

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 9 July 2014 at 9.30 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor G Bleasdale in the Chair

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Allen, B Armstrong, H Bennett, D Hicks, K Hopper, I Jewell, O Milburn, S Morrison, R Ormerod, P Stradling, J Turnbull, M Wilkes, R Young.

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Kay, D Bell and D Hall

Also Present:

Councillor M Simmons

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bell, D Hall and C Kay.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor I Jewell was substituting for Councillor O Gunn.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 21 March and 9 April 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 Unc. Beech Road, Framwellgate Moor - Proposed Restricted Parking

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services regarding representations received to a scheme which proposed the introduction of restricted parking at Unclassified Beech Road, Framwellgate Moor (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that the proposed scheme had been put forward by the local Councillors for Framwellgate Moor, essentially on behalf of local businesses.

The Committee were informed that the proposed scheme, would see the introduction of parking restrictions between Monday-Saturday, 8am-6pm, 3 hours, no return before 6pm. The restrictions would allow for greater turnover of vehicles for those people using the local amenities and would hopefully alleviate long-standing, parking problems which had led to numerous complaints regarding the obstruction of the highway and road safety concerns. Part of the carriageway was being left unrestricted to accommodate for some longer stay parking in order to reduce displacement into adjacent residential streets.

The Committee were then shown a presentation comprising:

- location plan of the area;
- photos of Beech Road and Lilac Avenue on a weekday at 9 a.m.
- proposed restrictions on a plan; and
- a plan showing location of responses to the consultation.

(for presentation see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that an informal consultation had been carried out between 30 August and 16 September 2013 with affected residents and statutory consultees. Out of the 36 letters sent to the affected residents, 4 responses were received in favour of the proposals and 4 were against the proposals. Two of the four objections intimated that they would be in favour of the parking if the restriction was extended to both sides of the road. The representations contained in the report were then summarised to the Committee.

Councillor M Wilkes, local Councillor for the area, highlighted that the parking problems at the location had been ongoing for some period of time. It appeared that some of the problems being experienced were due to parking by staff and visitors to the University Hospital. Other parking restrictions which had been introduced throughout the Framwellgate Moor area had also slightly impacted on the area.

Councillor Wilkes commented that under the scheme a small amount of parking would be designated so that people could use local shops and utilise their services. The 3 hour time limit was appropriate for people wishing to book appointments at the hairdressers. It was hoped that the scheme would assist local businesses and protect the safety of residents. Councillor Wilkes had also been in discussion with Durham City Homes with regard to developing parking and driveways for properties in Lilac Avenue and was hoping to use some neighbourhood budget monies for a future scheme, in the immediate area.

Councillor Simmons, endorsed the comments made by Councillor Wilkes and hoped that the proposals, if they were to go ahead would provide for a positive impact on the area.

The Committee then heard representations from two local residents who had taken photos at 8.30 a.m. The photos illustrated the extent of the parking problems before the shops had opened for business. They expressed concern at where people who worked in the shops would park. They also asked if the restriction could be introduced on both sides of the road. There was a feeling that other restrictions introduced in and around Framwellgate Moor had been effective but felt that the omission of restrictions on the opposite side of the road would cause an issue. The residents also explained that an RSPCA shop would be opening soon and expressed concern as to how people would be able to drop-off and pick-up items.

One resident, who used a mobility scooter, explained that vehicles were already parking on footpaths at nearby Lilac Avenue and were restricting his access and presenting safety issues and asked if this could be looked at.

The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that inconsiderate parking and the obstruction of footpaths was problematic and the Council would investigate if there were any possible physical measures that they could introduce, i.e. the installation of a bollard, however, such a proposal would have to be looked at in closer detail and would depend on the width of the footpath. In respect of the potential displacement of traffic to other areas, the Committee were informed that the scheme had been devised with a view to balancing the needs of the local businesses, however, it could be reviewed after 6 months of operation.

Councillor R Ormerod commented that his stance was one of 'pro-business' and supported the recommendations fully.

Councillor O Milburn sought clarification as to whether there was any parking to the rear of the shop premises, to which the Committee heard there was none.

Councillor Stadling sympathised with the situation faced and commented that the problems being experienced at Framwellgate Moor were being experienced across the County. Councillor Stadling was satisfied that there had been a proper attempt to try and eliminate the problem and agreed with the recommendation on the proviso that the scheme would be reviewed after six months of operation.

In response to a question from Councillor K Hopper regarding bus provision in the area, Councillor Wilkes informed the Committee that some people were parking at the location and then travelling elsewhere on buses, essentially to obtain free parking, however, the majority of people parking at the location appeared to be visitors or staff to the University Hospital.

Councillor Wilkes clarified that the main emphasis of the proposals was the creation of 13 dedicated spaces that could be utilised for people who wished to use the shops in the area.

Councillor J Turnbull explained that he was not against the scheme but felt that the shop owners who had vehicles should be able to load and unload without being affected by the restrictions.

Councillor I Jewell informed the Committee that he had been experiencing similar problems in his area and was minded to support the scheme, even though there was no guarantee that it would work. He added that the Council had to show some degree of flexibility and supported the introduction of the proposals and to monitor what affect they had after six months of operation.

Resolved:

That, having considered the representations, the Committee endorse the making of the Order by the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services, under delegated powers and that once the restrictions become operational, an update report be presented to the Committee after six months of operation.