



# Northumberland County Council

## **RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY SERVICE DIRECTOR – LOCAL SERVICES**

**Paul Jones**

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**Proposed Waiting, Loading & Parking Places (Map Based) Order 2023**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle**

**17 January 2023**

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### **Purpose of Report**

This report sets out the background to the proposed migration from Northumberland County Council's (NCC's) current operations in creating permanent Traffic Regulation Orders for on-street parking restrictions via a mainly text-based system to a fully map-based approach.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the proposed 'Northumberland County Council (Waiting, Loading & Parking Places) (Map Based) Order 2023' and associated new map-based format is approved.

### **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**

1. It is recommended that Local Authorities consolidate their orders periodically to achieve better data accuracy resulting in a more effective highway network. NCC's 'Waiting and Loading' and 'Parking Places' Composite Orders were last consolidated in 2011 (11 years ago). Since that time, there have been around 500 amendment Orders introduced. Although they are recorded digitally, it is a time consuming exercise to find, update and amend subsequent orders, increasing the administrative duties and increasing the likelihood of being challenged.
2. The system adopted in recent years is linked to a service-based geodatabase. Although this is suitable as a data repository for other

## Delegated Decision

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services within the Authority, the specific requirements and bespoke nature of TRO development means the system has never been an optimal solution. Key challenges include; dealing with the volume of data required, time consuming nature of entering data, poor search facility for finding specific TROs, difficulty generating a link to the public facing map based system which in turn is often inaccurate and out of date.

3. NCC began implementing the map-based approach in early 2022, replacing the current system with an improved service, specific to TRO generation and fully aligned with best practice in the industry. The system now being used generates TROs from inception to publication which leads to efficiency savings across the board. To maximise capability of the system, the 'consolidation' process is required to ensure map-based orders are fully up to date, accurate, viewable by the public and far less liable to challenges and scrutiny.

## Delegated Decision

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### Background

Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are the legal instruments by which the Council implements its on-street parking restrictions. They are designed to regulate, restrict or prohibit the use of a road or any part of the width of a road by vehicular traffic or pedestrians. They currently provide highway authorities with powers to place permanent, temporary or experimental restrictions on traffic for the purposes of safety or traffic management. Orders therefore provide a vital mechanism for enforcement on the road network.

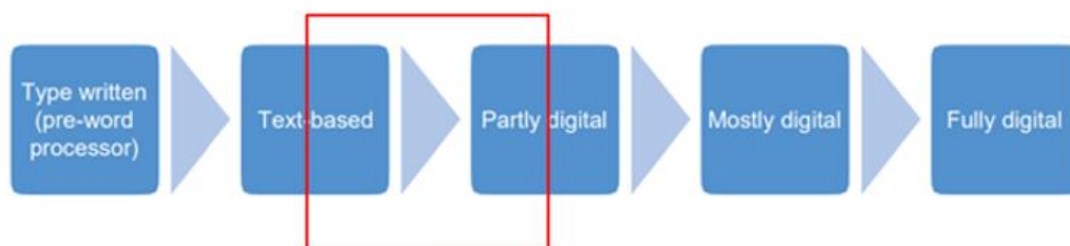
In January 2012, the Department for Transport (DfT) published 'Draft Guidance for New Procedures for Traffic Orders'. The principal reason for this publication was to suggest amendments to the existing process to deregulate publicity requirements for TROs and to provide flexibility for authorities in selecting the methods that they use to publicise their proposed and made traffic orders. Since the regulations were written 15-20 years ago, reflecting earlier regulations, methods of communication have changed more than anyone could have foreseen at that time.

In July 2019, the British Parking Association (BPA) released the 'Traffic Regulation Orders Guide' which looks at the variety of approaches local authorities take to create TROs and how their information is made available to the public. It examines good practice and explores innovative methods to understand the benefits and negatives of these approaches. It also draws attention to the fact that 'numerous incompatible systems are currently used to create TROs' and ultimately offers a guide as to how TROs may be developed from where they are now, towards where they may need to be in the future.

The Guide closely aligns with the DfT Discovery Project, a collaborative initiative between BPA, GeoPlace and Ordnance Survey which seeks to collect evidence as to how TROs are made and suggests how they may be digitally stored in the future.

It categorises TROs under the term 'degrees of maturity' ranging from 'type written' at the basic level to 'fully digital' at a more comprehensive and fundamental level. The TROs currently managed by Northumberland County Council would sit somewhere between 'text based' and 'partly digital':

- Text based = electronic format of descriptive Orders which are published on the Council's Traffic Management webpage;
- Partly digital = some restrictions and drawing plans are produced via a Geographic Information System (GIS).



