



Northumberland County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY SERVICE DIRECTOR - LOCAL SERVICES

Paul Jones - Service Director - Local Services

PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN REFUGES and PARKING RESTRICTIONS, C358 NORTH ROAD, PONTELAND

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle

Purpose of Report

To consider a proposal to provide three pedestrian refuges with associated 'No Waiting at Any Time' parking restrictions (double yellow lines) in North Road, Ponteland.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the proposed pedestrian refuges and parking restrictions are implemented.

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

- A scheme to improve facilities for pedestrians between new housing on the former Northumbria Police HQ and the village centre in Ponteland, funded via a Section 106 agreement with the developer, is currently being developed.
- As the housing development grows, the number of residents travelling along North Road is expected to increase. This proposal aims to encourage and facilitate these journeys to be undertaken on foot and reduce reliance on the private car.
- The scheme includes the provision of pedestrian refuges at three locations to aid pedestrians crossing North Road.

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- The Road Safety Audit of these proposals recommended that some short lengths of double yellow lines are provided at each refuge in order to keep them clear of parked vehicles and protect visibility for both motorists and pedestrians.

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Background

1. The County Council has received funding via a Section 106 agreement related to the development of housing on the former Northumbria Police HQ site in Ponteland. This funding is for “highway infrastructure improvements.”
2. One of the aims of this funding is to improve facilities for pedestrians between the development and Ponteland Village Centre in order to encourage walking.
3. The developer has provided a new footway alongside the access road into the development. The Council’s proposals are designed to improve the connection between this new footway and the village amenities.
4. Figure 1, below shows the location of the housing development in relation to the rest of Ponteland:



Fig.1 Location Plan.

5. The proposed improvements for pedestrians consist of footway widening on the east side of North Road between the development access and the Thornhill Road north junction, and the provision of three pedestrian refuges, located at strategic points to provide safer crossing points. Figure 2 shows the locations of the proposed refuges.

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Fig.2. Locations of proposed pedestrian refuges

6. The Road Safety Audit of the proposed refuges found that on street parking may obstruct visibility of pedestrians which could result in pedestrian/vehicle collisions.
7. In order to address this, the audit recommended suitable measures are put in place to ensure the approaches to each refuge are kept clear of parked vehicles.
8. Parking restrictions in the form of double yellow lines are therefore proposed on the approaches to each refuge to prevent parking and maintain visibility. The proposed double yellow lines are shown on the plan in Appendix A.
9. The affected residents were consulted on the proposed parking restrictions. 12 responses were received from 16 properties consulted, a response rate of 75%.
10. Of the 12 responses, 3 were in favour (25%), 9 were against (75%).
11. Those that were against the proposals objected to the removal of the ability to park outside their homes. Others also questioned the need for the proposed refuges.
12. Whilst the proposed double yellow lines will restrict parking outside some houses, the relatively short length of the restrictions means that on-street parking can still take place nearby, with the longest distance approximately 30 metres. It should also be noted that most of the properties affected have private off-street parking.
13. The number and location of pedestrian refuges is intended to provide safer crossing points at strategic locations on what is a very wide road which is subject

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to over 7,000 vehicles per day and speeds in excess of the 30mph speed limit, (speed survey data in 2017 recorded 85th percentile speeds of 42.6mph northbound and 39.7mph southbound). Whilst pedestrian flows on the east side of North Road are currently lower than those on the west side, this may change as the new housing development continues to grow. This is because there is no footway on the west side of North Road near the development access and there is no room to provide one. The result is that pedestrians must cross to the east side upon exiting the development site. It follows that many may choose to remain on this side to travel towards the village centre.

