

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 3 December 2015 at 9.30 am.**

**Present:**

**Councillor G Bleasdale in the Chair**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors C Kay (Vice-Chairman), J Allen, D Bell, H Bennett, I Geldard, O Gunn, K Hopper, O Milburn, S Morrison, J Rowlandson, P Stradling, F Tinsley, J Turnbull and R Young.

**Also Present:**

Councillor S Henig.

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Armstrong, R Ormerod and J Robinson.

### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members present.

### **3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2015 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 items of business on the agenda.

### **5 Chester-le-Street Parking and Waiting Restrictions Order 2015**

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding a proposal to introduce a resident's permit parking scheme which would operate from Monday to Saturday 10-11 a.m. and 2-3 p.m. at Bullion Lane, Chester-le-Street (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee received a presentation which detailed:

- the location and consultation plan;
- a map based schedule of the restrictions; and
- photos highlighting the issues being experienced by local residents.

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee of the previous history of problems faced by local residents in the area which had been exacerbated more recently, with the introduction of parking charges at Chester-le-Street railway station in early 2015. It had previously been free to park at the station prior to 2015. This had led to an increased number of commuters parking in surrounding residential streets.

One objection had been received from a commuter who had stated that they had previously parked at the railway station until parking charges were introduced. The objector felt that residents would have bought their houses knowing a train station was located nearby and ought to have been aware of the potential for possible commuter parking in the area. They also felt that the County Council could do more for commuters.

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that discussions had been taking place with Cestria Homes with a view to developing an area of land as a free car park for up to 20 vehicles, which could be used by commuters. The objector advised that they would withdraw their objection if the project went ahead. Discussions with Cestria Homes had stalled during the consultation, hence the outstanding objection.

The Committee were advised that the introduction of residents parking and protection of the junctions with yellow lines would be a sensible and pragmatic way of dealing with the issue of all day parking at Bullion Lane which was to the detriment of local residents.

The Committee then heard from Councillor S Henig, one of the local members for the area. Councillor S Henig informed the Committee that both himself and Councillor L Marshall received regular complaints from residents living in the area. The problem had grown and was growing, essentially down to the success of the railway station, where commuter numbers were well into the hundreds. The problem for residents, was that there were not many car parks and commuters were blocking access to their driveways, which were shared. In some cases people were leaving their cars parked all day and longer on occasions. It was proving extremely difficult for residents to manoeuvre from their driveways when cars were parked either side and opposite the driveways. Councillor Henig also felt that Network Rail had to take some of the responsibility for the problems being experienced by local residents.

Councillor Henig explained that a number of streets on the opposite side of the railway station (Avondale Terrace) already had similar restrictions in place and which had transformed the area. Councillor Henig felt that the scheme proposed was a good compromise which both local members fully supported.

The Committee then heard from two local residents who were in support of the proposals. They echoed the comments made by Councillor Henig and explained the problems of cars being parked outside their houses, all day, every day. In some cases people were parking at the location for a whole week.

Councillor Kay commented that he had enormous sympathy with residents and that the station had adequate cycle and taxi provision. Councillor Kay felt it was unacceptable for someone to park in outside someone's drive for an entire week and fully supported the scheme.

Councillor Gunn commented that the scheme had been fully investigated by officers, with only one objection being received during the full consultation. The speakers had provided an insight into the problems being experienced and fully sympathised with the issues they faced.

### **Resolved**

That the recommendation contained in the report be agreed

## **6 Bishop Auckland - Parking and Waiting Restrictions Order 2015**

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding the possible introduction of residents parking on High Bondgate (for copy see file of minutes).

Prior to the introduction to the report the Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that the proposals relating to James Street contained in the report had been withdrawn because the objection to the scheme had been withdrawn, meaning those proposals would go ahead. The Committee would therefore be making a decision on the scheme affecting High Bondgate only.

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that a consultation with residents living in High Bondgate had taken place in 2013. Nine responses were received from 16 properties with 5 respondents in favour of the proposals. At that time, the scheme was not progressed in light of the responses received.

Since then the County Council had been contacted by local residents seeking a further consultation for the introduction of a residents parking zone. The County Council had carried this out whilst other restrictions were being reviewed in the area. The new consultation took place in July, with eleven responses in favour of a scheme. One resident had opposed the scheme.

