



Northumberland

County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY SERVICE DIRECTOR - LOCAL SERVICES

Paul Jones

Proposed Experimental Blue Badge Holder Parking Places – High Street, Wooler

Cabinet Member: Glen Sanderson – Leader of Council

22 March 2021

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the background to the proposal to provide two new disabled parking bays for Blue Badge Holders at High Street, Wooler, on an experimental basis.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the 'Blue Badge Holders Only' parking restrictions are implemented on an experimental basis for 18 months and its effectiveness reviewed after 12 months.

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 has received concerns regarding a lack of parking availability for Blue Badge holders in the town centre of Wooler, where kerbside space and off-street car parks are often at full capacity during the Farmers' Market events.

The scheme will be funded from the 2020/21 Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme.

Background

High Street in Wooler is located directly in the town centre and is therefore the most popular and accessed route for parking in the area. In order to protect the amenity of the area and facilitate the flow of traffic, 'No Waiting at Any Time' (NWAAT) and Limited Waiting restrictions are in place to discourage obstructive and indiscriminate parking, of which are highlighted below in Figure 1.



Fig 1: NWAAT (red), limited waiting parking (blue), off-street car parks (grey)

Blue Badge holders are permitted to park on double yellow lines for up to three hours, provided they are not causing an obstruction or parked dangerously. Allocated disabled bays are present in off-street car parks, but in high demand, as are the allocated parking bays on High Street. As a result, more Blue Badge holders are forced into parking on the yellow lines, which creates road safety problems such as reduced visibility and congestion issues.

Proposals

Following concerns raised by Wooler Parish Council, it is considered that an increase in the number of disabled parking bays for Blue Badge holders only is required. Two locations have been identified on High Street so as to remain in close proximity to the most accessed area of the town and can be seen in Figure 2.

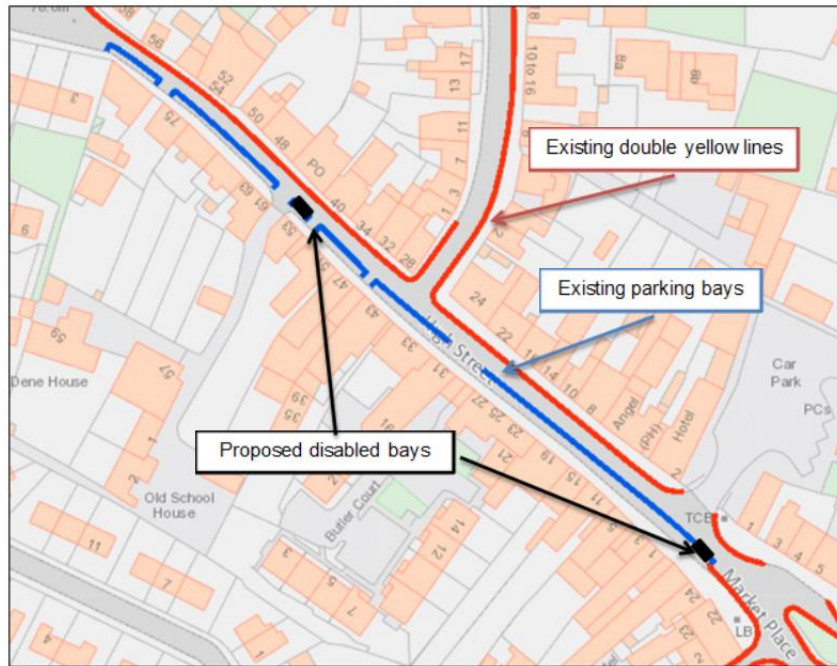


Fig 2: Proposed new disabled bays

It is proposed that the additional disabled bays will initially be provided on an experimental basis, so that their effectiveness can be measured before a decision is taken on whether to make them permanent or consider an alternative. The experimental order would be implemented for a period of 18 months, to allow it to be reviewed after 12 months via consultations and surveys. 79 properties were consulted and the responses received during the consultation period are displayed in Appendix A. Whilst the response rate is low, it is assumed that those who did not respond do not have any issues with the proposals outlined to them. Any further responses received from this point forward will be included in a future Delegated Decision Report and taken into consideration so as to determine the most appropriate course of action with regards to this experimental proposal.