## **Delegated Decision**

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In August 2019, the DfT commissioned a study identifying improvements to the legislative process in England (Policy Alpha). Policy proposals and supporting user journeys were tested and shaped by the engagement and interaction with nearly 100 individuals involved in the TRO-making process. The key proposed target user experience improvements within the report in relation to permanent TROs such as on-street parking restrictions are set out below:

1. Highway authorities should be given the responsibility to set the approach to informing the public of TROs through the most appropriate means and with due consideration given to improving accessibility requirements;
2. Highway authorities should publish standardised and open TRO data which should be consistent and made available for anyone to access, use and share;
3. Highway authorities should operate a more outcome orientated, flexible and proportionate process, setting out different classifications of TROs based on the proposed type of restriction that simplifies and improves the process;
4. Highway authorities should publish clear and transparent information on their charging arrangements.

It set out the case for change highlighting several issues that lead to inefficiencies set out below:

- Unsustainable and ineffective newspaper advertising;
- Inconsistent, inflexible and lengthy processing times;
- Data provision is inconsistent and non-standardised i.e. text based.

## **Proposal**

The Council intends to transform all its existing on-street parking restrictions by creating a new map-based format, moving it further towards the fully digital status. These restrictions include but are not limited to:

- Waiting and loading, such as double yellow lines, single yellow lines, loading bays, no stopping on entrance markings and kerb blips;
- Restricted parking zones, controlled parking zones and disc parking zones;
- Parking places such as permit parking, paid-for parking bays, limited waiting parking bays.

The current Composite Orders created in 2011, along with all the Amendment Orders made since that time, divided by five boundary areas across the County, are to be revoked in the process, along with any others associated with the restrictions proposed to be included within the new map-based Order.

Map-based orders have continually been cited as having real end-user benefits. These include improved road user comprehension through better clarity of information because of the geospatial visualisation of restrictions. Many highway authorities already publish map-based orders with supporting articles and most are thought to already possess or generate a digital

## **Delegated Decision**

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representation of the restrictions even if they do not publish it in a spatial format.

Benefits to adopting the fully map-based approach will include:

- Greater efficiency savings in implementing new amendment TROs. The time to generate a single TRO is expected to reduce significantly;
- Creating a more user-friendly system for staff and public to view and interrogate our existing TROs;
- Fewer challenges at Traffic Parking Tribunal (TPT) following a comprehensive review of both the legal terminology used in the orders and the restrictions themselves;
- Recognition that NCC is at the forefront of current practice and follows the legal processes as set out by the overarching bodies such as the DfT.

It is anticipated that, following advertising of the Order as per requirements in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the new map-based Order and system will be in effect from early 2023, with further reviews to be conducted later in the year to monitor its effectiveness.

## Delegated Decision

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### Implications Arising out of the Report

<b>Policy</b>	Consistent with existing policies
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Costs associated with Traffic Regulation Orders for on-street waiting, loading and parking places restrictions to be significantly reduced
<b>Legal</b>	Motorists will be required to comply with the Traffic Regulation Order
<b>Procurement</b>	Existing on-street signage and road marking restrictions to meet Regulations for Traffic Regulation Orders
<b>Human Resources</b>	None
<b>Property</b>	None
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	None
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	Regulations in place to carry out enforcement
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Simplified process for viewing Traffic Regulation Orders
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	None
<b>Wards</b>	Applicable to all Wards with on-street parking restrictions in place

## **Delegated Decision**

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### **Background Papers:**

File reference –

S:\Highways\PROJECT\22\HE Minor Improvements\HE223606D - TROs  
Countywide\TRO On-Street Consolidation Map Based Order 2023

Department for Transport, 'Traffic Regulation Orders and Associated Data'  
Policy Alpha Report

### **Author and Contact Details**

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Report Author      **William Binks, Programme Officer**

**Delegated Decision**

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**DECISION TAKEN**

**Title of Officer:** Service Director, Local Services

**Subject:** Proposed Waiting, Loading & Parking Places (Map Based) Order 2023

**Consultation:** Statutory consultees will be informed

**Decision Taken:** To introduce a new map-based Traffic Regulation Order for all on-street parking restrictions in the County of Northumberland

Signature of Director



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**Date**

25.01.23

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