



Northumberland County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Paul Jones – Director of Environment & Transport

Proposed Parking Restrictions – Green Lane, Ashington

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle, Improving Our Roads & Highways

05 October 2023

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the background to the proposal to introduce new parking restrictions on Green Lane directly outside Ashington Academy school.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the proposed parking restrictions are implemented in order to improve road safety in the area.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the following key themes in the Corporate Plan for 2023-26:

‘Thriving Places and Culture – Neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained’

Key Issues

1. Northumberland County Council has received concerns from bus operators regarding obstructive and indiscriminate parking during school start and end times outside Ashington Academy.
2. Additional parking restrictions have been proposed on Green Lane in Ashington as a result in order to alleviate these concerns.
3. The scheme is supported by the local County Councillor.

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4. The scheme is to be funded through the 2023/24 Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme.

Background

Green Lane is a single carriageway which flows through and is situated directly outside of Ashington Academy's school entrances. The Academy is located on the north side of the road, whereas the southern side is primarily residential.

The route is used by school transport as the pick-up and drop-off point for buses and is regularly congested with parked vehicles during school start and end times. The only parking restrictions currently in place are 'School Keep Clear' zig-zag markings directly outside the entrance gates and a Bus Stand which has been marked to allow school transport vehicles to wait and manoeuvre without vehicles causing obstructions.



Fig. 1: Existing parking restrictions outside Ashington Academy

Despite this, obstructive and indiscriminate parking remains an issue primarily at school start and end times where parked vehicles have been observed on both sides of the road blocking footways, a refuge island crossing point and causing congestion for traffic navigating through the area.

Proposal

In order to alleviate these concerns, further parking restrictions are proposed directly outside the school entrances on Green Lane. These include:

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- An extension of the existing 'School Keep Clear' zig-zag markings which would also apply Monday-Friday between the hours of 8am-5pm, meaning vehicles are prohibited from stopping on these restrictions;
- Formalised Bus Stands applying Monday-Friday between the hours of 8-9am & 2:30-4pm for school transport to wait and pick-up/drop-off in;
- 'No Waiting at Any Time' restrictions in the form of double yellow lines on the north side of Green Lane to assist with the free flow of traffic and to improve facilities for bus drivers when attempting to navigate through and into the Bus Stands;
- 'No Waiting' restrictions in the form of a single yellow line on the south side of Green Lane applying Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:15-9:30am & 2:45-4pm meaning vehicles must not wait on this side of the road during the proscribed hours but allows residents and visitors to park where necessary outside of those school start and end times.

Details of these proposals can be found in Appendix A via an overview plan showing the extents of the existing and proposed new restrictions.

Whilst the majority of respondents to the consultation are in favour of parking restrictions being introduced on Green Lane, it is noted that several requests were made to extend them further across the whole of the route. The aim of the scheme is to improve facilities for school transport parking directly outside Ashington Academy entrances, therefore it is not currently the intention to restrict the entire route – evidence from previous areas demonstrates that restrictions continuing for a large length of the carriageway are less likely to be respected and are much more difficult to enforce.

Site observations have not determined that extended restrictions are required at this time, however once the scheme is implemented, the Council will review any effect it may have had on the surrounding area regarding potential displaced parking.

The proposal is intended to increase road safety, maintain the free flow of traffic where possible 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 Traffic Regulation Order.

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Implications Arising out of the Report

Policy	Consistent with existing policies.
Finance and value for money	Scheme will be financed through the LTP 2023/24 programme.
Legal	Motorists will be required to comply with the Traffic Regulation Order.
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities 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, directly affected residents and the school have been consulted.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	Bothal

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Background Papers

File reference – S:\Highways\PROJECT\22\HE Minor Improvements\HE223606D - TROs Countywide\HE223629D South East Northumberland\HE223629D-08 Green Lane Ashington

Appendix A – Scheme Plan

Appendix B – Consultation Responses

Author

Report Author **William Binks, Programme Officer**

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DECISION TAKEN

Title of Officer	Director of Environment and Transport
Subject	Proposed parking restrictions at Green Lane, Ashington
Consultation	For: 6 (75%) Against: 2 (25%)
Decision Taken	To introduce new parking restrictions on Green Lane, Ashington