Details of the proposals are shown on the plan at Appendix B. They are intended to increase parking facilities for the most vulnerable road users, maintain the free flow of traffic where possible, to improve road safety in the town centre and to protect the amenity of the area overall.

Northumbria Police, other emergency services and relevant statutory consultees will be notified of these amendments as part of the process for making the permanent Orders.

Delegated Decision

Implications Arising out of the Report

Policy	Consistent with existing policies.
Finance and value for money	Scheme will be financed through the LTP 2020/21 Programme.
Legal	Motorists will be required to comply with the Traffic Regulation Orders (reference TRO_006_26).
Procurement	Signs and road markings to meet Regulations for Traffic Regulation Orders.
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Risk Assessment	The proposal is designed to reduce the risks associated with obstructive and indiscriminate parking.
Crime & Disorder	Regulations in place to carry out enforcement.
Customer Consideration	Statutory consultees and directly affected residents have been consulted.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	Wooler

Delegated Decision

Background Papers:

File reference – S:\Highways\PROJECT\20\HE Minor Improvements\HE203423D TROs\HE203423D-42 High Street Wooler

Appendix A – Consultation Responses

Appendix B – Scheme Plan

Author and Contact Details

Report Author **William Binks, Programme Officer**

Delegated Decision

DECISION TAKEN

Title of Officer: Service Director, Local Services

Subject: Proposed experimental 'Blue Badge Holders Only' disabled parking bays on High Street, Wooler

Consultation: Ongoing as part of experimental process

Decision Taken: To introduce additional parking bays for Blue Badge holders only on High Street, Wooler on an experimental basis for 18 months.

Signature of Director



Date

1st April 2021

Delegated Decision

Appendix A – Consultation Responses

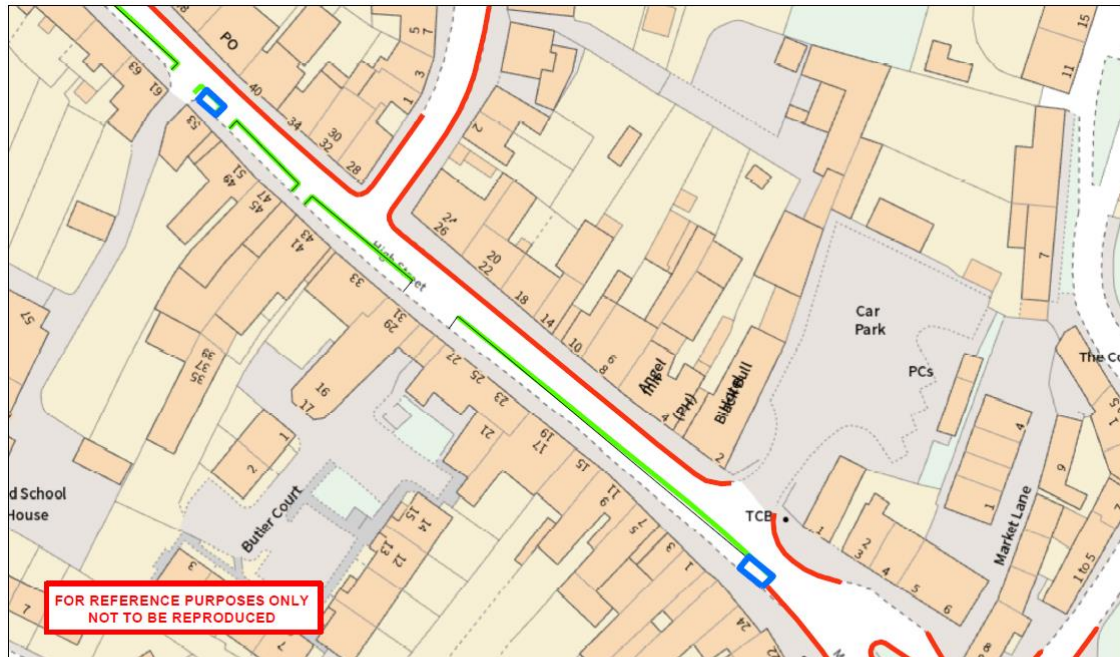
Key:

