

## RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DELIVERY

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### THE FUTURE OF MARYGATE, BERWICK FOLLOWING EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

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#### **Purpose of report:**

To consider feedback following the expiry of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order at Marygate, Berwick.

#### **Recommendations:**

**It is recommended that a permanent Traffic Regulation Order is NOT introduced following the expiry of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order.**

#### **Key issues**

- 1) An Experimental Order which restored short term parking on Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed expired on 31 January 2016.
- 2) Comments were invited throughout the duration of the scheme; an article in the Berwick Advertiser in December 2015 also encouraged members of the public to provide feedback so a decision could be made on the future of Marygate.
- 3) None of the comments received supported the scheme.
- 4) County Councillor Jones and Berwick Town Council are satisfied with the decision to remove short term parking from Marygate following the expiry of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order.
- 5) Parking Restrictions which were in place prior to the Experimental Order being introduced will now automatically return.
- 6) All road marking and signs to be removed / amended as necessary to aid enforcement of original parking restrictions.
- 7) An alternative proposal(s) for Marygate can be considered in a future Local Transport Plan Programme, as appropriate.

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## **BACKGROUND**

- 1) A Northern Area Committee Working Group asked that an Experimental Order be instigated on Marygate to restore some short term parking to the street in response to a petition submitted to the Northern Area Committee from residents and visitors to the town.
- 2) Unlike a Permanent Order where a formal consultation is undertaken, the experimental order offers a more flexible approach. An Experimental Order is effectively a 12 month consultation, as such feedback was welcomed throughout the duration of the Order in order to collate information and make an informed decision at the end of this experiment.
- 3) Neither County Councillor Jones nor Berwick Town Council formally responded or provided comment to the Experimental Order. However, I have spoken to Councillor Jones and he is satisfied with the decision to remove the short term parking. Berwick Town Council have recently confirmed by email that they also support this decision.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4) Bearing in mind the negative comments received in relation to the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, it is recommended that a permanent Traffic Regulation Order is not made. Therefore loading bays will return to Marygate and short term parking will no longer be permitted.
- 5) From the outset, the County Council has endeavoured to respond positively to local concerns raised in this area and it is inevitable that some sections of the community will be dissatisfied with whichever decision is reached. Considering the negative feedback relating to the restoration of short term parking by way of an Experimental Order, it is therefore recommended that a Permanent Traffic Regulation Order is not introduced. Parking Restrictions which were in place prior to the Experimental Order being introduced will now automatically return.
- 6) An alternative proposal(s) for Marygate can be considered in a future Local Transport Plan Programme as appropriate alongside other town centre initiatives. A parking study for Berwick Town Centre has already been commissioned to be carried out in 2016/17 and this will include consideration of parking on Marygate.
- 7) The Council has the power to hold a public inquiry before making any 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 by way of Experimental Traffic Regulation Order 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 INDEX**

Appendix 1 – Summary of Responses Received

Appendix 2 – Copy of Email from Town Council

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

none

## **IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT**

<b>Policy:</b>	Consistent with existing policies
<b>Finance and value for money:</b>	N/A
<b>Human Resources:</b>	N/A
<b>Property:</b>	N/A
<b>Equalities:</b>	N/A
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	N/A
<b>Crime and Disorder:</b>	N/A
<b>Customer Considerations:</b>	N/A
<b>Sustainability:</b>	N/A
<b>Consultation:</b>	Experimental Order in place for 12 months. Article in Berwick Advertiser requested that comments be sent to Highways Programmes team.
<b>Wards:</b>	Berwick North

## DECISION TAKEN

**Title of Director:**

Acting Director of Local Services and Housing  
Delivery

**Subject:**

Introduction of Permanent Traffic Regulation Order,  
Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

**Decision Taken:**

A permanent Traffic Regulation Order will NOT be  
introduced following the expiry of the Experimental  
Traffic Regulation Order.

**Signature of Director**



**Date**



## APPENDIX 1 - SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RECEIVED

Thoroughfare	FOR	AGAINST	NEITHER	Other Relevant Comments
	0	1	0	<p>Just my opinion regarding parking on Marygate. At the present moment, the arrangements are an absolute shambles. If short term parking is to be retained, surely some work needs done to get vehicles off the highway, just now it is sometimes impossible to get down the street. The wardens also need to police the street better, and not just appear every couple of hours, as can be observed at present. Many days it is totally congested, with no place for vans loading or unloading. Total mess at present, a free for all, quite surprised nobody has been seriously hurt.</p>
	0	1	0	<p>In response to the article in the Advertiser this week in respect of the above.</p> <p>In our opinion we feel the parking on Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed causes unnecessary obstruction to Marygate as the parking bays are not used correctly and cars protrude onto the road. They are also used on market days, which wasn't permitted in the past.</p> <p>If parking was to be re-introduced permanently on Marygate, the previous 'angled' bays as they were in the past would be better.</p>
Grange Road	0	1	0	<p>The short-term parking on Marygate should be cancelled. The cars parking there cause a number of problems:- It is difficult and dangerous for pedestrians to cross the street, they have to look out between cars in order to cross and are often only seen by motorists travelling down Marygate at the last minute. Many motorists parking their cars do not park within the white lines, their cars intrude into a busy main road and then the drivers open their doors causing even further obstructions. Marygate only allows, at the best of times, one vehicle to travel in each direction. With cars parking at the side of the road and especially on market days, it is often limited to vehicles travelling in one direction only causing traffic jams, delays and dangerous situations. The above problems are leading to some conflicts between road users and pedestrians trying to cope with the system as it is now, with bollards in their current position. Please stop the current short-stay parking on Marygate and make Berwick-upon-Tweed a safer place to shop and walk, before there is a serious accident.</p>
Callers Court		1		<p>As Requested in today's Berwick Advertiser I respond to give my opinion on Marygate short stay Parking. I am <u>AGAINST</u> the present Marygate parking experiment as it only serves to exacerbate the already disastrously designed street layout. The changed layout left Berwick with probably the world's widest pavement alongside a ridiculously narrow High Street Highway. There is ample street width to accommodate safe pedestrian movement, angled car parking and free flowing traffic.</p>

