

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES

Corporate Director of Local Services - Barry Rowland

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO PARKING RESTRICTIONS FRONT STREET - CORBRIDGE

Purpose of report:

To consider the amendment of the current parking restrictions on Front Street in Corbridge

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Corporate Director of Local Services agrees the proposals set out in the report relating to;

1) The amendment of the current parking restrictions on Front Street in Corbridge

Key issues

- 1) Due to the access requirements for the development of Bridge Bank Cottage on Front Street there is a need to remove a section of parking bays on the opposite side to allow turning manoeuvres to take place.
- 2) Access into Front Street can prove difficult due to the narrow width at the entry and the existing bays do add to the access issue.

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**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO PARKING RESTRICTIONS
FRONT STREET - CORBRIDGE**

BACKGROUND

Introduction

- 1) Front Street runs between the B6321 and the Market Place within Corbridge. The road averages around 5.5 metres in width, therefore a one way system is in operation with parking bays marked out on the North side only. The parking bays form a combination of Pay and Display parking and Resident Permit Holders. The times of operation are Monday – Saturday 9am – 6pm, maximum stay 2 hours with Resident permit Holders accepted. The charges for none permit holders equate to 30p for half hour, 50p for 1 hour and £1 for 2 hours. 'No Waiting at Any Time' restrictions run at various intervals on both sides where it is considered unsafe or unsuitable to park.
- 2) The original Traffic Regulation Order for Front Street formed part of the 'Town Centre Pay and Display Parking, No Waiting at Any Time, Prohibition of Driving, and One Way Street' Order introduced in April 2006. A working group was established prior to its conception consisting of the Corbridge Village Trust, the Town Council, the Parish Council and County Council Representatives. Full consultation was held with those affected by the proposals.
- 3) At the time of implementation and indeed ever since there has been an access on the south side of Front Street that was brought into neglect through lack of use. Subsequently bays were introduced on the opposite side to maximise parking availability. The issue has never been questioned until now since work has begun on developing the site and making use of the access. Since the access has been in place long before the restrictions imposed, Northumberland County Council has a responsibility to ensure safe access is established.

Consultation

- 4) Amendments to the existing Traffic Regulation Orders that will address the access issue were then considered. Consultation was carried out with a proposal to remove a 15 metre section of parking bay opposite the access and replace it with No Waiting at Any Time Restrictions as shown on Appendix 1.
- 5) 62 Consultation letters were sent out to those affected on Front Street and associated statutory bodies. 11 responded in favour whilst 3 were against (See Appendix 2). Those in favour suggested the proposed changes will make access to Front Street easier as at present it can often prove difficult to pass. Those against cited the increased pressure on parking due to the loss of parking allocation, the potential increase in speeds and use by Heavy good Vehicles. The increase in speed is

considered negligible at this particular section due the relatively steep gradient where the bays would be removed. Speed surveys and traffic count surveys will however be requested both before and after the scheme if indeed it is recommended to proceed. Taking everything into consideration, on balance, the removal of parking is considered necessary for the purpose of improving road safety and providing access that should otherwise have always been made available.

- 6) A report was submitted to the Planning and Environment Committee on 4th June with a recommendation to make the amendments to the existing TRO. The Committee resolved to accept these recommendations and as such, notice of the intention to make the Order was published in the Hexham Courant and on site between 12th July and 3rd august 2013. During that time two further objections were received.
- 7) The first objection simply re-asserted the original objection and those concerns have been considered in a previous report therefore they will not be discussed again. Speed surveys were requested and will be carried out both before and after the proposed changes to assess any fluctuation in speed. The second objection also emphasised points previously considered but added that the public rights pre-date the construction of the access. The access was in place prior to the introduction of the parking restrictions and therefore the Council have a duty to ensure it can be accessed safely. A request is then made to install an access in an alternative place to allow the restriction to remain. The County Council cannot impart requests on the developer when an access is already present and suitable for use.