14. The southernmost refuge will provide a crossing facility for residents walking from Berwick Hill Road and the adjacent residential developments of Louisville and Berwick Court. The overall scheme also has the added benefit of allowing the provision of a formal right-turn lane for northbound traffic turning right from North Road into Berwick Hill Road.
15. Whilst the comments of those who are against the proposal are acknowledged, it is considered that the benefits of the proposed scheme outweigh the perceived disadvantages. They also encourage and facilitate walking which will contribute to the Council's health and climate change objectives.
16. The local Ward Member and Ponteland Town Council are in favour of the proposals.
17. It is therefore recommended that the proposed pedestrian refuges and associated parking restrictions should be implemented.

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Implications Arising out of the Report

Policy	The proposal accords with the Council's transport and climate change aims.
Finance and value for money	The proposal will be funded via a s106 agreement funded by the housing developer.
Legal	Motorists will be required to comply with the Traffic Regulation Order.
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	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	Residents and Statutory consultees have been consulted.
Carbon reduction	The proposals are intended to encourage walking and reduce reliance on the private car, thus reducing carbon emissions.
Wards	Ponteland North

Background papers:

File ref: HX200001

Report sign off.

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

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	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)	

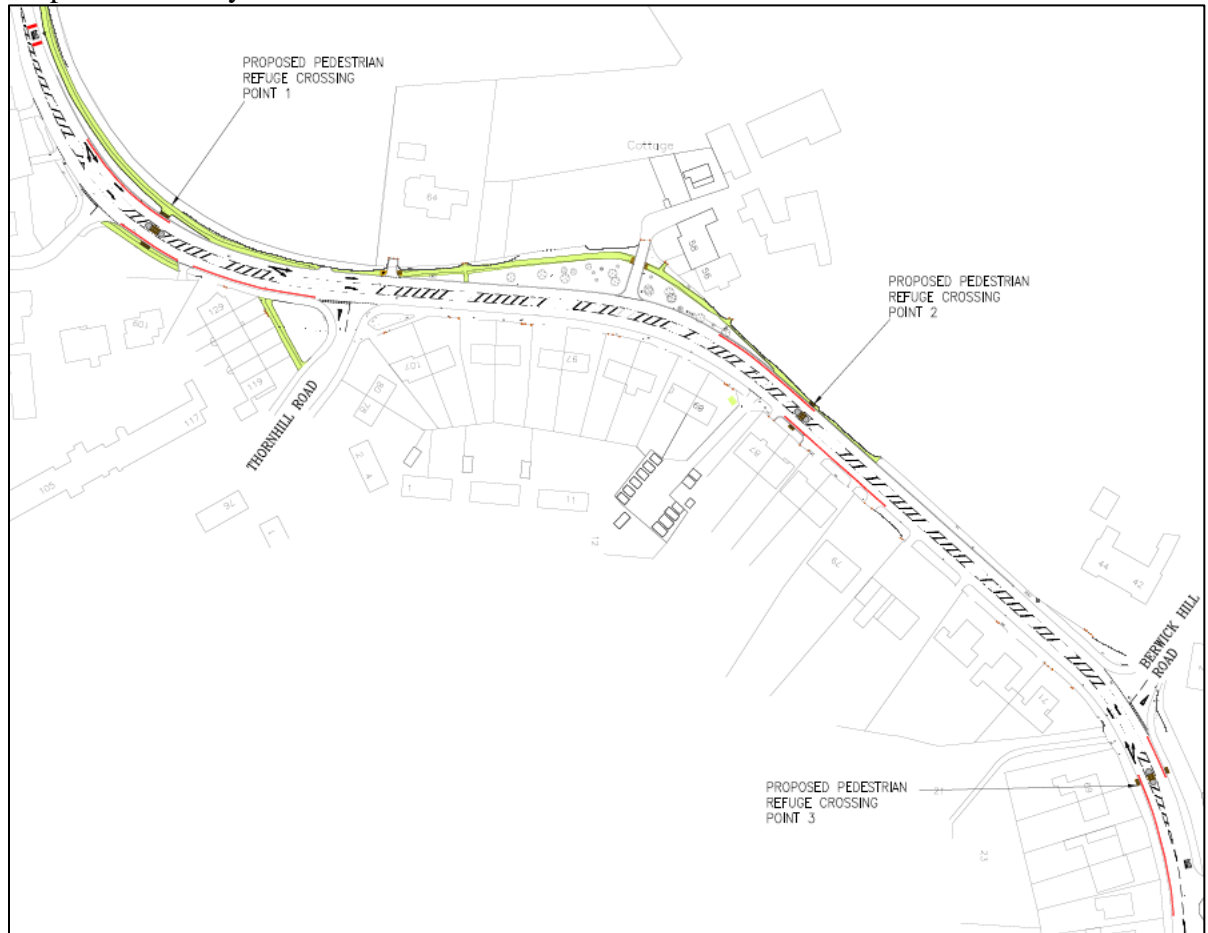
Author and Contact Details

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Appendix A – Proposed Scheme Layout

Proposed double yellow lines shown in red.



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Appendix B

Consultation Responses

FOR	AGAINST	NEITHER	Comments
1			<p>Thank you for your letter regarding the proposals. Firstly, as it feels that I live on an actual motorway, I would welcome any improvements designed to reduce traffic speed on North Road. Often large agricultural vehicles drive at speeds of up to 60mph down North Road! I understand that for part of the year they are very busy, but if they needed to stop quickly for any reason, it just wouldn't happen as they are travelling too