- F = For
- A = Against
- N = Neither

RESPONSE	F	A	N
<p>I am not in favour of the introduction of these bays for the following reasons: We are introducing 2 bays for 6 days of the year? Disabled badge holders can use the 2hr restricted bays for as long as they like, provided their badge is correctly displayed so why introduce new bays? Disabled badge holders are permitted to park on any DYL or SYL using their badge and clock for up to 3 hours and there are sufficient areas this could be used without causing any issues. I believe it is not appropriate (or our decision) to change the rules regarding the disabled badge scheme just for one area on 6 days of the year. The disabled badge scheme in England and Wales stipulates a maximum 3-hour time limit with a no return within 1 hour on no waiting restriction and we uphold this rule throughout the County every day.</p>		✓	
<p>I would support No 15 i.e. two disabled bays on the High Street within the existing on-street parking areas. I do not support No 16 i.e. an understanding about the blue badge holders not restricted from parking on double yellow lines. In my opinion, this would cause issue with traffic flow and potential obstruction, albeit unintentionally.</p>	✓		
<p>Thank you for your letter - 137)I would like this option to be chosen, with the proviso that these are Additional disabled parking bays. Outside the Drop-in Centre is ideal as it is a long bay, and has an entrance at either end, so parked vehicles cannot be "boxed "in, if they need to use a rear access vehicle ramp (say for a wheelchair/disabled scooter). This is also near the Post Office, and there are pavement ramps which make crossing to the Post Office and other shops easier here. Opposite the Bus Station entrance is slightly more problematic for disabled parking, as very very often, vehicles park on the double yellow lines at the end of the parking bays (the road is wider here, however, it is useful for wide turning circle of the longer busses, and for vehicles giving way to oncoming traffic on the High Street). Vehicles are often parked for very short periods of time here, and now that the supermarket is no longer on the High Street, the turn-over of parking spaces within the bays along the rest of the street mostly works well, with, at worst, only short waiting time until a place becomes available. If the second disabled bay could be closer to the chemist (no 24 on the map) this would be better, however, opposite the bus station entrance, though a busy junction area would serve that end of the High Street/Market Place. I do not know the number of Blue Badge holders in the area, however, there are very many people with restricted mobility in and around Wooler, so I would request that the two bays in the Bus Station car park be kept, in addition to the new disabled parking bays. 138) I would not want to encourage more people to park on double yellow lines as it restricts the flow of traffic, but also limit the turning circle for vehicles at junction. People do so without encouragement, but usually for the briefest time! Three hours is far too long for a vehicle to be left on a double yellow line. The most common places are outside the Post Office, the Chemist (or opposite the Bus Station). Drivers can wait a few moments while someone collects a prescription or posts a letter, or empties the post box, before moving their vehicle on, but three hours would cause a problem, There are no loading bays on the High Street, so it is usually for loading and unloading that the double yellow lines are used. This is generally amicably tolerated, while people go about their business, and does not cause traffic problems. Thank you for considering these points and the welfare of the people accessing Wooler High Street.</p>		✓	
<p>I write with reference to the above, I live on the High Street and am one of the three properties that do not have access to the rear of our properties for parking. Meaning that we have to use public parking. When returning home with a briefcase. a laptop and a handbag, or bags of shopping the places on the High Street are a lot more attractive than the parking in the Market Square. For this reason anything that reduces the availability of those spaces on the High Street is something that has the prospect of making life more difficult for me. Do you have any data showing the usage of the existing disabled parking bays day to day, which might cast light on whether more bays are needed, reducing availability of parking of parking on the High Street for the sake of one Sunday per month seems unnecessary unless the need far outstrips the supply. Given the situation I have outlined above for myself and two Neighbours, I would like to know if a residents parking scheme could be considered for us. The situation has not been particularly acute recently because of reduced traffic, but in normal times it is often an issue.</p>		✓	
<p>Thank you for your letter 2 March. Having thought about this it seems that the concern is limited to six days each year but proposal 37 would be permanent, 365 day change to the limited parking available along the High Street. I would have thought the proposal 38 on the face of it should meet the need</p>		✓	

Delegated Decision

Appendix B - Scheme Plan



 Northumberland County Council	Network Management Information System	Title: New Disabled Bays High Street Wooler			Key: — New 'Disabled Badge Holders Only' On-Street Parking Bays All Days, All Hours
		Drm: WB	Date: 20.03.2021	Scale: 1:800	
<small>Northumberland County Council County Hall Morpeth Northumberland NE61 2EF Tel: 0345 600 8400</small>	<small>This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. License No. 100049481 (2019).</small>				