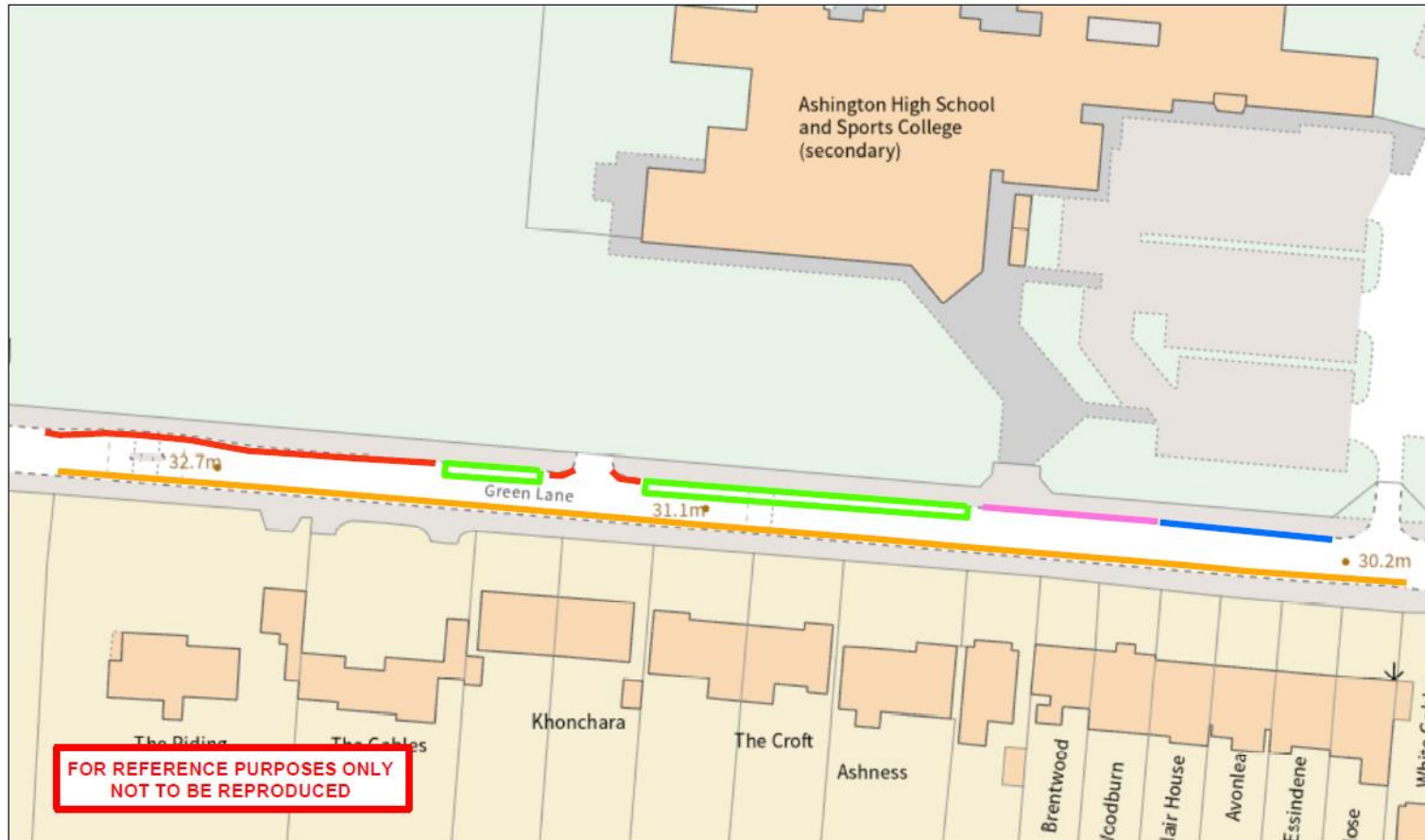
Signature of Director



Date

24th October 2023

Appendix A – Scheme Plan



FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES ONLY
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Northumberland
County Council

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**Network Management
Information System**

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Title: Proposed Parking Restrictions
Green Lane
Ashington

