



Northumberland

County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY SERVICE DIRECTOR - LOCAL SERVICES

Paul Jones - Service Director - Local Services

PROPOSED EXPERIMENTAL PROHIBITION OF DRIVING, NARROWGATE, ALNWICK

Cabinet Member: Councillor Glen Sanderson

Purpose of Report

To consider a proposal to implement an experimental 'Prohibition of Driving' traffic regulation order on a section of Narrowgate in Alnwick, in order to trial the closure of this section of road to vehicular traffic.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the proposed experimental Prohibition of Driving order be implemented for a period of 18 months, this will allow for gathering feedback at the end of the experiment.

Link to Corporate Plan

Living - "We want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for"
Enjoying - "We want you to love where you live"

Key Issues

The County Council is working with Alnwick Town Council, Alnwick Forum and other stakeholders to improve the town centre environment.

One of the key projects is the closure of Narrowgate to through traffic, in order to enhance the streetscene for pedestrians and support local traders.

Delegated decisions

It is proposed to implement a closure on a trial basis initially, so that its impact can be assessed before a decision is made on whether to make it permanent or not.

Delegated decisions

Background

1. The County Council is working with Alnwick Town Council, Alnwick Forum and other stakeholders to improve the town centre environment.
2. One of the key projects is the closure of Narrowgate to through traffic, in order to enhance the streetscene for pedestrians and support local traders.
3. Narrowgate connects Bondgate Within to The Peth/Baillifgate and is part of a 'through route' used by traffic passing through the town centre. Its location is shown in Figure 1.

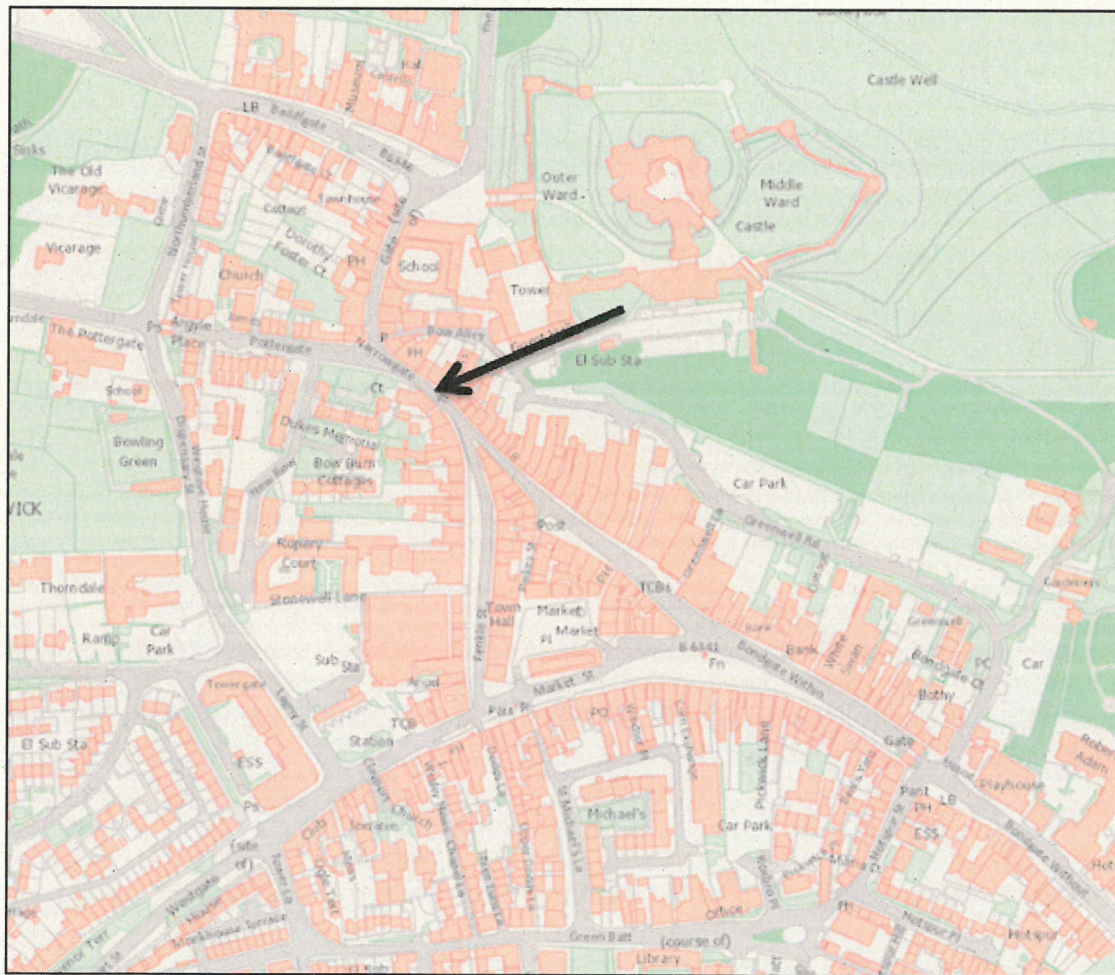


Fig.1. Narrowgate Location Plan.

