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**HARROWGATE HILL SCHOOL ONE WAY SYSTEM**  
**OBJECTIONS OF TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is for Members to consider an objection that has been received in response to proposed changes to traffic regulation orders in the back lane to the south of Thompson Street West.

**Summary**

2. The Council delivers a programme of Safer Routes to School (SRTS) projects each year. The purpose of the SRTS budget is to make the environment around and on the approaches to schools more safe and in so doing encourage more parents and children to walk or cycle to school.
3. Residents, parents, governors, school staff, ward councillors and the Police have all raised issues regarding the means of access to Harrowgate Hill Primary School. The school is accessed from a two way lane that runs to the back of Thompson Street West and there is significant traffic and parking congestion at the start and the end of the school day.
4. A scheme has been developed to address the school gate congestion and associated safety issues in the back lane. This includes a proposal to provide a one way system in the back lane in order to avoid traffic conflicts and changes to the waiting restrictions to reduce obstructive parking and improve standards of road safety. A plan showing the proposed restrictions is attached at **Appendix 1**.
5. Residents were consulted on the proposal. A majority of the local residents that responded were in favour of the proposed one way system and changes to the waiting restrictions in the back lane, though there was a sizable minority against. The police, emergency services and school were consulted separately and were supportive. It was decided to proceed with the scheme.
6. Traffic Regulation Orders relating to the proposed one way system and changes to waiting restrictions were advertised and objections were invited from members of

the public. We subsequently received one objection from a local resident. The basis of the objection is that parental parking creates significant issues for extended periods around the school start and finish times. Members are asked to consider the comments in **Table 1** which provide a fuller description of the complainants concerns and an officer's response.

## Recommendation

7. It is recommended that:
- (a) The objection to the proposed restrictions be set aside.
  - (b) The Traffic Regulation Order be implemented as advertised.

## Reasons

8. The recommendations are supported to improve safety at the school entrance and to facilitate the expeditious movement of traffic in accordance with the Council's statutory network management duty.

**Ian Williams**  
**Director of Economic Growth**

## Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Brenda Bowles : Extension 2774

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no direct implications.
Health and Well Being	The proposal will benefit children attending Harrowgate Hill Primary School
Carbon Impact	There are no carbon impact implications in this report.
Diversity	There are no direct implications.
Wards Affected	North Road
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Measures to provide a safer living, walking and cycling environment have One Darlington benefits. Measures to encourage more efficient traffic movement have Perfectly Placed benefits.
Efficiency	The proposal will maintain free flowing traffic.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

9. All Darlington schools are given the opportunity to identify measures that will improve the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure for their school site through the development of School Travel Plans.
10. The Safer Routes to School programme supports the development of these schemes which may include; cycle routes, traffic calming, footway works, highway and signage improvements and 20mph zones.
11. Harrowgate Hill School was extended in 2010/11 with planning permission subject to a number of improvements. It was initially proposed that a car park for parents to drop children off would be built within North Park, however this was not feasible due to objections from Sport England. A compromise scheme was then developed with kerbside parking for 20 cars on a hard paved verge on Whessoe Road. The school agreed to open up an access to the rear which links to the new parking via North Park.
12. The other element of the scheme involved a proposal to improve traffic flow and safety in the back lane, in Thompson Street West, which provides the main access to the school. Complaints from residents through ward councillors and reports from the school and Durham Police indicated that traffic and parking congestion in the back lane needed to be addressed in the interests of safety and the free flow of traffic. A one way system is proposed to improve movement through the back lane and further parking restrictions are proposed to improve safety and reduce the occurrence of obstructive parking. The proposed changes contribute towards providing a safer less congested frontage to the school.
13. The proposed improvements will however, improve safety and enable vehicles to pass through the back lane with greater ease which should benefit parents and residents alike.
14. Officers recommend setting the objection aside.

### Financial Implications

15. The proposal will be funded from an existing capital budget associated with the extension to the school.

### Legal Implications

16. The proposed traffic order has been advertised as required by the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) England and Wales) Regulations 1996. and the purpose of this report is to consider the objection received as required by the Regulations

## Equalities Considerations

17. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) provides a framework for delivery of transport improvements including those that improve the free flow of traffic and the safe of highway users. An EIA was carried out on this strategy.