Dm: WB Date: 06.10.2022 Scale: 1:800

Key:

- Existing 'School Keep Clear' Restriction to Remain
- Proposed 'School Keep Clear' Restriction Mon-Fri 8am-5pm
- Proposed 'No Waiting at Any Time' (Double Yellow Lines)
- Proposed Bus Stand Mon-Fri 8-9am & 2.30-4pm
- Proposed 'No Waiting' (Single Yellow Lines) Mon-Fri 8:15-9:30am & 2:45-4pm

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Appendix A – Consultation Responses

Key: F = For; A = Against

F A	RESPONSES
1	<p>I welcome the proposal of more extensive parking restrictions on Green Lane, however they don't extend far enough.</p> <p>The restrictions in this small area of the road will only cause greater issues west of 'The Riding' property on Green Lane, causing congestion at the junction with Wansbeck Road and increasing the risks for children crossing the road to school here. Therefore the restrictions need to continue up to the junction with Wansbeck Road.</p> <p>Even though my grandchildren are aged 9, 12 and 13, I still have to accompany them across the road at school start and end times on their way to and from Ashington Academy / Bothal Primary due to the current irresponsible and dangerous parking on the pavements. If the proposed restrictions only extend to 'The Riding' property, the cars will park at the west end of Green Lane and the south end of Wansbeck Road making this situation worse. The children won't be able to cross the road safely on the west end of Green Lane, they won't be able to walk down the pavements safely due to cars parking on the pavements and if I accompany them passed these cars, won't be able to cross further down where the buses are and where parents will ignore the restrictions and still pull onto the pavements to drop off or pick up their children.</p> <p>Further to the proposed parking restrictions, the matter of speeding cars must also be addressed for the safety of the school children and residents. The current speed bumps are completely useless and do nothing to slow down the traffic. There needs to be more speed bumps along the length of Green Lane and they need to be across the whole road with a speed camera to catch the speeding cars.</p>
1	<p>Whilst I am broadly in favour of these restrictions, I think the expectations of those affected by them need to be managed. The Southeast team of 4 enforcement officers have 47 schools to patrol many with much younger attendees. This is a high school so the pupils should have greater awareness of various aspects of traffic, but I am concerned about the ability to enforce given the many other troublesome issues we have regarding schools at specific times of the day.</p>
1	<p>Objection to the proposal.</p> <p>I agree that because of road safety concerns there should be restrictions introduced outside the Academy, however the proposals do not include the whole of Green Lane so all this will do is move the problem along to the other end of Green Lane, as people will just park there. We already have problems with people parking outside our house waiting to collect or drop off their children, restricting our view and making it difficult for us when leaving and entering our properties.</p> <p>We have problems with traffic coming around the bend too fast and any cars parked restrict our view, we have had a couple of near misses with traffic coming around the bend onto Green Lane when we have been waiting to get back on our driveway.</p> <p>The junction between Wansbeck Road and Green Lane is also very busy with children and other pedestrians often forced on the road as the pavement is very narrow, any increase in parked cars, in this area will make this worse.</p> <p>This proposal should be included in a review of parking along Green Lane, should the proposal by the Banks Group to build a new housing estate be approved. There have been concerns raised by the residents on the impact on traffic, road safety and increased parking, on the residents and the children attending the Academy. If approved, further restrictions to protect residents and the children will be necessary and not just at pick up and drop off times, as the construction traffic and builders will need to park somewhere which will be on Green Lane.</p> <p>I propose therefore that these restrictions are introduced but along the whole of Green Lane not just outside the Academy otherwise you will not have addressed the existing road safety problems, only moved them.</p>
1	<p>On the whole I support the proposal, however as we are a 4 car family and only 2 cars fit on our drive then we would fall foul of the No Waiting during certain school hours, and we not the only ones. Can I propose that each household on Green Lane are given 2 or 3 parking permits for the south side of the road to cover themselves and any visitors they may have.</p>

