

CABINET
13 APRIL 2021

**PROPOSED WAITING RESTRICTIONS GEORGE STEPHENSON DRIVE -
OBJECTIONS**

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Andy Keir, Local Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Members of two objections received to a proposal for waiting restrictions on George Stephenson Drive and to seek a decision on whether to proceed with the proposal.

Summary

2. Concerns were received from residents and via a Ward Councillor with regards to the parking on the bend on the approach to the junction of West Auckland Road and whether it was possible to introduce waiting restrictions at the junction to resolve the issue of vehicles obscuring forward visibility.
3. Residents are currently parking on and around the bend which is causing visibility issues for vehicles entering and leaving George Stephenson Drive.
4. Officers have consulted twice on solutions to manage parking at this location previously and received numerous informal objections on both occasions. Since then there has been additional development adjacent which has exacerbated the issue. (see green area at **Appendix A**). Further informal and formal consultation was undertaken on a proposal for waiting restrictions to prevent parking and improve the visibility/road safety issues (see plan at Appendix A).
5. There were four submissions to the statutory consultation. One submission is fully supportive of the proposal and one submission stated restrictions were not sufficient. There were two objections to the scheme. One objector was satisfied with the restrictions up to house No.9 George Stephenson Drive and disagreed with the need for the restrictions protecting the junctions further into the estate. The other objector was fully against the restrictions, although the reasons were not directly against the restrictions proposed.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Members consider the objections and set them aside and authorise officers to proceed with the proposal to introduce the waiting restriction scheme as shown at Appendix A.

Reasons

7. The recommendation is supported to improve the traffic flow, visibility and road safety of vehicles entering and leaving George Stephenson Drive. The Council, acting in its capacity as the Highway Authority, have a duty of care to ensure the safety of the travelling public and a duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to maintain the expeditious movement of traffic.

Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Background Papers

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

Chris Easby: Extension 6707

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no direct implications.
Health and Well Being	There are no direct implications.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no significant impact implications in this report.
Diversity	There are no direct implications
Wards Affected	Brinkburn and Faverdale
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	No significant implications.
Efficiency	The proposal will prevent obstructive parking

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. George Stephenson Drive is a housing estate off the roundabout on West Auckland Road. There are circa 285 properties on the estate comprising of houses and apartments.
9. On-street parking is present and has resulted in issues being raised for a number of years. The on-street parking causes visibility issues daily, which result in road safety concerns for residents and drivers entering and leaving the estate. However, there has been no reported accidents that have resulted in injury.
10. The parking issues have resulted in residents raising concerns and requesting the introduction of waiting restrictions on this section of George Stephenson Drive. The concerns related to the impact parking was having on the visibility and associated potential road safety problems.
11. Officers consulted residents on a scheme to introduce waiting restrictions on George Stephenson Drive and other junctions further into the estate (see plan at Appendix A). This was intended to ensure that traffic could safely enter and leave George Stephenson Drive and to protect junctions off George Stephenson Drive from potential displacement of vehicles.
12. Two residents have made objections to the proposed waiting restrictions. One objector was satisfied with the restrictions up to No.9 George Stephenson Drive but against the proposed restrictions at junctions further into the estate as this would impact on their parking. They were concerned that parking away from their home would endanger their young children when entering/exiting their vehicle.
13. The restrictions around junctions are proposed to avoid parking at locations where vehicles are carrying out manoeuvres with limited visibility of vehicles approaching from the side road and to maintain the flow of traffic. Section 243 of the Highway Code directs drivers to not stop or park opposite or within 10m of a junction, except in an authorised parking space. The restrictions at the junctions reflect this guidance. Any vehicles currently parking within 10m of a junction could be liable to be issued a fixed penalty notice by the Police.
14. The second objector has made a number of representations. The issues raised and an officer response are included in the table below for clarity:

Issue Raised by Resident	Officer Response
Minor inconvenience for road users rather than a hazard.	Parking currently occurs on the inside of a bend on the entrance into the estate, which significantly restricts visibility. Officers consider that this is a road safety hazard.
Most of the kerb space near my house is used for parking. Where will those cars go. I dare say they will be	It is hoped that some residents make greater use of their off street parking and garages. If issues occur further

Issue Raised by Resident	Officer Response
dispersed into Paradise Way etc thus moving the problem/creating a new one.	into the estate we will consider further restrictions.
Would I have bought my house with parking restrictions to the front? No. Therefore the proposals will undoubtedly have an impact on my house price.	The public highway is, in law, for the pass and the repass of members of the public. Residents do not have a right to park outside their property and consequently cannot rely on kerbside parking. The Council will always try and allow parking where it is safe to do so, but in this case the parking is causing road safety issues.
The Council were given money by Bussey and Armstrong for speed humps. None have appeared. One in front of my house would slow traffic and vastly reduce any collision risk.	This is not a material consideration in respect of the proposed restriction. For information officers will be looking to implement traffic calming and will consult on a scheme later in the year.
How many crashes have occurred due to this "hazard"? I haven't seen any in 11 years.	The Council does not hold records of all collisions or incidents. However, there are no reported injury accidents.
Where are the overspill cars from the new flats being built opposite my house going to go?	It is not clear at this stage if there will be overspill parking. This will be addressed in the future if further issues arise.
They do not solve the forward observation issues between numbers 10-15.	Whilst the council could restrict parking along this section it would add to the issues that resident raises above. The scheme is a compromise and officers have had requests from other residents asking for more restrictions. Forward visibility is less of an issue on this section of road as it is away from the bend. Officers will review this arrangement once the restrictions are in place and may propose additional restrictions if they consider that there is a significant hazard.
They will recreate the same scenario on the next curve of the road due to displaced car parking due to the proposals.	Officers will review the impact of the scheme once it has been implemented.

15. It should be noted that the only right the general public have on the public highway is a right of passage along it. The Council, acting in its capacity as the Highway Authority, have a duty of care to ensure the safety of the travelling public and a duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to maintain the expeditious movement of traffic. The Council will generally allow parking where it is considered safe to do so and where it does not impact on performance of the highway.
16. The Ward Councillors have been consulted on the proposals and were aware of the concerns of residents regarding the road safety issues on George Stephenson Drive. The Ward Councillors have worked with officers and are supportive of investigations that have been conducted and the actions to help mitigate these issues that are being proposed.
17. The proposed restrictions will improve the traffic flow and reduce the risk of road traffic accidents.
18. Subject to Cabinet approval, the restrictions will be introduced in accordance with the Council's powers as set out in Part 1 of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984.

Financial Implications

19. The proposal will be funded from the traffic management budget.

Legal Implications

20. The traffic orders have been statutorily advertised for the required period.

Consultation

21. Officers have consulted the residents directly impacted by this proposal. The proposal has also been statutorily advertised in the press, following delegated authority to progress a traffic order.

Outcome of Consultation

22. Two residents have objected to the proposal. One resident fear for the safety of their children if they are forced to park away from their home. The second resident has highlighted possible further issues. If implemented the proposed scheme would be monitored and reviewed.