## Consultation

18. Officers have consulted 110 properties in the vicinity of the school, including all of the properties directly affected by the proposed restrictions. The proposal has also been statutorily advertised in the press, in accordance with our delegated authority to progress traffic orders.

## Outcome of Consultation

19. We initially carried out a scheme consultation which involved information packs being sent to 110 dwellings. We received 20 responses, a response rate of 18%. A majority of the local residents that responded were in favour of the proposed one way system and changes to the waiting restrictions in the back lane, with 60% in favour and 40% against. In addition 80% were in favour of the proposed changes to waiting restrictions and parking in the back lane and 90% in favour of the parking on Whessoe Road. The Police, emergency services and school were consulted separately and were supportive.
20. The changes to waiting restrictions and the introduction of a one way system require a traffic regulation order. The legal order was subsequently advertised in the local press and objections were invited from members of the public. We subsequently received one objection. Table 1 below provides details of the grounds for objection and an officer response.
21. The comments of the objector are noted and are not uncommon from residents who live close to schools. Parental parking is a source of complaints and the resident will be inconvenienced by it at school opening and closing times.

**Table 1 : Summary of Objections/Comments on Proposed Traffic Restrictions**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Officer response</b>
<p data-bbox="225 1532 841 1570"><b>Response from Thompson Street West</b></p> <p data-bbox="225 1608 841 1787">At the moment I cannot leave or return to my house between 0815 -0900 and 1400 and 1530 due to lazy parents who arrive early to book their parking spaces to collect their children.</p>	<p data-bbox="869 1608 1410 2004">Parental parking is an issue at most of our schools, though the size and location of Harrowgate Hill School do create specific issues. We work with schools to try to encourage more children to walk or cycle but some parents will always choose to drive their children to school. The proposed measures will not have an impact on the resident's ability to find a parking space at these times and</p>

Issue	Officer response
<p>On top of this the school seem to think that they are more important than the residents by holding parent evenings, sports days etc without the courtesy to inform us that we will not be able to access our properties for longer periods of time.</p> <p>We are running around to look after the rights of the school what about mine.</p> <p>The one way system proposed is the wrong way around as cars will be exiting in to a blind junction due to cars parked on both sides of the road and congested by pedestrians as this is the main foot access/egress for the school.</p> <p>Before you start spending my taxes on pampering to this school you should put pressure on the management to act as responsible neighbours to the residents living here, also the signage about parking</p>	<p>as such this not considered a substantive objection.</p> <p>The school are permitted to carry out these types of events. This is a matter between the school and local residents. Residents do not have a right to park outside their homes; any car with vehicle excise duty can park on the highway subject to them not being parked in an obstructive manner. This is not considered a substantive objection.</p> <p>The proposed measures are provided to improve safety and traffic flow in the back lane. Residents are affected by the current poor traffic conditions and will derive some benefit from the proposed scheme i.e. residents with cars parked within their property will find it easier egress and leave the back lane. This is not considered a substantive objection.</p> <p>Officers considered having the one way system reversed but after a site visit with Durham Constabulary and local ward councillors it was decided that the proposed orientation with vehicles accessing from Longfield Road and egressing onto Thompson Street West was the safest option. Vehicle speeds on Longfield Road are higher than on Thompson Street West and visibility is restricted by the brow of a hill. Visibility along Thompson Street West is restricted by parked vehicles but traffic speeds are lower. Whilst this is considered a substantive objection, Council officers and the Police are of the view that the proposed arrangement is the safest option.</p> <p>This is a matter between the school and local residents as the Council has no control over how the school operates. The signage is in accordance with the Traffic Signs</p>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Officer response</b>
<p>on zig-zag lines should be altered to show that this only applies during term times.</p> <p>As regards the police comments concerning the 20mph limit they really need to visit this street at all hours of the day and see the abuse of the speed limit having lived here for ten years now I have NEVER seen a Police officer monitoring the speed so feel their support for the scheme is without any proven evidence. As I type this two vehicles have just gone passed travelling at well in excess of 20mph proving that the traffic calming is not working</p>	<p>Regulations and General Directions and cannot be changed to term time only.</p> <p>Officers will pass this observation onto the Police who are the enforcement authority for speeding offences.</p>