fast. Many other vehicles that have just driven at high speeds down the Berwick Hill Road and the road from Morpeth continue the same speeds when they arrive at North Road. I am unable to comprehend why we haven't got the same digital speed signs as they have at Cheviot View Ponteland. It would be just as beneficial to have them on North Road, particularly where traffic is coming from the Berwick Hill Road reminding them that North Road is not a race track. For some reason many drivers do not know or seem not to know that North Road is a 30mph limit. More signs are needed.</p>
	1		<p>Thank you for your letter of 13th September and the attempt outlined in it to improve the situation for North Road residents with regard to pedestrian crossings and parking restrictions. Crossing the road safely and inappropriate parking on the road and the pavements are problems here. However these plans do not deal with the main problem and that is the passage of an ever increasing number of HGVs taking shortcuts through a residential area. It clearly acknowledges that action needs to be taken and that what was once a pleasant area in which to live has been turned into something akin to residing next to a major trunk road, where people need protection from what is happening around them. I am totally opposed to the "tampering around the edges" proposals outlined in the letter. The term "refuge" sums up the attitude that is being displayed towards pedestrians as it seems to involve provision of some minimal support and protection while the essence of the problem, the volume and type of traffic permitted to pass through a residential area remains unsolved. Yellow lines usually succeed in just moving the problem on. The only HGVs allowed to pass through here should be those that require access and there should be no need to reduce traffic speed as there is already a limit in place. Local people are well aware that a significant number of drivers exceed the limit by a considerable margin and that the law is rarely enforced. I think it disgraceful that residents here are going to continue to suffer from constant pollution, congestion and noise and are expected to be content with the protection provided by more paint on the road and some minor alterations. Much bolder action is required as this plan could well be a waste of money and very little will have changed. We seem unable to provide an acceptable environment for one small residential area. What hope for dealing with climate change I wonder?</p>
1			No comments