Conclusion

- 8) As such, the original recommendations remain to amend the existing restrictions by removing a section of bays to improve accessibility along Front Street itself and into the new development.
- 9) The Council has the power to hold a public inquiry before making a traffic regulation order. Such an inquiry might enable disputed evidence to be tested under cross-examination and the need for an order to be critically examined by an independent inspector. In this particular case, officers believe that the extensive consultation process and involvement with interested parties, means that such an inquiry is unlikely to bring any fresh information to light and it is therefore recommended that an inquiry is not held.

Appendix 1 – Consultation Plan and Proposal
Appendix 2 – Consultation Summary

BACKGROUND PAPERS

File Ref: M/E/2/107/2

IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

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| Policy: | None |
| Finance and value for money | To be financed by the Local Transport Fund |
| Human Resources: | None |
| Property | None |
| Equalities | None |
| Risk Assessment | Residential use |
| Sustainability | None. |
| Crime & Disorder | None |
| Customer Considerations: | Motorists and residents will be required to comply with the restrictions proposed. |
| Consultation | Emergency Services, Road User Organisations, County Councillor for the area. |
| Wards | Corbridge ED |

DECISION TAKEN

Title of Executive Member or Officer(s):*

Deidre Campbell – Policy Board Member,
Streetcare and Environment

Subject:

*PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO PARKING
RESTRICTIONS
FRONT STREET - CORBRIDGE*

Consultation

15 Responses
11 For
3 Against
1 Neither

Decision Taken:

*TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT OF THE
CURRENT PARKING RESTRICTION ON
FRONT STREET IN CORBRIDGE*