The Committee were informed that one resident who had originally supported the scheme had since changed their views following recent large scale events that had taken place in the area. The objector had expressed concern that the scheme wouldn't guarantee a parking space or include evening and weekend parking, which the Strategic Traffic Manager indicated, was correct. He added that residents parking was an inconvenience and was cumbersome, however, it would resolve residents' concerns to displace long stay parking.

The Strategic Traffic Manager also informed the Committee that due to the development of the Auckland Castle site and the Eleven Arches project the County Council would be consulting on wider restrictions for the area with residents and stakeholders in the New Year, covering the duration of future events that would be taking place in the area.

Councillor Zair, one of the local members for the area had been unable to attend the meeting and had sent his representations via email. Councillor Zair had stated that residents parking permits could work in some areas and felt that it would work very well in High Bondgate. Councillor Zair reiterated his support for the scheme given that the majority of residents were in favour.

The Committee then heard from Councillor J Allen, the other local member for the area who felt that the scheme would be beneficial for the area, particularly in light of a similar scheme introduced in the Cockton Hill area of Bishop Auckland.

The Committee then heard from an objector who explained that the traffic team had carried out an excellent job in Bishop Auckland over the years. The objector felt the proposal as had been presented was sound, had it been introduced 5-6 years ago when cars parked along High Bondgate from nose to tail, for the entire stretch of road. However, today, as a resident of High Bondgate there was always space to park multiple cars, at any time of the day. The objector was of the view that most people were happy for the current parking arrangements to remain following the initial survey and that the second survey had been conducted following insistence by one person who had been continually pushing for the scheme. The objector explained that the recent Bonfire Night event at Auckland Castle had been a disaster in the surrounding area because nobody could get parked. People living in the area weren't fearful of the parking situation as it stood at present, however, there was huge local concern about the Eleven Arches project.

The objector felt that the proposed scheme should be put 'on hold' and wouldn't address the more concerning issues regarding the Eleven Arches project and Auckland Castle.

Councillor O Gunn explained that she was familiar with the area and her initial thoughts were that the issue didn't appear to be a large problem and suggested that the Committee may wish to wait until the further consultation outline by the Strategic Traffic Manager took place and wasn't sure the scheme offered major benefit for minimal cost.

Councillor Stradling sympathised with the comments expressed by Councillor Gunn and also by the views of the objector, however, he wasn't from the area and could understand the viewpoint of the local Councillors.

Councillor Kay felt that the objector had made a fair case based on his own experiences. However, there had been eleven positive responses, the two local members were in support and the permit scheme would stop the issues being experienced by residents from occurring and fully supported the proposed scheme.

### **Resolved**

That the recommendation contained in the report be agreed.

## **7 Langley Park - Parking and Waiting Restrictions Order 2015**

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding changes to a proposed traffic regulation order in Langley Park (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee were provided with a presentation detailing:

- a location and consultation plan of Church Street (side) and
- photos of parked vehicles

(for presentation see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that vehicles in the location had been observed parking on and around the junction and parking halfway on footways. A number of public meetings were held in the community building and the Area Action Partnership Coordinator had advised the Council that large vehicles were parking on the junction to load and unload, blocking visibility and accessibility. The introduction of no waiting/no loading at any time and yellow lines around the junction would hopefully alleviate the problems being experienced. A loading facility on the opposite side of Front Street would be introduced where there were unrestricted purpose lay-bys.

The local members for the area could not be present at the meeting but had reiterated their support for the scheme.

One person had objected to the proposals. In their representations they felt that there was no problem with junction parking on the side of Church Street. Their view was that the situation would be better addressed with 'keep clear' markings. The objector also viewed that parking occurring on Low Moor Road helped reduce the speed of vehicles in the area and that the Council should have consulted with residents in the wider area.

Councillor J Turnbull commented that he was a regular visitor to the community building and the junction highlighted in the report was extremely dangerous. Councillor Turnbull felt that the County Council owed a duty of care to staff working in the building, to those who used the community facility and fully supported the proposals which would make the area much safer.

### **Resolved**

That the recommendations contained in the report be agreed.