

Highways Committee

27 September 2011

Unc High Chare, Chester-le-Street Proposed Parking Restrictions



Report of Terry Collins, Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services

Councillor Bob Young, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic Environment

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To advise Committee of a representation received to the proposed alterations to the parking restrictions for the Unc High Chare, Chester-le-Street
- 2 It is recommended that the Committee endorse the proposal having considered the objections to the proposal and proceed with the implementation of the various parking restrictions at Unc High Chare, Chester-le-Street as per the plan in Appendix 2

Background

- 3 Representations have been received for a number of years from pedestrians, residents, business holders, Durham Constabulary and the Residents Association about the inconsiderate parking particularly associated with businesses around High Chare, causing a road safety hazard to motorists and pedestrians alike.
- 4 Unc High Chare is a short through route which has grown in importance following the closure of Front Street to all vehicles except permit holders and local buses. The inconsiderate parking is now causing congestion at various times on both the Front Street and Mains Park Road.

Proposals

- 5 A full review of the existing parking restrictions considered a number of issues which would assist the local businesses but also improve the two way flow of vehicles – therefore removing the road safety and congestion issues.
- 6 The proposals include the implementation of a loading bay, no waiting / no loading restrictions between the hours of 08.00 to 18.00 and the relocation of the two existing disabled parking bays as per the drawing in Appendix 2.

Consultation

- 7 Informal consultation was carried out with the affected residents, businesses and statutory consultees from the 20th May 2010 to the 10th June 2010.

- 8 Out of the 9 letters sent to affected residents and businesses 2 responses were received. Both were in favour of the changes. No responses were received against the proposals at the informal stage. Durham Constabulary, North East Ambulance Services and Arriva bus services responded to the informal consultation.
- 9 During this above period of time a new tenant took over one of the businesses on High Chare and made representations direct to ourselves and then through his Member of Parliament. His main request was for a parking bay or permit for him to be able to park during the hours of his business opening times.
- 10 A response was sent to the MP advising that we would be unable to accede to his request for a bay or permit as we cannot reserve the highway or any part of it for the use of an individual person or business. However the proposals would include a loading and unloading bay which the tenant or visitors to his business would be able to have use of.
- 11 A statutory advertisement of the proposals was undertaken from the 13th May 2011 until the 3rd June 2011. During this period one letter of representation was received and 15 letters were received in support of the proposals. The proposals were also fully supported by Durham Constabulary and the Residents Association.
- 12 Contact was made via letter with the respondent with a full response to his issues and asking him to consider withdrawing his representation. However this was followed up with a second letter from the respondent with no reference to withdrawal of his objection. This respondent did indicate their support of the proposed scheme during the informal consultation period.
- 13 The local Members, County Councillors Beaty Bainbridge and John Shiell support the proposals.

Representation and responses

14 Representation 1

The representation raised was from the owners of a building which they sub-let to their tenant, the new owner of the lawn-mower shop. They advise that he requires his customers to stop and drop off / collect other items for repair. In the second letter he raises the issue of the number of businesses which would have to utilise the bay.

Response: The proposals include the implementation of a loading bay which can be utilised by the person's sub-tenant to load and unload to his business. Customers of the business and other such businesses within the area would be able to utilise the loading bay for the legitimate use of loading and unloading.

With regard to the number of businesses who would have access to the loading bay it is in line with the number of businesses who utilise the existing loading facilities available at various locations throughout the Front Street. One of the businesses referred to in the respondent's letter offered their full support to the proposals at the informal stage as it would improve their ability to load and unload.

16 Representation 2

“High Chare should never have been treated as a main thoroughfare following the closure of the Front Street”

Response: Front Street was closed to through traffic in 1999 as part of a larger scheme to generally improve pedestrian safety and to assist in the ongoing redevelopment of the main commercial centre of the town. As a result of this closure there is no other reasonable alternative route apart from maintaining free flowing traffic and access through High Chare and Station Road.

17 Representation 3

They would like to see more than two disabled parking bays. In the second letter they also refer to metering of the parking bays on West Lane and North Burns.

Response: We advised them in our response to the first letter that there has only ever been two disabled parking bays on High Chare. This at the time of implementation and even now is considered adequate for the businesses on High Chare. Unfortunately any extra provision of disabled parking bays would have to be at the loss of the proposed loading / unloading bay. The road is too narrow to accommodate further bays.

We informed them that there are also 11 disabled parking bays available within the Middle Chare Car Park and 10 within the Osbourne Road Car Park. Both of these car parks have good access points for wheelchair users if the two bays are unavailable on High Chare.

We also advised them that we are currently considering the implementation of further disabled parking bays on West Lane and North Burns to improve access to services for people with disabilities. In respect of the issue of metering we can only assume that this refers to the ‘car parks’ where disabled bays do have to be paid for. The bays on High Chare and those being considered for West Lane and North Burns would be open to all blue badge holders for limited waiting under the blue badge scheme of 3 hours unless signed otherwise.

18 Representation 4

In letter 2 they state “Something should be done about the ‘speed merchants’

Response: Speed limits are currently enforced by Durham Constabulary. Therefore the issue of alleged inappropriate speed would need to be discussed with them direct.

Recommendations and reasons

- 19 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Committee endorse the proposal having considered the objections and proceed with the implementation of the various parking restrictions on Unc High Chare as per the plan in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing – None

Risk – None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - Provision is being maintained for Blue Badge holders

Accommodation – None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – None

Consultation – As described in the report

Procurement – None

Disability Issues – None

Legal Implications - None