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	1	<p>I am writing to object to the proposed pedestrian refuges and parking restrictions on North Road Ponteland in their proposed format. My view is that Refuge No.2 is not required. The basis for my objection is: 1. My main objections are to the central hatching the full length of North Road between Berwick Hill Road & Thornhill Road and the double yellow line parking restrictions in front of houses 79-91 North Road. Both only required because of Refuge No.2. 2. There is no justification for Refuge No. 2. It cannot be based on accident or pedestrian numbers. As a resident on North Road for 27 years I am not aware of any accident involving pedestrians on North Road between Berwick Hill Road and Thornhill Road. Pedestrian numbers on this section of North Road on the Berwick Hill Road side are very low, most use the wider footpath on the other side. People do not normally cross the road at the proposed location of Refuge No.2. 3. North Road is wider than your normal width road because it was designed for two-way flow plus residential parking. There is currently ample room for visitor parking in front of houses and cyclist and cars travelling in two directions. 4. The hatching in the centre of the road will restrict lane widths, thus making cycling more dangerous as drivers find it difficult to pass. North Road is a very popular route with Cycling Clubs for casual use and arranged events such as time trials. 5. Parking restrictions in front of residential properties is not acceptable when no real benefit. This will particularly affect elderly residents who require health and family visitors to park on the public highway in front of their houses. As a minimum the scheme should be revised to remove proposed crossing No 2.</p>
	1	<p>Speeding and the use of this road as an agreed route by large, articulated vehicles is a major problem. As is the narrow pavement just after the blackburn pub. I cannot walk abreast of my two children on this stretch and if I am meeting a pedestrian coming the other way, one of us has to step into the road to pass. I have seen vehicles mount the kerb regularly outside of the blackbird at the narrowest section when a lorry or other large vehicles is trying to pass. The speed also makes it very difficult at times to get on and off the driveway which is very stressful. Cheviot View has several speed calming measures in place including radar speed sign, traffic camera sign signs painted on road and the speed limit sign. Why are there none of these on North road? A serious injury or death is waiting to happen here.</p>
	1	<p>I am writing to you in response to the proposed pedestrian and parking improvements on North Road. They are funny, and I suppose for someone like yourself who writes from his ivory tower, you actually believe they are solution...they are not! You see, we already have double yellow lines all around Ponteland that people constantly park on because there is no traffic enforcement. Ponteland Main street is a prime example and outside the pharmacy, opposite Waitrose. All double yellow lined and used as a car parking facility, taxi rank and takeaway collection zone. With regards to the pedestrian refuges, I assume you ventured out of your ivory tower and actually visited North Road for this proposal because your use of the word refuge is most fitting to describe what the poor people of North Road require to attempt to cross it but alas even your refuges will count for nothing whilst there is no mention from yourself or your fellow bandits regarding the sheer volume of traffic, coupled with the constant HGV's frequenting our road instead of the ones they are supposed to. Finally, regarding the speed of the vehicles using North Road, my opinion is the same as the double yellow lines... no traffic enforcement equals no resolution. The residents of North Road have witnessed the decline of driving behaviour and the increase of HGV's, and it is simply all because of a lack of law enforcement and a dubious council, so instead of trying to humour us, why don't you address the elephant in the room, so to speak!</p>

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			<p>I am writing to object to the proposed pedestrian refuges and parking restrictions on North Road Ponteland in the current format. I would like to know what research has been done to come up with this plan. In my own view I would suggest little or none. I am sure if some research was conducted this proposal would change and a better road solution could be implemented. I understand the need for safe crossing as I have lived on North Road for 25 years. My view is that a safe crossing point should be placed North of the Berwick hill turning as people walking south on the footpath opposite the houses should not have to navigate two junctions to cross this road. This is a terrible junction to cross. I see very few people walk up or down this path as the vast majority walk on the housing side of the road. Because of the new estate I do agree there should be a pedestrian crossing at or close to the junction with Thornhill Rd. I believe a traffic control light system would be a much better alternative at this junction to incorporate a pedestrian crossing. This would also assist with the speeding traffic that has been an issue on North Road for so many years. I do not feel the middle crossing is necessary. No one crosses the road at this location....they either cross at the Berwick hill turn or at the junction with Thornhill. As these are the obvious crossing areas. I can say this from years of experience living on North Road and using the footpaths several times a day.</p> <p>The planned parking restrictions will be unfair on the current residents who have limited on-site parking and douse the areas outside of their houses. The area does get busy with visitors cyclists and the route is always used by so many people on bikes I feel without better traffic control the current plan will cause danger and not help pedestrians unless crossing point 3 is altered and the one at point 2 is removed.</p> <p>Why can you not put a 20 mph speed limit the whole length of North road?.... this may even do the trick especially if enforced!</p>
	1		<p>My view is it is completely unnecessary as the bulk of pedestrian traffic is on the side of the road where most of the houses are. The location of the proposed island outside of my property will increase danger rather than reduce it as visibility is limited because of the bend in the road. All of the properties in the vicinity have restricted parking on their driveways leading to more vehicles being parked on the road, these will by necessity have to be parked on the opposite side of the road creating an even greater hazard if you introduce no parking outside of the properties. An additional hazard will also be created for vehicles entering and leaving the garage site.</p> <p>In my opinion the expenditure would be better spent introducing a 20mph Zone on the North Road reducing the speed at which vehicles travel.</p>

