

Appeals & Complaints Committee

A meeting of Appeals & Complaints Committee was held on Tuesday, 19th January, 2010.

Present: Cllr Robert Gibson (Chairman), Cllr Aidan Cockerill (vice Cllr Sherris), Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr John Fletcher, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell.

Officers: Julie Butcher, Kelly Maddison-Walshe, Fiona Shayler (LD). Mark Gillson, Ann McLone, Chris Renahan and Gillian Spence (DNS).

Also in attendance: Mr Crutchley (Chairman - Masonic Hall); Steve Williams (Secretary - Masonic Hall).

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Cllr Jean Kirby and Cllr Andrew Sherris.

ACC 8/09 Declarations of Interest

None

ACC 9/09 Procedure

All those present were informed of the procedure for the meetings of the Appeals and Complaints Committee.

RESOLVED that the procedure be noted

ACC 10/09 West Stockton Residents' Parking Scheme

Consideration was given to a report that sought Members' views on unresolved objections received following the statutory advertising of a proposal to implement a Residents Permit Parking Scheme in the area west of Stockton town centre to protect residents from commuter parking.

It was not considered appropriate for the Acting Head of Technical Services to consider the objections as he would be effectively reviewing his own decision.

Following objections received during the statutory consultation all five outstanding objectors were contacted giving more background to the scheme proposals and consultation exercise undertaken, giving the option of withdrawing their objection or attending the Appeals and Complaints Committee. No responses were received indicating that objectors wished to withdraw.

A review of the area to the west of Corporation Street was subsequently undertaken and various options were highlighted within the report.

All objectors had been invited to the Appeals and Complaints Committee. Mr Crutchley and Mr Williams who were objecting on behalf of the Masonic Hall with regard to the parking restrictions on Victoria Street were in attendance.

The desire for a residents parking scheme in the proposed area had been identified via a consultation exercise, the required two thirds of residents in the proposed zone in support of the scheme was achieved.

However, in light of objections received and a response rate of less than 50% in favour of part of the scheme from the most recent consultation exercise, it was proposed to remove various streets from the zone, and proceed with the scheme detailed on Drawing No. TM14/55D at Appendix C of the report. The revised scheme would protect residents in affected remaining streets from commuter parking. It was considered that significant efforts have been made to overcome the outstanding objectors' concerns. The less onerous proposed scheme would not require another statutory consultation exercise inviting objections. The reduced area of the zone would address two of the five outstanding objections and help to address one other objection.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Mr Crutchley and Mr Williams were given the opportunity of addressing the Committee. They felt that it was inappropriate to put day-time parking restrictions on Victoria Street as it was mainly Members of the Masonic Hall that used the Street to park on and it would make it difficult for their Members to park close to the Masonic Hall as there were only limited parking places within the car park. The objectors suggested that restricted parking be placed on one side of Victoria Street only.

Members considered the other objections that had been made with regard to other roads within the scheme.

At this point the objectors and Officers from Development and Neighbourhood Services left the meeting room.

The Committee noted the objections and felt that many of the objectors comments had been met by the Officers amended scheme. With regard to the objection by the Masonic Hall Members felt the it would not be detrimental to the Masonic Hall by placing the day-time parking restrictions on both sides of Victoria Street as it would prevent town centre workers etc. from parking in this area all day. The Street would be free for Masonic Hall Members to use after the parking restrictions ended at 6pm. Members felt that the Head of Technical Services should consider an amendment to the order to include two disabled parking bays in the northern region of Victoria Street.

With regard to the other two remaining objections members were of the view that the concerns did not outweigh the advantages of the order and did not impact on the objectors or residents so greatly that it should warrant upholding the objections.

RESOLVED not to uphold the 5 outstanding objections to the West Residents Parking Scheme as amended in accordance with the report.

Recommended that the Head of Technical Services consider a further scheme to include two disabled parking bays in the northern region of Victoria Street.

ACC
11/09

A177 Durham Road Stockton - Proposed Bus and Pedal Cycle Only Lanes and Speed Limit Reduction to 30 mph

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' views on an unresolved objection, received following statutory advertising of a proposal to implement lengths of 24 hour bus and pedal cycle only lanes and to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph on A177 Durham Road (between Darlington Lane and Harrowgate Lane/B1274 Junction Road), Stockton.

It was not considered appropriate for the Acting Head of Technical Services to consider the objection as he would effectively be reviewing his own decision given this is an agreed scheme, being progressed by Technical Services Division.

The report submitted to Members outlined the full background to the changes.

The proposal advertised, was the intention to reduce the 40mph speed limit to 30mph between Darlington Lane 'Mile House' traffic signals and the 'Horse and Jockey' B1274 Junction Road/Harrowgate Lane roundabout. Also, to provide three lengths of 24 hour bus and pedal cycle only lane on both approaches to Hardwick Road/Redhill Road roundabout and on the southbound approach to the 'Mile House' signals. The existing south to west bus only filter lane at the Hardwick Road arm of the roundabout would be opened to all traffic and a new west to north general left-turn traffic filter lane on Hardwick Road would also be created as part of the scheme.

Following publication of the statutory Notices on site and in local press on 19th November 2009, one objection was formally received during the objection period which expired on 10th December 2009. The objection was received by the Director of Law and Democracy, an exchange of correspondence by email has occurred but the objection could not be resolved and the objector has requested that the matter be referred to the Appeals and Complaints Committee.