			<p>Dear Gavin,</p> <p>Do tells me you are collecting people's views on parking in Marygate, so here is my two pennorth.</p> <p>I consider it an unmitigated disaster. Very few extra spaces have been made available, perhaps a dozen or so: this at the expense of safety and amenity.</p> <p>The spaces are short, but almost all drivers try to drive in forwards. There might be a neater outer parking line if everyone reversed in, but traffic congestion and the ominous bollards deter everyone I have seen from attempting this. Hence we have a ragged edge, which can actually impede cars travelling down the street.</p> <p>Many drivers seem to believe there is a divine right to open their door at any time without any consideration for safety, their own and others. Pedestrians obviously find it difficult to cross safely and equally obviouly drivers find it harder to spot someone waiting to cross almost hidden between parked cars.</p> <p>All this is in the context of free parking in the rest of the town. Far from encouraging visitors this policy has meant that the long stay car park on the Quayside is full up with residents on their way to work by 9 am; the Parade show a similar congestion only a little later.</p> <p>Very best wishes</p>
Caslte Drive	1		<p>Cllr Jones</p> <p>The Berwick Advertiser last week quoted you asking for views on the above:</p> <p>I remain resolutely opposed to this scheme. In addition to the legitimate and illegitimate clutter in the area (on which I have emailed you before; I have heard nothing from NCC), moving and parked cars are a further unpleasant hazard.</p> <p>Can there be another town in the industrialised world which is trying to encourage more vehicles to its centre?</p> <p>I now avoid the centre as much as possible. I find it more pleasant to walk to the supermarkets. What a brilliant own-goal!</p> <p>Regards</p>
Newfields	1		<p>We the undersigned do not agree with the High Street Parking. It now causes more congestion than the old way.</p>
			<p>Dear Gavin</p> <p>Just my opinion regarding parking on Marygate. At the present moment, the arrangements are an absolute shambles. If short term parking is to be retained, surely some work needs done to get vehicles off the highway, just now it is sometimes impossible to get down the street. The wardens also need to police the street better, and not just appear every couple of hours, as can be observed at present. Many days it is totally congested, with no place for vans loading or unloading. Total mess at present, a free for all, quite surprised nobody has been seriously hurt.</p>



				<p>regarding review of short term parking arrangements on berwick high street we agree it is a "half baked idea" and feel there should be no parking on the high street except for the disabled which already exists. as a driver and pedestrian it is very dangerous and stops the flow of traffic.</p> <p>when the review takes place we feel these short term bays should be removed before a serious accident happens</p>
				<p>You have invited comments on the experimental parking arrangements in Berwick's Marygate.</p> <p>It is no surprise there is congestion and confusion. The half on, half off arrangement, is, patently half-baked. However, as residents who remember the congestion, hold ups and frustration when parking was previously allowed in Marygate, we could have easily forecast this would not work.</p> <p>There has to be some provision for genuinely disabled drivers and passengers, but why anyone else cannot walk from any of the nearby car parks is a mystery. Lack of car parking is not to blame for the demise of the High Street, which, like many other small towns, is due to the rise of internet shopping, greedy landlords demanding grossly excessive rents and the consequent fall in the viability of attractive independent shops. Rate-free concessions have meant the dominance of charity shops.</p> <p>Another report out this week reveals the hardly surprising £667,000 loss in the county's parking revenue. The parking charges were modest in the first place and residents could buy a very economical annual pass. However, the main result has been that local workers occupy every available space from early morning, leaving no space for tourists and visitors.</p> <p>Thus, at a stroke the measure has deprived the town of valuable visitor revenue and the county of funding for other services.</p> <p>I hope this gives you an alternative view from that of shopkeepers who believe free and almost adjacent parking is the answer to their financial ills.</p>
	0	6	0	