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1		<p>Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express my views on the above proposals, for North Road in Ponteland.</p> <p>If I can comment on this initial crossing point (Point 1), as it's a part of road I know very well, and I do agree that an easier way for pedestrians to cross North Road at this point is a really good idea. As is the associated traffic calming, as vehicles often gain speed on this corner ahead of actually leaving Ponteland, or haven't slowed down to 30mph on entering the village. This area has also become increasingly busy with vehicles as well as pedestrians, due in the main, to the additional large amount of new housing at the Old Police Headquarters site. I do though have some serious concerns for the solution that seems to have been chosen, as I believe this will actually exacerbate the issue, and/or move them to a slightly different area. Pedestrian Refuge - I'm concerned that this design won't allow for the very wide farm vehicles & machinery, as well as heavy goods vehicles that use North Road regularly. I can imagine them mounting the curbs or at least being incredibly close to the footpath, which would be dangerous in itself. I'm not sure how this proposal actually helps reduce traffic speeds, as the pedestrian refuges won't do this themselves. Does the proposal include a reduced speed limit, as this is not mentioned? Parking restrictions (double yellow lines)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* I'm concerned this is going to cause serious issues for the row of terrace houses as several currently use the stretch of North Road outside their houses to park their cars, as these days most families have x2 cars or more.. Most of the terraced row don't have driveways to park cars, there are single garages to the rear of the properties. Only the x2 end terraces have a driveway.* Visitors also use this stretch of road to park.* Delivery vehicles of course use this stretch of road to deliver to all the terraced houses. Deliveries are more and more frequent with our ever growing online shopping culture and especially after lockdowns. Deliveries include various size vehicles, and include weekly grocery shopping delivery.* All the cars and delivery vehicles are going to need to park, pause somewhere, and that could cause a serious issues for the end of Thornhill Road, which in my opinion would put more pedestrians and drivers at risk, than leaving North Road as it is, or looking at alternative options. Cars already park in the bus stop at this end of Thornhill Road due to lack of parking, so this is only going to get much worse.* Cars of visitors and staff to the nursing home at the edge of the village on North Road, also frequently park in North Road, where you are also proposing to have double yellow lines. Where will they park if that isn't an option anymore? <p>Might there though be a different option to improve facilities for pedestrians crossing and help reduce traffic speeds. Could the traffic calming come from narrowing the road and giving priority to oncoming traffic in one direction. So slowing cars down to a stop to give priority and slowing cars down in the other direction too, with the narrowed road, signage and cars potentially already passing through. There wouldn't need to be double yellow lines, as cars could park where they do now protected by the road island. Pedestrians could also cross at this point, and therefore only be crossing one lane of traffic, at a much reduced speed, with all cars slowing or stopping to make their way through. This type of traffic calming measure is already in use on Thornhill Road, near to the school and shops, and is very effective. The single lane of road at this point, could also certainly be wide enough to accommodate the very wide farm vehicles and heavy goods lorries.</p> <p>I also think it would be a good opportunity to extend the village 30mph speed limit to before the new housing (old Police HQ site) thus ensuring pedestrians crossing there are safer, and vehicles then arriving to the traffic calming measures are already slowed down too. The footpath could also benefit from widening at certain points to ensure pedestrians are safe, as it's well used by children walking to and from school, and families walking into the village.</p> <p>If I could finally comment on the other proposed pedestrian refuges crossing points. I don't think that Point 2 is needed at all, I don't think I've ever seen anyone crossing the road, or attempting to at this point. Point 3 possibly of some use, but I would suggest that it's not nearly as well used. Pedestrians mostly carry on whichever side of the road is relevant to them. Going through the graveyard to get to school, or crossing the road at the pedestrian refuge next to the mini roundabout if they want to go to the shops.</p>
