

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 21 November 2014 at 9.30 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor C Kay in the Chair

Members of the Committee:

Councillors D Bell, H Bennett, O Gunn, D Hall, D Hicks, K Hopper, S Morrison, P Stradling, J Turnbull and R Young

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Allen, B Armstrong, O Milburn, R Ormerod and R Todd.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Strategic Traffic Manager referred the Committee to Minute No. 8 and reported that the waiting restriction could be amended from 30 minutes to one hour without the need to re-consult, re-advertise and incur further cost.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations

5 Burnopfield, Tanfield, Oxhill, South Stanley, Craghead and Bloemfontein - Parking & Waiting Restrictions Order

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding an objection made to a proposed traffic regulation order in South Moor (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that the County Council was committed to regularly reviewing traffic regulation orders to ensure that the restrictions held within them were relevant and appropriate. A request had been received from a local business to consider the introduction of some waiting restrictions to aid accessibility and improve road safety at the junctions of Bridge Street and Mundell Street, South Moor.

Highways Officers had visited the site and observed coaches performing multiple reversing manoeuvres on to Park Road to gain access to the depot, and determined that there was a requirement for restrictions to aid road safety. As an interim measure 'keep clear' markings were laid at strategic locations to help ensure access/ egress to the depot without the need to carry out reversing manoeuvres.

The 'Keep Clear' markings were installed in July 2014, and following feedback received, it was proposed to replace the markings with No Waiting at Any Time restrictions on Bridge Street and to remove the 'keep clear' markings on Mundell Street and extend the existing No Waiting at Any Time restriction by 5 metres to allow better access to larger vehicles and still allow some parking.

The Committee then heard from the objector, who informed the Committee he was representing the residents of Parmeter Street and raised the following issues:

- The proposed double yellow lines were being introduced to accommodate a request from a local business man.
- There had not been a problem in the area for buses until a new owner bought the nearby bus business.
- If the restriction was to be introduced, could consideration be given to the introduction of residents parking on Parmeter Street.
- There was suspicion that traffic movements had been staged during the visit to the area by Highway Officers – could an unannounced site visit take place by the Committee.
- There were already parking problems in Parmeter Street for local residents as vehicles parked there to use nearby shops – the proposed restriction on Bridge Street and Mundell Street would exacerbate these problems.

The Strategic Traffic Manager responded to the issues raised by the objector. The site visit by Highways Officers to the area which had taken place last week was unannounced. During the site visit buses had been observed undertaking difficult and potentially dangerous manoeuvres at the junctions of Bridge Street and Mundell Street and the introduction of No Waiting at Any Time restrictions on these junctions would improve road safety.

Councillor Gunn, while sympathising with the objector, informed the Committee that there were many towns and villages where people came to shop and parked outside of resident's homes, and asked what parking was currently like in Parmeter Street. The objector replied that local residents were afraid to move their cars because the space was almost immediately taken by people visiting the local shops.

Councillor Stradling informed the Committee that while he was not familiar with the South Moor area, this proposal would prevent vehicles parking on a road junction and 5 metres from the junction, adding that vehicles should not be parking on a near a junction in any event. He moved approval of the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Hall referred to the request from the objector for a residents parking scheme in Parmeter Street and asked whether this could be considered. The Strategic Traffic Manager replied that discussions could take place with residents and a survey be carried

out to ascertain whether Parmeter Street met the County Council's usual criteria for a residents parking scheme.

Seconded by Councillor Gunn and

Resolved:

That the implementation of the Burnopfield, Tanfield, Oxhill, South Stanley, Craghead and Bloemfontein Parking & Waiting Restrictions Order be approved.

6 A689 Western Approach to Stanhope - 40mph Speed Limit

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding representations and objection received in respect of proposed changes to the speed limit on the A689 western approach to Stanhope (for copy see file of Minutes)

The Strategic Highway Manager informed the Committee that speeding on the A689 approaching and through Stanhope had been a Police and Communities Together (PACT) priority since September 2012, with residents raising speeding concerns on numerous occasions. In March 2014, Durham Constabulary made representation to Durham County Council asking for a review of the speed limit on the A689 approaching Stanhope, as they believed the current 30mph speed limit was unrealistically low and was not a credible speed limit leading to a lack of driver compliance and that a 40mph "buffer zone" should be considered to reduce the speeds approaching and through Stanhope. A speed limit review had been completed in accordance with current best practice guidance produced by the Department for Transport.

