

**At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS (EAST) COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, on MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> AUGUST, 2021 at 5.30pm**

**Present:-**

Councillor Butler in the Chair.

Councillors Bewick, Dixon, Doyle, Foster, E. Gibson, Morrissey, Noble, Reed, Scanlan, Stewart and D. Wilson.

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Hodson, Peacock and P. Smith.

**Minutes of the last meeting of the Planning and Highways (East) Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2021.**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Planning and Highways (East) Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Objection to Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) Marine Walk (St Peter's Ward)**

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought to advise the Committee of an objection received by the Council, in respect of the experimental traffic regulation order at Marine Walk, and which requested the Committee to not uphold the objection that could not be resolved within the constraints of the scheme.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The representative of the Executive Director of City Development presented the report informing members that an ETRO had been introduced on the northern section of Marine Walk to help address concerns raised with regards to obstructive parking and road safety. Following an investigation, it was concluded that the heavily pedestrianised area was very narrow with no suitable turning point for vehicles. Drivers perceived that they may be able to

park at northern end of Marine Walk leading to heavy traffic in both directions. The ETRO was an attempt to extinguish that expectation and included the introduction of No Waiting at Any Time (double yellow lines) and a prohibition of motor vehicles except for loading and access to off-street premises. It also included a loading restriction between 10.30am - 8pm to accommodate deliveries to businesses.

Members were briefed on the statutory and public engagement undertaken in respect of the proposals and their attention was drawn to the drawings of the proposals as shown in Appendix A of the report. As part of the public engagement exercise, two businesses within the area advised that they were not in favour of the proposed scheme, however, following the implementation of the experimental scheme Officers had written to both establishments on numerous occasions asking if they wish to carry their comments from the public engagement forward as formal objections and neither had responded.

One formal objection had been received by the Council since the implementation of the ETRO and this was detailed in Appendices B and C of the report. In relation to this, members were informed that paragraph 2.6 contained a minor typographical error and were advised that the section reading "the approximate location of the objector is shown on a plan in Appendix B" should be amended to read "a summary of the objection is shown in Appendix B"

The representative of the Executive Director of City Development then addressed questions from Members.

Councillor Bewick stated that the issue on Marine Walk had been a problem for many years and asked if enforcement would be increased, for example via CCTV, as ultimately the public would tend to ignore the restrictions if they believed they were not being enforced. In response, the Officer advised that the enforcement team were asked to pay Marine Walk as much attention as possible especially at weekends and when good weather attracted people to the area. There were no plans at present to install CCTV.

There being no further questions at this stage, the Chairman welcomed and introduced Mr Dickson who had registered to speak in objection to the ETRO. The Chairman advised Mr Dickson that he would have 5 minutes to address the Committee.

Mr Dickson spoke in opposition to the proposals citing the impact they would have on him as a disabled person. He briefed the Committee on his medical conditions and advised that when outdoors he couldn't be more than 10 to 15 yards away from a public toilet. He had a mobility vehicle and was a Blue Badge holder and liked to visit the pub at the end of Marine Walk. Under the proposals he would no longer be able to do so and believed that they were being deliberately discriminatory towards disabled people. He stated that life was hard when you were disabled and highlighted the lack of proper toilet facilities between Roker and Seaburn. He believed the situation could easily

be remedied by utilising the area currently containing the stone bench seating to provide additional disabled parking.

The Chairman thanked Mr Dickson for his presentation and invited further questions from the Committee.

Councillor Doyle asked the Officer to what extent, if any, did the Council take account of equality issues in respect of its proposals? The Highways Officer advised that the Council always considered issues of equality when developing a scheme whether it be through the inclusion of dropped kerbs, disabled parking bays etc. In this case, the ETRO was introduced on Marine Walk because the road was so narrow. Its aim was to prevent all parking, not just disabled parking and disabled parking bays were provided nearby

Councillor Doyle asked the Officer to what extent did the Council need to consider the feasibility of alternative proposals? The Highways Officer advised that in respect of Mr Dickson's proposal of the stone seats on the promenade being removed and that space being utilised for disabled parking, the Council would be reluctant to remove seats provided for pedestrians. It would prefer to ask people to use the already existing parking provision rather than diminish the recreational areas.

Councillor Noble stated that the percentage of disabled parking bays within the total parking provision in the area seemed to be low. The Highways Officer replied that no disabled parking provision would be removed as a result of the proposals and drew members attention to Appendix A of the report which showed the 10 disabled bays to the south end of Marine Walk which were to be retained. In Marine Walk car park, there were 50 parking spaces including 7 disabled parking spaces and in Harbour View Car Park there were 128 spaces of which 10 were disabled bays.