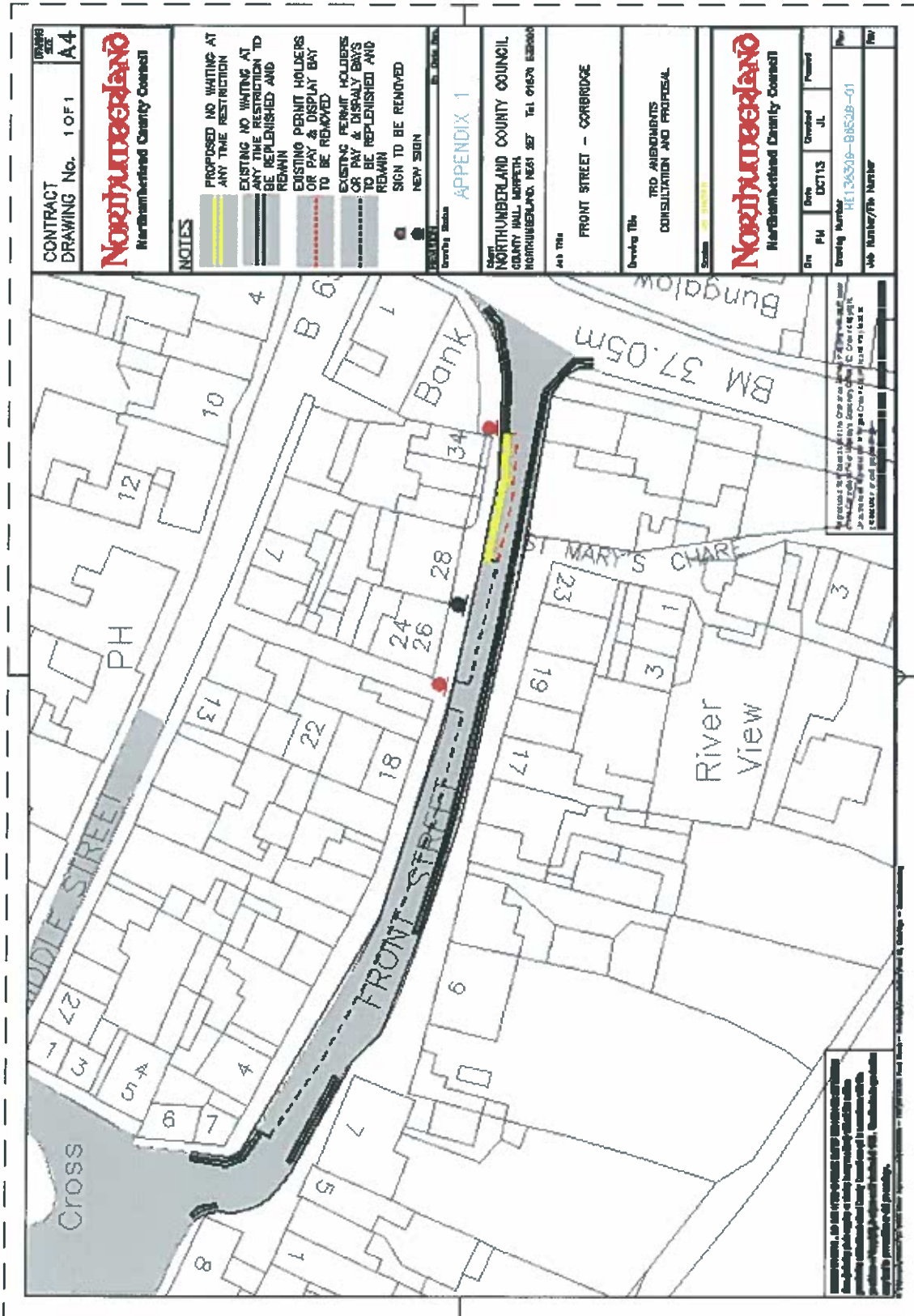
Signature of Corporate Director



Date

18/10/13

Appendix 1 – Consultation Plan and Proposal



Appendix 2 – Consultation Summary

| FOR | AGAINST | NEITHER | APPENDIX 2 - CONSULTATION SUMMARY - FRONT STREET |
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| 1 | | | The parking access to Bridge End house has been a problem waiting for a solution. The change will also help the turn into Front Street, which is not easy. I can understand there will be concern at the loss of parking bays, but on balance I support the proposed amendments. |
| | | 1 | I would inform you that as an emergency service we may be required to use the above road for access and egress in the event of being activated to attend an emergency call, or to convey patients to hospital for out-patient appointments. I would thank you for your consultation on this matter and offer our support for the on-going road safety programme. |
| 1 | | | After talking to Mr McKenna, I understand that these proposals are more of a "tidy up" legal procedure. As I live in the middle of the "gap" at 1-5 Front Street where 3 residents cars are usually parked, I am clearly affected but, as it looks as though the same 3 cars can continue to use this space, I support the proposal. |
| 1 | | | The drive entry should be recessed. |
| 1 | | | Very necessary amendments for Bridge Bank Cottage owners and vehicle users entering the street, plus emergency services. |
| 1 | | | Definitely a good proposal. However, I would suggest that you increased the no waiting section opposite Bridge Bank Cottage, for an additional 20ft so as to avoid a possible bottle neck where the street widens. |
| 1 | | | Corbridge village trust has been pressing, since early 2012 to have the no waiting at any time restriction extended at the east end of Front Street. We fully understood that until this restriction was in place access into and out of the property was impossible for vehicular traffic, bearing in mind the narrow turning circle offered due to vehicles, often out of bay, parked opposite the entrance. Consequently we welcome and support the proposal to extend the no waiting at any time restriction at the east end of Front Street. |
| 1 | | | My address is Main Street but my house is on the corner and looks across to Bridge Bank Cottage, which has been derelict and neglected for years. I welcome the proposal to remove the parking bays at the east end of Front Street, both as a means of allowing the refurbishment of Bridge Bank Cottage to take place and as a contribution to road safety and improved traffic flow. It is indeed true that the east end of Front Street is very narrow and parking in the bays in question can cause significant problems. The bottleneck at this point can prevent easy access for traffic turning into Front Street and an obstruction here has a knock on effect on traffic flow throughout the centre of the village. |
| | 1 | | I do not support the proposed changes. The removal of the parking bays opposite Bridge Bank Cottages rear garden will put additional pressure on the existing parking in the street. As a permanent resident of Front Street I already find it difficult to secure a parking space on the street. I am 84 years old and disabled, I have previously applied to you for a disabled parking space to no avail. I would propose that Front Street is made residents parking only. The lack of a loading bay for the "Artisam" restaurant opposite my house forces delivery vehicles to mount the pavement in front of my house, causing increased damage to the paving slabs and a health and safety risk to myself and other pedestrians. I cannot support his amendment as it will make my life even more difficult. |
| 1 | | | The existing arrangement makes Front Street far too narrow. What about widening the pavement on the north side at the same time? |

