

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 10 June 2016 at 9.30 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor G Bleasdale in the Chair

Members of the Committee:

Councillors C Kay (Vice-Chairman), B Armstrong, D Bell, O Gunn, B Kellett, O Milburn, S Morrison, R Ormerod, J Rowlandson, P Stradling, F Tinsley and J Turnbull.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Allen, D Hicks, K Hopper, J Robinson, M Wilkes and R Young.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2016 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 Sedgefield - Parking and Waiting Restrictions Order

The Committee were informed by the Legal Adviser that representatives of one of the objectors, United Parcel Service had made a number of representations focussing on procedural aspects. Under the circumstances, the Legal Adviser advised the Committee that it would be incorrect to consider the item. It was proposed that arrangements be made with the objector to meet on site with a view to resolving the outstanding matters.

Resolved

It was resolved unanimously that the item be deferred to a future meeting.

6 Durham City (South West) - Parking and Waiting Restrictions Order 2016

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development which sought to change the controlled parking zone system in operation at Grape Lane, Durham City from a shared zone to its own individual zone (for report see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that Grape Lane was a small cul-de-sac, typically busy with cars. A proposal had come forward from a resident of Grape Lane to change the area from being part of zone I to become a zone of its own. Residents of Grape Lane were consulted on the proposals and were made aware that should the proposals go ahead, they would no longer be able to use their permits in other areas of Zone I. They would also have to use existing pay and display facilities to park on-street.

A consultation was sent to 36 residents in October, 2015. 25 responses were received, with 2 against, 23 in favour. The proposals were then formally advertised on site, with no objections being raised during the formal advertising period. One objection was received outside of the formal notice period and following advice from Legal Services, the objection was allowed to stand. The objector was present at the meeting to present their objection.

Councillor R Ormerod, local Councillor for the area accepted the representations that had been made by local residents but expressed concern that any decision may set a precedent for future requests. Whilst Councillor Ormerod cautiously supported the proposal, he explained that the introduction of the individual zone would not solve other problems which affected the surrounding Crossgate area, which he felt had too much through traffic.

The Committee then heard from a local resident from Crossgate. The resident held a permit which permitted him to park in Grape Lane. The resident had chosen to park in Grape Lane during the majority of this time because the Crossgate area was always congested. The resident explained that if the proposals went ahead, he would no longer be able to park at Grape Lane. The resident went on to explain that he had much empathy with residents of Grape Lane but had always managed to find a space in the street. The resident was unsure why residents living in the area felt that the proposal would solve their issues. The resident pleaded for some additional bays to be located in Crossgate should the proposal for Grape Lane be approved. Crossgate was currently 'resident permit holders or pay and display Monday – Saturday 8am – 6pm. The objector considered that the pay and display aspect should be removed to allow a length of on-street parking to be made 'permit holders only.

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that proposals brought forward for consideration were all about striking the correct balance between city centre and residents parking. In terms of additional bays in Crossgate, the Committee were informed that mixed areas were available when parking zones were introduced in Crossgate, however, this became unsustainable moving forward. The issue of increased charges was a separate process and would need to be consulted as a separate issue.

In response, Councillor Ormerod commented that he didn't agree entirely with the comments made by the Strategic Traffic Manager in relation to parking bays on Crossgate, but accepted that the Crossgate scheme was not up for discussion at the meeting and should be dealt as a separate issue.

Councillor O Gunn felt that the matter was not particularly easy to resolve and suggested that the scheme be reviewed and reassessed once it had been in operation for a period of time.

Councillor Turnbull expressed concern that cars may be displaced to other areas and cause problems in other streets. In response the Strategic Traffic Manager explained that displacement would not occur in this instance and didn't believe that the ripple effect would transfer to other areas.

The Committee were generally supportive of the scheme given that it had been suggested by local residents, however, concerns remained at the potential negative impact the scheme could have on residents of Grape Lane.

Councillor Stradling commented that he would support the scheme, provided it was reviewed after six months of operation. Councillor Tinsley seconded the amendment.

Resolved

The Committee recommended the removal of Grape Lane from Zone I to make it a stand-alone zone, with the scheme being subject to a full review after six months of operation, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director in accordance with the officer scheme of delegations.

7 Stanhope - Parking and Waiting Restrictions Amendment Order 2016

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding a proposal to introduce a two hour parking restriction on Front Street, Stanhope (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that requests had been received from local businesses of Front Street, Stanhope for the introduction of a two hour parking restriction following concerns that businesses were missing out on passing trade due to the kerb space adjacent to the shops being taken up by vehicles being parked up for the majority of the day.