Councillor Bewick asked that as the Harbour View Car Park was in the process of being redeveloped, could this be used as an opportunity to increase the number of disabled bays there? The Highways Officer replied that he had already asked this question and it was something that was currently being looked into.

Councillor Reed referred to the paragraph in the report which stated that it was "considered necessary to make the experimental traffic regulation order permanent to maintain road safety for all users particularly pedestrians" and also the comment that the ETRO had been introduced following a number of incidents. He asked if the incidents involved injuries and why wasn't it possible to simply widen the area to allow vehicles sufficient space to turn round? The Highways Officer explained that to do so would result in the loss of the recreational space and it was something that the Council did not want to do. There had been no injuries recorded but there had been numerous reports of near misses between pedestrians and vehicles contained within the many complaints submitted to the Council.

There being no further questions, the Chairman asked the Committee to consider and debate the report.

Councillor Wilson stated that he sympathised with the concerns of the objector, having a close family member who was also disabled, however the issue had been an ongoing problem for the North Area Councillors for over 10 years and during that time there had been numerous near misses. The combination of the beach, children, ice cream and traffic in close proximity was an accident waiting to happen. He added that the North Sunderland Area Committee had even used its budget to fund an Enforcement Officer to specifically patrol Marine Walk. He stated that there had been a lot of near misses, a lot of complaints and the Council couldn't keep dodging the issue. He believed the Council needed to be proactive or the day would come when it wasn't a near miss and there would be a child fatality.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Morrissey, the Highways Officer advised that a Blue Badge Holder could park on a double yellow line unless it was accompanied by restrictions on loading and unloading. In response to a further question from Councillor Dixon, the Officer confirmed that the Council had consulted with local disabled groups on the proposals in accordance with its list of Statutory Consultees.

Councillor Doyle believed there were two issues to consider, firstly the feasibility of accommodating the alternative suggestion proposed by Mr Dickson and secondly the needs of cyclists and pedestrians. He stated that while he sympathised with the concerns voiced by the objector, the Committee had to remain conversant with the needs of pedestrians and make the area safer for pedestrians and cyclists. On that basis, he was happy to support the recommendation.

There being no further comments, the Chairman put the recommendation to the Committee, and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the Executive Director of City Development be advised that:-

- i) The objection to the ETRO, for the proposed scheme under Sections 1, 9, 10 and 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 not be upheld;
- ii) The objector is notified accordingly of the decision; and
- iii) The Executive Director of City Development instruct the Assistant Director of Law and Governance to take all necessary steps to make the experimental traffic regulation order permanent.

**Planning Application Reference 21/00399/FUL - Full Application - Change of use from residential property to children's care home for up to 6 children, with alterations as approved under previous permission 20/01584/FUL - Location: 4 Roker Terrace Sunderland SR6 9NB.**

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above application.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairman informed the Committee that following the publication of the Agenda, the application had been withdrawn by the applicant.

3. RESOLVED that the withdrawal of the application be noted.

**Planning Application Reference 21/01164/LP3 Local Authority (Reg 3) Installation of a NPG high to low voltage power substation – Location Land to the south of European Way, Pallion, Sunderland.**

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above application.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Prior to the presentation of the item, the Chairman advised the Committee that a supplemental report had been tabled which highlighted additional information provided following the publication of the report regarding the results of the Geoenvironmental Appraisal. Members were given 5 minutes to read the supplemental report.

The representative of the Executive Director of City Development presented the report advising the Committee of the key issues to consider in determining the application.

The Chairman thanked the Planning Officer for his presentation. There being no questions for the Officer or comments by Members, the Chairman put the amended recommendation (as detailed in the supplemental report) to the Committee, and it was:-

4. RESOLVED to approve the application in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 (as amended) for the reasons set out in the report, the supplemental report and subject to the condition below:-

1. The development hereby granted permission shall be retained in full accordance with the following approved plans:

Tarmac Sub-station European Way Pallion (dated, 7 June 2021)

General Arrangement / Plans & Elevations (Ref No. C993892 B)

Standard Distribution Substation Drawing (Ref No. C991443 D)

In order to ensure that the completed development accords with the scheme approved and to comply with policy BH1 of the Core Strategy and Development Plan.

### **Items for Information**

Members gave consideration to the items for information contained within the matrix (agenda pages 28-32).

Councillor Doyle having reiterated his previous request that a site visit was undertaken in respect of the following application,

- i) 21/01001/FU4 - Erection of 69 affordable homes with associated infrastructure and landscaping - Land East of Primate Road Sunderland.

It was:-

- 5. RESOLVED that the items for information as set out in the matrix be received and noted.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

(Signed) M. BUTLER  
(Chairman)