The objector was concerned about the potential impact of the proposals for A177 Durham Road upon the B1274 Junction Road. Mr Latimer has contacted various Council departments previously regarding his concerns about B1274 Junction Road.

The objector suggested that motorists seeking the quicker route would choose Junction Road, the B1274 since the proposed improvements are only for bus services and pedal cyclists using A177 Durham Road.

In an additional e mail to his original objection, sent on 16 January, the objector had asked if a specific study to investigate the impact of the advertised proposals upon the adjacent road network had been undertaken and also how the Council plans to discourage motorists using the B1274 instead of A177 if the scheme was implemented. Officers therefore subsequently requested ARUP to undertake further modelling to satisfy the objectors comments. Journey times on A177 between A1027 Ring Road and B1274 Junction Road were modelled for the Do Nothing (existing) and Do Something (bus lanes, etc) scenarios for 2009 and 2015. The modelling indicated no significant adverse change due to the introduction of the proposed measures; in a southbound direction, there was a slight improvement in 2009, and a 4% increase in 2015; however, in a northbound direction there were shown to be significant improvements in general traffic journey times .

The issues identified as part of the grant bid were that buses on Hardwick Road have difficulty joining the A177 Durham Road at peak times and can get delayed during occasional queuing on the A177, again at peak times.

In addition to the 24 hour operational bus lanes, the proposed scheme includes measures to address congestion at the Hardwick Road/Redhill Road roundabout for general traffic, with the creation of a west to north filter lane on the roundabout and opening the existing bus only south to west filter lane to all traffic.

The bus lanes, as advertised, do not cover the entire length in both directions, there were three separate lengths (on both approaches to the Hardwick Road/Redhill Road roundabout and on the southbound approach to the Darlington Lane traffic signals). The affected length of A177 Durham Road is a single carriageway and thereby has one traffic lane operating in either direction at the moment, as part of the proposals a general traffic lane running parallel to the bus lane will remain in order to maintain vehicle capacity. No migration of traffic to other routes, including Junction Road where there were also queues at peak times, were anticipated and therefore did not justify or highlight a need to model the impact of the A177 Durham Road scheme upon B1274 Junction Road or other adjacent road network, however following the objection this was carried out and did not support the concern that there would be any migration of traffic along the B1274.

Queuing and delays occur at the junctions along the road network rather than along the actual links, therefore the advertised reduction in speed limit from 40mph to 30mph and provision of bus lanes should not adversely affect the motorists choice to use the A177 or notably increase queues or delays when travelling along it, particularly since the scheme, as advertised, also included improvements to address general traffic congestion at the roundabout along this link.

The Council was the local highway authority for all roads referred to in the objectors correspondence, as such it was progressing all necessary Traffic Regulation Orders for the schemes. If the objector contacted the Department for Transport directly to object, as he suggested, they would refer the concerns back to the local authority.

The Objector had been advised that the Committee would only consider the merit of his objection to the proposals for A177 Durham Road against the benefits of introducing the scheme. The objector had previously received a full response in connection with the issues he raises regarding B1274 Junction Road from Technical Services and had been advised there was nothing further to add as these issues had been fully investigated.

Existing signing at the 'Horse and Jockey' roundabout (B1274 Junction Road/A177/ Harrowgate Lane) indicates motorists should use B1274 Junction Road for Norton and A177 for Stockton Centre and the University Hospital of North Tees. The only destination signed along Junction Road on the A1027 at the Norton Green roundabout (B1274 Junction Road/A1027/Norton High Street) indicates motorists should use B1274 for Carlton. The signed destinations on the A1027 at the A177/Bypass Road/A1027 roundabout for the A177 are

Sedgefield, Durham and the University Hospital of North Tees.

The signed destinations for the B1274 and A177 indicate the most appropriate routes, they are not the same, traffic was not likely to migrate to B1274 as a result of the proposed scheme since the proposals provide improvements for general traffic. It was not considered feasible that as a result of the scheme motorists would use B1274 instead of A177 to access Stockton Centre from Sedgefield at the 'Horse and Jockey' or that motorists travelling to Durham/Sedgefield from Stockton Centre or A1027 eastbound would continue along the A1027 to avoid the A177 route.

A scheme to address queues on the approach to the A1027 / B1274 Junction Road/Norton Green roundabout was on the list for investigation in Year 2 (2011). The scheme would involve public consultation and may include lengths of bus and pedal cycle only lane and amendments to pedestrian crossing facilities. A list of the proposed schemes for all 3 years was given in Appendix 3, the A177 Durham Road scheme was ref S21 and the B1274 Junction Road scheme was ref S24.

In conclusion, if traffic capacity was less than the demand it was reasonable to accept drivers would seek to use other, alternative routes. The scheme does not reduce traffic capacity on A177, it makes improvements for all traffic at the roundabout along the affected length to address existing congestion issues experienced at peak times. There was sufficient road space to provide lengths of bus and pedal cycle only lane without reducing capacity and thereby the scheme should not adversely affect the motorists choice to use the A177. This was subsequently confirmed by the modelling exercise undertaken. The B1274 Junction Road was an unlikely choice for traffic displacement since it suffered from similar peak hour delays to A177 Durham Road.

The objector had been invited to the meeting but declined to attend and had sent in a written submission which had been presented to the Committee at the meeting.

RESOLVED that the objection shall not be upheld.