The Committee were informed that parking surveys were undertaken in Front Street and Market Place, Stanhope to establish parking occupancy numbers and stay durations. The survey showed that on average 15 of the 25 spaces adjacent to the shops were occupied for 4 hours or more. On the opposite side of Front Street, 14 out of 21 spaces were occupied for the same duration. Three quarters of the spaces on the Front Street and Market Place were taken by 10am and people working in the village contributed to the high occupancy levels. The County Council were looking to redress the balance by suggesting a two-hour limit with disabled person's bays at either end. Eight individual responses had been received expressing concern around the displacement of vehicles into nearby residential streets.

A representative from Stanhope Parish Council addressed the Committee and thanked officers from the County Council for the consultation. The Parish Council felt that the proposal would benefit shoppers and residents alike, explaining that it was common for people to travel down from the Upper Dales. The Parish Council queried how vigorous any enforcement would be, given that it had been noted that traffic enforcement was very rarely witnessed in Stanhope. They sought assurances that the restrictions would be enforced on a regular basis, otherwise the system would be abused. Longer term the Parish Council wished to see plans for parking in other parts of the town, given that

Stanhope was a growing tourist destination and that people were resorting to parking on grass verges in the wider areas.

The Strategic Traffic Manager explained that officers would always be happy to work in partnership with regard to future provision. In terms of the proposed restrictions, the Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that restrictions were generally well observed across the County and enforcement would be used.

The Committee then heard from two objectors, one who had been a local resident for 35 years. Concerns expressed included the following:

- parking was being reduced by ten spaces with no extra spaces being provided;
- seven of the objectors are nearby residents who have stated it would make parking conditions untenable due to the impact of the displaced vehicles migrating to nearby residential areas where reduced parking space was already an issue;
- parking was not problematic essentially due to 50 metres of kerbside;
- previous attempts to move the eastbound bus stop was refused and requests to see the evidence for refusal was not provided – facilitating this move would have been perfectly reasonable;
- a local business with insufficient parking spaces employed at least forty staff and by 9 a.m. cars were parking wherever they could;
- parking facilities at the Durham Dales Centre had a four hour limit, yet the car park was empty at the majority of times – why could that not be utilised;
- the waiting time could be reduced to one hour and the physical length of the restriction could be longer and extended to number 79 Front Street;
- concerns regarding how the proposal would affect displaced vehicles to nearby Martin Street;
- issues had been raised with the police who acknowledged that there was a problem in Martin Street which was an issue for the County Council to resolve;
- a general view that the proposed solution was a piecemeal answer to a long term problem;
- the balance of the proposals were incorrect; and
- could the scheme be reviewed, if implemented?

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that the solution was not designed to be a solution for the whole town. Essentially, the proposal was an option for local businesses and more studies wouldn't resolve the situation. The idea of the scheme was to ensure that local shops could attract more business.

Councillor Kay informed the Committee that he knew Stanhope very well having visited a café in the area on many occasions. He had observed Front Street jammed with vehicles and there was no doubt that Stanhope attracted a large number of visitors. He felt that parking should be restricted on Front Street and that generally, there should be parking measures in place to attract more visitors.

Councillor O Gunn explained that it was impossible to please everyone but felt that the current problems highlighted by businesses were detrimental to them and not good for Stanhope. Councillor Gunn felt that the County Council were correct in making the proposals as attractive to the area as possible. Councillor Gunn was pleased to hear one

of the objectors' comments regarding the Dales Centre but recognised that these were wider issues not up for consideration as part of the proposals.

Councillor Tinsley informed the Committee that he fully supported the scheme. Sixteen spaces were being displaced which may mean some overspill into surrounding streets however, the area concerned was a commercial part of Stanhope, the economic factors should be encouraged as well as showing support for local businesses. Councillor Tinsley also felt that the two hour restriction was appropriate.

Councillor B Armstrong felt a degree of sympathy with the local residents who had made their objections at the meeting and felt that residents would expect to at least park their own vehicle near to their property and queried if one residents permit could be introduced and proposed an amendment to the scheme with the offer of one residents parking permit.

Councillor Milburn commented that she was happy with the proposal and picked up on the comments made regarding the Durham Dales Centre where there appeared to be lots of available parking which could free up around six spaces and alleviate some of the issues raised, even with a 4 hour limit.

In relation to Councillor Armstrong's suggested proposal, the Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that there were no residents living in the area where the restrictions were being proposed, therefore, if a resident's only permit was introduced, this would result in resident being attracted to park in the area.

In light of information received by the Strategic Traffic Manager, Councillor Armstrong withdrew her amendment.

Councillor Stradling explained that he was comfortable with the original proposal but felt that appropriate monitoring and review of the scheme should take place given that many of the concerns expressed by objectors that the proposed restrictions would potentially worsen the situation.

Resolved

That the recommendation in the report be approved and that the scheme be monitored after six months of operation.