Other Relevant Comments

Prior to this present scheme, cars were parked, all the way down the street on both sides of Marygate. One side the cars parked diagonally, usually with their noses to the pavement. This made crossing the road very difficult and dangerous as people had to squeeze between parked cars. No consideration at all was given to people with pushchairs, wheelchair users and the disabled. This hazard was exacerbated by cars reversing into on-coming traffic, causing many incidents both with pedestrians and other vehicles. Consequently, the layout was changed by widening the pavement down one side of the road to provide a greater pedestrian space, and an allocated area for disabled parking. This works well. However, delivery problems were never addressed - vans were allowed to park half on the pedestrian area, half on the road just up from the Guildhall. This situation was made much worse and extremely dangerous when short-stay parking was also allowed to occupy this space - this is an accident waiting to happen. The reasons being - parking intruding onto the road, narrows the width and hinders the flow of the two-way traffic. Cars are rarely parked within their allocated white boundary, it creates another hazard and no penalties are applied. Doors are opened without due care and attention into moving traffic. Children and belongings are unloaded on the side with moving traffic i.e. on the road. Cars dart across the road in front of on-coming vehicles to secure a parking space - cars do u-turns when leaving. - less space for deliveries, necessitating double parking or large packages being carried down the street. Pedestrians still have to walk between cars. The action of parking and leaving in what is essentially a pedestrian area adjacent to a busy road is risky and undesirable. It has been suggested that bollards be removed to revert back to diagonal parking, down toward the Guildhall - as previously, this will still be dangerous. Probably more so as cars will need to reverse further to negotiate getting past the Guildhall. **This area in front of the Guildhall, with its steps and seating is an essential amenity space.** At present Marygate appears cluttered and uninviting. Without the parked cars, the visual appearance of the street would be greatly improved. It would give a balanced aspect from the Golden Square roundabout down to the imposing Guildhall, creating interest, and enticing visitors into Berwick. Visitors and shoppers are seriously disadvantaged in seeing what's on offer in Marygate as a result of the constant wall of vehicles parked down the centre of the street (it is visually clearer to see across a street, than to see what's ahead on the same side of street, because of foreshortened vision). Priority should be given to pedestrians and shoppers. It would be a great amenity for the Town Centre and an enjoyable space for visitors to sit and linger, and children to run around safely without having to worry about cars parking. **Do we really need this extra parking?** There are lots of free parking spaces just behind the Marygate - for instance in

These comments may be late for consideration, for which I apologise: A move to provide vertical or angled parking space is, in my opinion, a retrograde step, for the following reasons: 1 Restricted movement between parked cars for wheelchair & pram/pushchair users. This will reduce crossing areas and probably cause more damage to cars through pedestrian or car to car contact. 2 Restricted vision of on-coming traffic for both pedestrians & reversing vehicles. It is not safe to be attempting to cross between potentially reversing, moving, vehicles, or to reverse out into traffic. 3 Every car reversing out will halt traffic, often in both directions, causing a bottle neck reaching back to the Golden Square roundabout. This is a version of the old system which did result in incidents, mercifully, not serious at that time. However there was an occasion when a driver's foot slipped, the car shot across the road, stopping with inches of a shop front on the opposite pavement. If anyone had been on the pavement they would almost certainly have been killed. Removing the bollards & widening the spaces for horizontal parking will reduce pavement size, squeezing pedestrians back to a restricted area. Unless parking controls are rigorously enforced on market days, (not currently happening) it will again make crossing the road a very dangerous hazard. There are no clearly defined or regulated safe crossing areas. That lack may reduce street furniture & attempt to retain what slight character is left to the town centre, but does little to promote safety. There are no easy solutions to this decades old, hotly debated, but I would suggest that "biting the bullet" retaining the existing disabled spaces & loading bays opposite, then dispensing with all other street parking between 8 am to 6 pm would create a safer environment with freer flowing traffic. Berwick is not the only UK town facing these problems. Surely some others have come up

I am responding on behalf of the Berwick chamber of trade in my capacity as vice chairman. The parking trial that has been carried out in Marygate over the last year has been very disappointing. The way that the parking places were arranged on the street was possibly the worst layout being half on the road and half on the pavement. The opinion of the chamber of trade is that bollards should be removed allowing parking to be returned to Marygate with the cars parked nose in to the pavement. At the moment this form of parking works very well for the disabled parking at the top of Marygate.

Kind regards,



## APPENDIX 2 – COPY OF EMAIL FROM TOWN COUNCIL

**From:** [Town Clerk](#)  
**Sent:** 13/06/2016 17:37  
**To:** [Margaret Robinson](#)  
**Cc:** [Richard Mckenzie](#)  
**Subject:** Original Default position of car parking in Marygate

Dear Margaret

Councillors have held a short meeting today to discuss free car parking issues and also the experiment in Marygate which you advised some time ago was coming to an end but which has continued on.

Council agreed at Committee some time ago to get rid of it.

Councillors are asking at today's meeting if we could have confirmation of what the original default position was which was when the parking was parked 'head in' on Marygate instead of as current, which is facing down the street where car owners are opening their car doors out into the traffic therefore causing accidents and problems re oncoming traffic. The bollards were never removed as promised and the experiment was never properly actioned as was agreed formerly.

Best regards  
Wendy

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