4. The section of Narrowgate that is proposed to be closed is shown hatched red in Figure 2. This is the narrowest section (approx. 3.8 metres) and traffic operates an informal 'give and take' system. Figures 2 and 4 show views from both directions.

Delegated decisions



Fig.2. Location of proposed Prohibition of Driving restriction.



Fig.3. Looking west from Bondgate Within.

Delegated decisions



Fig.4. Looking east into the narrowest section. The proposed closure will start here and traffic will use Fenkle Street, to the right.

5. No waiting at any time parking restrictions are in place on both sides of the road through the section proposed for closure. A 7.5 tonne weight restriction (with an exemption for delivery vehicles) is also in place.
6. The proposal to close the road to traffic was put forward by Alnwick Town Council and was subsequently taken forward through Alnwick Forum.
7. Alnwick Forum held two public consultation events at which the proposals were displayed and members of the public were able to submit their views. At the first event, on 17th November 2018, three potential options for change were shown: a simple upgrade to the existing environment, one-way traffic and full pedestrianisation. Those who attended were asked to state which option they preferred. 233 people took part. The results were:

No change: 23 (10%)

Upgrade: 20 (8%)

One-way: 35 (15%)

Pedestrianisation: 155 (67%)

Delegated decisions

8. The results were discussed with Alnwick Town Council in January 2019 where it was agreed that the pedestrianisation option would be taken forward for further consideration. Initially a closure would be put in place on a trial basis so that its impact can be assessed before a decision is made on whether or not to make it permanent.
9. At the second Forum event held on 23rd March 2019 the results from the previous event were displayed and attendees were able to put forward suggestions for the use of the space created by pedestrianisation. A summary of these suggestions is shown in Appendix A.
10. Officers visited all commercial premises on Narrowgate and Bondgate Within to speak to traders about the proposal and to ascertain their loading requirements. Those who were unavailable at the time were left a survey form to complete and return.
11. The premises on the north side of the road receive deliveries from Greenwell Road to the rear. Those on the south side of the road receive deliveries from the front, however, these mainly use cars or vans which are able to turn in Bondgate Within.
12. Traders were also asked whether they felt that changes were needed to the street environment in Narrowgate/Bondgate Within. 67% of those who responded said yes, 33% said no.
13. An experimental traffic regulation order (TRO) to prevent vehicles from using Narrowgate will allow time for the effect of the closure to be assessed, including the impact on the surrounding road network. The TRO will last for 18 months, to allow enough time for the experiment and to gather feedback, but the order can be revoked at any time if necessary. It is intended to leave the trial closure in place through the busy summer months and on into the Autumn when the town is less busy, so that a full picture of the impact can be gathered.
14. Traffic counters and surveys will be carried out to gather evidence on the impact of the trial closure, and regular contact will be maintained with local traders and the Town Council.
15. A website has been set up to provide information on the trial and to allow people to make comments and put forward ideas. The website is: <https://alnwick.stickyworld.com/home>
16. Alnwick Chamber of Trade and a number of Narrowgate traders are considering ways the space can be used during the closure (e.g. performances, displays, etc), and the County Council will support this effort wherever possible.

Delegated decisions

17. Planters will be used to physically close the road to vehicles in order to make the environment pleasant and make it clear that pedestrians are still able to use the space.
18. The exact end date of the closure will be determined following analysis of the effects, local feedback and the decision on whether to make the closure permanent or not.

Implications Arising out of the Report

Policy	None
Finance and value for money	The scheme will be funded through the Local Transport Plan Programme.
Legal	Motorists will be required to comply with the Traffic Regulation Order which, as a moving traffic order, will be enforced by Northumbria Police.
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None
Risk Assessment	The proposal has been developed to improve public safety as well as the street scene within Narrowgate
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	Local residents and traders have been consulted.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	Alnwick

Background papers:

File ref: HE163308

Delegated decisions

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that relevant officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	n/a
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Director	
Portfolio Holder(s)	

Report Author

Richard McKenzie – Senior Programmes Officer

Delegated decisions

Appendix A - Comments/Suggestions made at Alnwick Forum 23/03/19

Support testing benefits of pedestrianisation through a trial period. Bondgate is used as a street market during festival weekend, please bear this in mind when deciding trial.