The review of the speed limit was undertaken jointly with Durham Constabulary on the 28 March 2014, reviewed the roads and agreed to seek consent to the implementation of 40mph buffer zones, combined with relocating to more appropriate sites the 30mph terminal traffic signs to assist in enhancing compliance with the speed limits. The review identified that the current 30mph speed limit commenced some 300m west of what was considered to be the natural start of the town, with this 300m section of road being mainly rural with sporadic property development. The review also took into consideration the current 30mph speed limit on the B6278 which runs in a southerly direction from the A689. The 30mph speed limit on the B6278 was only 140m in length and the DfT did not recommend a speed limit length of less than 300m.

It was proposed to make a 40mph speed limit Traffic Regulation Order on the A689 western approach to Stanhope and the adjoining B6278 road, which would have a beneficial effect on road safety by better reflecting the character and environment of the road. Experience of where the speed limit reflected the type of road had revealed a reduction in the higher speeds and an overall reduction in the lower speeds.

The proposal would include the introduction of a gateway feature at Rose Terrace, and additional repeater signs/enhanced road markings would be provided throughout the proposed 40mph speed limit on the A689 and B6278. Rose Terrace would also be included within the Council's rotation programme for the deployment of a rotational speed visor "flashing" sign.

The statutory consultation was undertaken between the 24 April and 23 May 2014 and an informal consultation encompassing all affected properties in the immediate vicinity of the proposal was undertaken between the 2 May and 30 May 2014. Of the 43 informal consultation letters sent to properties directly affected by the proposals, a total of 14 responses were received. Of the 14 responses, 5 were in favour of the proposals whilst 9 were against. The remaining consultees who did not respond are deemed to have no preference. A further letter was sent to those who objected, clarifying a number of issues, and as it stood, based on the proposal put forward, 7 were in favour of the proposal and 7 remained as objections.

The statutory Traffic Regulation Order was advertised on site and in the local press between the 13 August and 3 September 2014. Following the advertisement of the statutory Traffic Regulation Order, a petition comprising 61 signatures, and 1 objection was received objecting to the proposal.

Councillor Stradling queried the benefit of increasing the speed limit to 40 m.p.h. The Strategic Highway Manager replied that as motorists travelled eastwards on the A689 the current 30 m.p.h. speed limit came into force outside of the built environment. If a stretch of this was raised to be a 40 m.p.h. limit then this would act as a buffer zone transition between the 60 m.p.h. speed limit and the 30 m.p.h. speed limit and therefore encourage motorists to adjust their speed accordingly before entering the 30 m.p.h. limit.

The Committee then heard from one of the objectors who raised the following issues:

- It was unclear how increasing the speed limit on a road from 30 m.p.h. to 40 m.p.h. would allay concerns of local residents about speeding
- The B6278 had an exit from a Community Hospital and a tea shop onto it
- The B6278 had area of limited visibility with a blind corner and blind crest, which would be made more dangerous if the speed limit was increased
- The B6278 contained hazards to both cyclists and pedestrians and those hazards would increase if vehicles could travel faster
- The B6278 had no pedestrian footpath

The Strategic Highway Manager responded that DfT guidance was that the minimum length of road for a speed limit should be 300 metres, which would preclude the section of the B6278 having a 30 m.p.h. limit. However, continuous edge markings would be placed on the B6278 which would give the impression of the carriageway narrowing, together with repeater road markings and rumble strips.

Councillor Hall suggested that the 30 m.p.h. could be extended on the A689 to beyond its junction with the B6278 which would allow for the 30 m.p.h. limit to remain on that road. The Strategic Highway Manager replied that speed limits were a maximum rather than target speed for motorists. Drivers tended to drive to their environment which was the reason for the 30 m.p.h. being proposed to commence at Rose Terrace which was the start of the built up environment of Stanhope and was a point of the road which narrowed and therefore had a tunnelling effect. Work had been undertaken with the police and the proposed design was considered to be the most appropriate for conditions in the area and which also met DfT guidance. The proposed scheme had been designed to take account of the environment on the approach to Stanhope and geometry on the B6278 with additional carriageways and a number of highway engineering methods would be utilised.