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| 1 | | The development of Bridge Bank Cottage is long overdue bearing in mind the time it has lain derelict and its prominent position in Corbridge. The proposed changes to the parking in Front Street will enable this development to proceed. |
| 1 | | The proposal is vital for the elimination of an eye-sore in a very visible place in the village. |
| 1 | | As well as providing satisfactory access to Bridge Bank Cottage this proposal will eliminate a long-standing problem of access to Front Street for emergency vehicles. Ever since the pay and display parking arrangements were put in place access to Front Street has been frequently obstructed. Access for fire engines and ambulances would have been difficult / impossible. Implementation of these proposals is long overdue. |
| | 1 | <p>I write as joint owner of the above property in regard to your letter addressed to 'The Occupier' dated 02/04/2012, which the tenant occupier of the property kindly copied to me last week. In your letter you refer to a need to remove the section of street parking outside Nos. 30-34 Front Street to allow turning manoeuvres to take place in conjunction with the development of Bridge Bank Cottage. In the absence of further clarification, this appears to refer to the physical development (i.e. the carrying out of works). I raise no objection, in principle, to a temporary restriction of this parking to facilitate access for building works to that property. A temporary restriction being all that is required for that purpose. You then add that <i>'concerns have been raised regarding the original citing (sic) of those bays, because the road is narrow and has in the past caused problems for road users'</i>, on which grounds alone (apparently, from the wording of your letter) the Council now proposes that these bays be permanently removed. I shall be grateful if you will please note and consider my objection to any permanent removal of these bays, and the elimination of parking in this section of road, for the following reasons: 1. The parking outside Nos. 30-34 has always existed and has, hitherto, clearly been considered safe by the Council, as evidenced by the Council's designation of this for 'pay and park' from 2006. 2. It is accepted that there is a narrowing of the street at the north west corner of the Bridge Bank Cottage site but it is nevertheless wide enough, when cars are parked on the north side of the road, to allow adequate access for users of Front Street. 3. As a former Corbridge resident and property owner for most of the past forty years, I am not aware of the narrowness causing any safety issue. Indeed, coupled with the parking, it has the advantage of greatly reducing the speed of vehicles entering the street.</p> <p>However, you say in your third paragraph that removal of the parking is being considered 'to avoid danger to persons or other traffic using the road', when such removal would obviously allow vehicles to enter the street at higher speed while also potentially creating an attractive shortcut/rat-run, resulting in increased traffic and thereby greater risk of accident. Furthermore, while the pavement in front of 30-34 Front Street is narrow, pedestrians using this pavement are protected from passing traffic by the existence of the parking bays and parked cars. Removal of the parking, thereby allowing moving vehicles to pass close to the pavement, would clearly increase the potential danger to pedestrians. As also, in the absence of the parking bays, would any vehicle swinging wide and close to the pavement while trying to manoeuvre into, or out of, the 8'6" gate opening of Bridge Bank Cottage. On occasion, the front elevations of Nos. 30-34 require access for maintenance (gutter cleaning, painting etc.) and this is possible by ladder via judicious parking of vehicles to protect workmen. Removal of the parking would cause difficulty and a potential safety problem in this regard. 4. There is already a severe shortage of parking places in Corbridge and it seems essential for the maximum benefit of residents, visitors and the local businesses that the Council should seek to create/retain as many spaces as possible. 5. The gateway from Front Street into the garden of Bridge Bank Cottage has been relatively little used in the past and it is puzzling how it has been considered safe and fit for purpose in relation to what is now proposed for development at the rear of the property,</p> |