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			<p>I recently returned to my home address with my wife on 7th October to find your letter regarding the above subject matter. (Your ref: HX200001). Unfortunately I have missed your deadline for responses. I wonder in the circumstances if you could consider these points and acknowledge my letter. Whilst I welcome measures to increase pedestrian safety and reduce the speed of motorists exiting Ponteland along North Rd which is quite dangerous and unacceptable I find your proposal for Point 1, in my view, to cause residents of particular problems. The parking behind the terrace is just not adequate enough and at present two of the residents do not have cars. If this situation changed the parking would be impossible in some cases. Does the proposal seek to create additional parking for the terrace?</p> <p>Thirdly both of our mothers often make visits to our home and in the proposal, she would have to park possibly 50+ metres further away from the house. This would make their ability to visit us quite difficult with their mobility issues. Please take into account the limited parking availability behind the house and the fact that, apart from no. 129, none of the houses have driveways unlike all other houses on North Rd and Thornhill rd. It seems the terrace is being particularly and unfairly treated in this regard. I look forward to your response.</p>
	1		<p>My concern would be parking for the residents of properties on Thornhill road numbers 119 to 129 as there is limited parking space for these residents as only a select few have drives for parking and most residents these days do not have one single car for one household and in fact have two or three cars per household. Due to this the only parking for these residents is a small garage way at the rear of the properties which can only accommodate four vehicles at present and this is substantially lower than the six to ten vehicles which all these households have and this does not take into account any visitors that the houses may have which will also mean more parking is required. Currently the front area where the green is at the top of North Road is used as an overflow essentially from the garages for the residents whose vehicles and their visitors vehicles will not fit at the rear. The removal of this as a parking area for residents will mean that residents and visitors will be forced to park further up Thornhill road which is already a very dangerous road where the bend is as vehicles are always having close collisions on this road due to cars being parked on the curb on one side meaning restricted road access for road users. The effect of the removal of the parking zone will mean more parking in this area on Thornhill road and may mean parking on both sides of the street at points creating a bottle neck around the bend for which cars are trying to get through. Therefore the removal of the front green as a parking area will cause substantial disruption to Thornhill road and the road will become even more manic on school days and this should certainly be taken into heavy consideration while considering these new plans for restricted parking for residents on North Road. A suggestion for improvement of the plans would be to incorporate parking bays for said residents to the front of these properties where at present there is a small green area which could accommodate a few parking spaces for residents whilst also keeping in with plans of restricting parking access along the pathways of the green. This would allow for enough parking for the residents of Thornhill road and would not cause more street parking further up Thornhill road.</p> <p>This along with the proposal would accommodate both safety and parking for residents and should also be taken in consideration whilst carrying out the plans. Thank you.</p>
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DECISION TAKEN

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

Paul Jones - Service Director - Local Services

Subject:

PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN REFUGES and PARKING RESTRICTIONS, C358 NORTH ROAD, PONTELAND

Consultation

☒ For: 3 (25%)

☒ Against: 9 (75%)

Decision Taken:

The proposed 'No Waiting at Any Time' parking restrictions should be implemented.

Signature of Director



Date

3rd March 2022