Councillor Kay informed the Committee that he knew the lengths of road well, and that the proposed scheme mirrored one which was introduced at Binchester which had resulted in slowing traffic travelling through the village. The proposed scheme at Stanhope had the support of the two local members and of the PACT.

Councillor Hicks informed the Committee that while he had no reservations about the proposed increase from 30 m.p.h. to 40 m.p.h. on the A689 approach to Stanhope he considered the B6278 to be a narrow road with hazards which should remain with a 30 m.p.h. limit on it. Councillor Kay questioned whether the Committee could approve the scheme in part only covering the A689. The Principal Solicitor Planning and Development advised the Committee that where there was a series of restrictions in an Order, these could be approved in part unless they were so linked they could not be segregated. From a legal perspective, in this instance the Order could be made for the A689 without being made for the B6278. Councillor Stradling agreed with Councillor Hicks that, while he didn't disagree with the 40 m.p.h. damper zone on the A689, the key was how far out the 30 m.p.h. zone should start

Councillor Kay reminded the Committee that it should take cognisance of the views of the PACT and the two local Members,

Councillor Hopper informed the Committee that speeding had been an ongoing concern for local residents at PACT meetings for the past two years, and local residents were in favour of the scheme. Residents wanted resolution of this issue. Councillor Gunn informed the Committee that while she would not reject the proposal, she had concerns regarding the B6278. While agreeing with the comments made by Councillor Hopper regarding the length of time this had been raised at PACT meetings, she sought clarification whether it was viable to not implement the proposals on the B6278. The Strategic Highway Manager replied that while this would be viable from a legal perspective, he was not convinced it would be viable from an engineering point of view.

Councillor Stradling **moved** that the report be deferred and re-presented at a later Committee meeting to take account of the views expressed by Members regarding concerns on the B6278 and the location of the start of the 30 m.p.h. limit on the A689. Councillor Hicks **seconded** this motion.

Upon a vote being taken the motion was lost.

Moved by Councillor Hopper, **Seconded** by Councillor Gunn and

Resolved:

- (i) That the recommendation contained at Paragraph 34 of the report be approved;
- (ii) That the Road B6278 be monitored for 6 months following implementation of the scheme and results from this monitoring be fed back to the Committee,

7 Paradise Lane, Easington Colliery - Proposed No Waiting At Any

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding representations received to the proposed introduction of a No Waiting At Any Time restriction on Paradise Lane, Easington Colliery (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Highway Manager informed the Committee that representations had been received from the local County Councillors on behalf of residents to investigate the possibility of establishing a No Waiting at Any Time parking restriction to discourage indiscriminate parking and reduce vehicles obstructing the highway at the junction of Paradise Lane and Paradise Lane, Easington.

During the informal consultation period on the proposal 6 responses in favour were received and 7 against. No formal objections were received during the statutory advertisement of the proposals.

The Committee then heard from one of the objectors who raised the following issues:

- The proposal would have a devastating impact on the off licence and tanning salon businesses located on the junction
- The restriction would lead to people shopping elsewhere which could result in business closures and job losses, in an area of already high unemployment
- The tanning salon was planning to expand and these plans could be jeopardised should the restriction be implemented

Councillor Stradling informed the Committee that the proposal was being considered as a road safety issue and asked how far along Paradise Lane the double yellow lines were proposed. The Strategic Highway Manager indicated the length of the proposed restriction on both side of Paradise Lane from its junction with Seaside Lane as well as the length of the restriction on Seaside Lane to improve the visibility splay at the junction. The police were in support of the proposal because of problems which had been encountered by buses at the junction.

Councillor Stradling informed the Committee that while he had some reservations about the proposed length of the restriction, he **moved** approval of the recommendations in the report because the proposal had the support of the two local County Councillors. Councillor Hopper **seconded** approval of the report.

The Strategic Highway Manager informed the Committee that the restriction would be subject to monitoring and the results of this would be brought back to Committee after it had been in operation for some 6 months.

Resolved:

That the implementation of No Waiting At Any Time restriction be approved and feedback be brought to the Committee when the restriction had been monitored.