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1	<p>Received your proposed plan for parking outside my property. Exiting our property turning right will be dangerous as there will be no right of way for nearly 200m because of your extension of the bus stops outside our home. I question whether it is barely legal what you are proposing as exiting our house will be very dangerous to oncoming traffic. If we were a new planning application to build a home, highways would decline the application as there is no clear right of way exiting right from our property. No residents in the street are happy with your proposal. We are all rate payers paying for a service and suggest you treat the residents with the upmost respect we deserve. I would also like it noted that we feel this proposal is dangerous, so if any accidents occurs after you decide to go ahead with your plan, there will be recourse for person or persons involved with the decision making. You have a huge unused car park opposite that would be a far more safe way for buses and cars to use in school times. All said we have to live here and should feel comfortable. It would also be nice for you to collect the rubbish outside our homes from the school that I do regularly unpaid.</p>
1	<p>With reference to the letter that I received as a resident on Green Lane opposite Ashington Academy, I'd like to offer the following comments and questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Having lived in our house for over 20 years we have seen the problems that, let's be honest, inconsiderate parents or guardians cause when they insist on parking on pavements on both sides of the road.2. The problem are not generally caused by residents parking, it's the relatively short periods of time at the start and end of each school day when parents try to get as close to the school as possible so their children don't need to walk far!3. I noted the 'No Waiting' restrictions being proposed for the south side (residential) side of the road and I think the times are too long. All students have been dropped off by buses or cars before 8.45am so for me I'd propose a change that sees the restrictions between 8.15 and 8.45am. The afternoon times I agree with as the Academy has a staggered end of school day with students being picked up until approximately 4pm.4. Given these problems are caused by inconsiderate parents / guardians parking, has thought being given to where they will start to park if they indeed do take notice of the no waiting signs (which for some of these people I am doubtful about having experienced verbal abuse first hand when politely asking motorists to clear the entrance to my driveway when needing to either enter or exit our property at these core times!)5. When is it proposed to start these restrictions and what additional signage will be put in place as I'm sure none of the residents will be keen to have a sign on a post outside their property especially as we are not the cause of this problem!6. When the proposals are introduced, how will they be enforced? Having seen the habits of parents / guardians this may sound cynical but I can guarantee that after a period of time the restrictions will be ignored.7. There is a small car park just around the corner south of the Green Lane / Park Road roundabout but I would like to suggest that it is also in the Academy's interests to see a workable solution to these problems and that the old hard standing area (what used to be a hockey pitch) within the school playing field opposite the school and south of Green Lane is grossly under used. If an entrance / exit could be made from this small car park south of Green Lane and the hard standing area improved then surely this would be a safer place for students to be picked up by parents / guardians and would avoid the on street congestion. Of course this would need to be properly looked at and The Academy would need to be on board with this but the use of Child / Road Safety wardens (Lollipop people as we used to call them) to help facilitate the safe crossing to this car park could be part of the solution. I hope you will see that my comments and suggestions are supporting the need to improve the current unsafe situation but I do think they need more consideration than just setting up double yellow and single yellow lines. Using the approach being proposed also brings problems for residents especially if we need to have work carried out at our properties and a single tradesperson van would need to be outside our houses.

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1	<p>Thank you for the letter informing us of proposed parking restrictions on Green Lane. Can I ask that consideration is given to the following two points:</p> <p>a) as a resident on Green Lane, we occasionally have visitors who do park on the road, including my father who visits from another part of the country. Obviously we mostly try to avoid parking on the road at school times as we know how busy it gets but nevertheless there will be occasions where we have no choice, particularly in school holiday times too. I note there are no exclusion dates on the proposal. Can I request that some provision is made for residents parking outside their own homes please? Whether this is through parking permits or some other form of exemption at the times proposed?</p> <p>b) that alternative provision will be put in place for families dropping off their children at school otherwise the problem is simply going to shift to other surrounding streets. Although traffic is an issue at those peak times, there are currently no other options for drop off. Also, I'd encourage more active travel routes to be considered in conjunction with other council departments.</p> <p>I hope these comments can be considered and appreciate it.</p>
1	<p>Thank you for your correspondence dated 9th March 2023 in which you invite us to offer our comments on the above proposal.</p> <p>I would inform you that as an Emergency Service we may be required to use the above road(s) 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.</p> <p>I would thank you for your consultation on this matter and offer our support for the on-going road safety programme.</p>
6	2