – LTP 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 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.