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| | | <p>even without parked vehicles opposite. Appropriate, safe access / egress for a vehicle, in keeping with the</p> <p>Conservation area, could be created by removal of an appropriate section the Bridge Bank Cottage garden walls(s), without need for removal of the parking opposite. So far as appears evident by online enquiry, the Listing of Bridge Bank Cottage does not refer to the garden walls being of any historic importance and relates only to the Bridge Bank Cottage building. That the Council should propose that Nos. 30-34 Front Street, and the village and its various businesses, be permanently deprived of the amenity of this long-established parking for three vehicles, and of the considerable benefits which this parking provides, for the purpose of allowing vehicle access to an extent that has never existed in the past, solely for the (very significant) benefit of Bridge Bank Cottage, seems inappropriate, unnecessary, unjust, unjustifiable and disproportionate. I propose that the bays should not be removed, allowing the current planning consent on Bridge Bank Cottage to lapse, or a revised planning application entertained to include an access design that does not interfere with the parking opposite and which is not to the detriment of other persons, businesses and property. Should there be no alternative to the removal of the designation of these bays, I would propose that no parking restriction should apply to this section of Front Street, allowing cars to park there at no charge, thereby reverting the situation to that which always existed prior to 2006.</p> |
| | 1 | <p>I do not support these proposals. I have serious concerns about these proposals on the grounds they pose an increased risk to pedestrians, residents and drivers, as follows: The bridge end of Front Street is a steep, sharp bend and, as such, already a dangerous turn for traffic approaching from either direction. From the south, it is a blind corner. If this access to the road is widened by eliminating the parking spaces, it will increase the numbers of heavy vehicles using Front Street as a thoroughfare into the village via the market square at a rate to which the turning, the street and the market square are entirely unsuited. The traffic lights on the bridge mean that traffic already gets back up. The backing up will be increased by more vehicles turning into Front Street from the bridge end, particularly by the manoeuvres of heavy vehicles. The provision for access to Bridge Bank Cottage via Front Street is dangerously close to the blind corner (as approached from the south). This poses an increased safety risk, which will be exacerbated by heavy vehicles turning into the street. NB The steep gradient means that vehicles need to accelerate as they turn. Even if the parking spaces opposite are removed as proposed, there will be little room in the road for vehicles to manoeuvre safely into and out of the property. The narrowness of bridge end of the road (historically known as Narrowgate) has historically acted to deter large vehicles using Front Street as a thoroughfare into the village via the market square. This currently helps to moderate the already significant congestion in the square. However, it does not prevent it, as large vehicles attempting to enter the street today appear to be relying on sat nav directions rather than local knowledge.</p> <p>Finally, loss of these parking spaces, in a village which already suffers from a dearth of provision, will be to the detriment of local residents, businesses and visitors. All these issues but the last might be addressed by measures to limit heavy vehicles from entering Front Street, with the usual exceptions for emergency service vehicles, refuse, deliveries, removal etc, and allowance of temporary suspensions for purposes of construction. Not only would this help to counter the additional risks presented by the proposed changes, but it would help to reduce existing problems caused by large vehicles attempting to drive on a road which is wholly unsuited to such vehicles at either end. A splayed entrance to Bridge Bank Cottage would also counter the significant risks inherent to the current design and allow the parking spaces to be retained.</p> |
| 11 | 3 | 1 |