The trial should be for one year, so it takes into account the winter period, not just seasonal, i.e. summer.

Street furniture could also include wind protection, terrace division, awnings etc, helping to create a place where people can linger in comfort in a pleasant environment - see places such as the Netherlands.

Try and reduce cars, more pedestrianisation, trees and planters, and surely by now the archway should/could be one-way! Is there no way to get a one way system, perhaps even using the Greenwell Lane parking area as a 'way through' could be envisaged?

Fabulous Idea!! Pedestrianisation is definitely the way forward. Will benefit all the businesses down Narrowgate.

Recycling bins.

How about 2-seater swings (like in Alnwick gardens)?

Planting, seating, litter bins (inc dog poo bins), lighting - for example soft uplighting in large planters highlighting trees. String bunting/lights between trees planted to create a warm and attractive environment.

Seating.

cycle parking is very important, could also investigate more secure style cycle parking as in London.

Please have more nature. Less plastic in shops. More recycle bags and bins and you need more trees.

Yes! A-boards, pleasant seating areas and opportunity for businesses to further contribute to a vibrant and inviting shopping area and pedestrianisation means access will be safe for visually impaired etc.

Great concept. Fully support it. Possible short stay (15 mins) parking outside chemists.

Pedestrianisation is a great idea. It will encourage people to browse, utilise F & B places and enjoy spending time in town. Narrowgate could be a fantastic place to spend time.

Full pedestrianisation of Narrowgate as far as Fenkle Street is essential if it is to have a positive effect.

Main problems in Alnwick: 1) Boy racers at night. 2) Drivers parking on pavements and double yellow lines to collect takeaways in evening - often leaving engine running (evening). 3) Non-stop goods vehicles parking on pavements. 4) Pollution. The answer is to create a one-way system, widen pavements, plant trees, etc, for the entirety of Narrowgate.

Seating on pedestrianised area - more planting.

Delegated decisions

Please don't make it look like any other street in the country - keep it unique.

One-way traffic system on the junction between Fenkle St & Narrowgate. Widen the pavement. Enhance the street with flowers or trees - the part of the street too narrow to have 2 lanes or 2-way system, take advantage to widen pavement.

Security cameras around cycle parking.

I want it left as it is - we were not given choice.

Making Narrowgate fully pedestrianised is a great idea. It will allow residents & tourists to wander without worrying about traffic & it may even encourage us to stop and look up at the buildings.

The Narrowgate survey was fundamentally flawed by NOT giving an option of NO CHANGE.

The opportunity to be bold, creative and forward thinking to develop truly inviting areas in the town is great. Some people are resistant to change but it is critical to the future of a vibrant town.

Wow!! Fab idea!!

Think about how many new homes are being built - you'll need a new high school soon, then you'll have 2 streams of people and you will no longer have a small community cohesiveness.

Love the idea! Brilliant for people walking around! Will for sure benefit the businesses!

I'd prefer informal crossing IF there is no traffic. The benefit of pedestrianisation is that we can wander around.

More paths.

Informal crossing points - no need for traffic lights given the reduced traffic!

Disabled parking only (plenty of spaces current insufficient).

Yes!

Bike stands, planters, seating, canopy over certain areas, promoting café culture.

Alnwick centre needs to become more pedestrian & cycle friendly. At the moment the car is king, which isn't great. More planting & trees to attract nature & appeal more to visitors so they stay longer, it's all very utilitarian at present.

Fab!

Narrowgate is a very old & unique area of the town. Any development needs to be sympathetically done.

Nature. Bike tracks. Less houses.

Leave it as is. The town is unique.

Delegated decisions

Trial period - need more clarity on how trail will look. It must be more than 2 plant pots and a road closed sign!! & should be done with quality and thought for an attractive place to spend time.

More biodegradable bags.

Signage is key (for trial & permanent) i.e. signage for shops, individual businesses & to direct traffic i.e. via Fenkle Street & ensuring people don't "miss" the pedestrianised area.

Pedestrianisation will also improve the cleanliness & air quality in this part of town.

DECISION TAKEN

**Title of Officer(s) and Portfolio
Holder (where appropriate):**

Paul Jones - Service Director - Local Services

Subject:

**PROPOSED EXPERIMENTAL PROHIBITION OF
DRIVING, NARROWGATE, ALNWICK**

Consultation

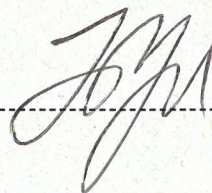
- No change: 23 (10%)
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Decision Taken:

The proposed experimental prohibition of driving
should be implemented for a period of 18 months.

Signature of Director/
~~officer/Portfolio Holder~~ (where
appropriate)*

Date



2/7/19

* delete as appropriate