

**PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS (EAST) COMMITTEE**  
**4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

**REPORT TO CONSIDER:**  
**OBJECTIONS TO THE TRAFFIC REGULATION**  
**ORDER (TRO) FOR THE PROPOSED PERMANENT**  
**PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES AT THE**  
**JUNCTION FROM VIEWFORTH TERRACE ONTO**  
**A1018 NEWCASTLE ROAD IN THE SOUTHWICK**  
**AREA (SOUTHWICK WARD)**

## REPORT TO PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS (EAST) COMMITTEE:

### **OBJECTIONS TO THE TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER (TRO) FOR THE PROPOSED PERMANENT PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES AT THE JUNCTION FROM VIEWFORTH TERRACE ONTO A1018 NEWCASTLE ROAD IN THE SOUTHWICK AREA (SOUTHWICK WARD).**

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To advise The Committee regarding objections that have been received, by the Council, in respect of the proposed TRO for the permanent prohibition of motor vehicles at the junction from Viewforth Terrace onto A1018 Newcastle Road that is intended in the area of Southwick, and to request the committee to not uphold the objections that cannot be resolved within the constraints of the scheme, as set out below.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Sunderland City Council received requests to further investigate reports of vehicles using Viewforth Drive and Viewforth Terrace to access A1018 Newcastle Road from Thompson Road, avoiding the signalised Grange junction. Investigations and public engagements had been carried out prior to this, with residents being given different options which were aimed at reducing and/or removing the reported issues. Due to a mix of options given, the residents could not agree on the most suitable solution and a scheme was not progressed at that time.
- 2.2. Further discussions were held with ward members which resulted in officers carrying out surveys and visits to the area on differing days and times to gain a full understanding of the reported issues. A camera survey was carried out on 20 September 2018 from 7am – 7pm to determine the number of vehicles using this route to avoid the traffic signals. The time vehicles were spending in the area from entering to exiting was measured to determine number of vehicles using the area to avoid the traffic signals or genuine residents / visitors to the area. The survey showed a total of 1140 vehicles exiting Thompson Road onto Blanchland Drive and Viewforth Drive over the 12 hour period. Of those vehicles, 601 travelled through the housing estate and exited onto Newcastle Road in under 5 minutes, a further 7 vehicles between 5 and 10 minutes and 4 vehicles between 10 and 15 minutes. It was deemed that vehicles travelling through the area in under 5 minutes were avoiding the traffic signals.
- 2.3. A one-way system was designed by Infrastructure & Commercial which would eliminate vehicles using this route to avoid the signalised junction to access A1018 Newcastle Road from Thompson Road. This option was agreed between Infrastructure & Commercial and ward members and engagement packs were delivered to residents of the area on 25 March 2019. These packs included a letter and drawing showing the proposals and a voting slip.

- 2.4. The public engagement resulted in 53.6% returns from the whole area, with 51.2% in favour of the proposals, 45.4% against the proposals and 3.4% abstained.
- 2.5. The voting results were analysed, and it was shown that streets to the north of the proposals were against the scheme (30 votes in favour, 37 votes against and 2 abstain) and the streets south of the proposals were for the scheme (31 votes in favour, 17 votes against and 2 abstain). Many comments from residents north of the proposals highlighted their difficulty returning home. There was also a number of requests for the junction of Viewforth Terrace onto Newcastle Road to be closed to prevent any vehicles cutting the area.
- 2.6. Discussions were again held with ward members, with the issue of access to properties following the introduction of a one-way section highlighted. Further options were then considered including traffic calming and other closure options.
- 2.7. Officers from I&C developed further options and a further meeting was arranged with the ward members. During the meeting it was agreed that Traffic Calming would improve the situation, however residents tend to be against traffic calming directly outside their properties, which at times makes stand alone traffic calming schemes difficult to get on the ground. Comments and requests received from the public engagement were referred to and the request of closing the exit from Viewforth Terrace to A1018 Newcastle Road was highlighted, of which a total of 22 requests were received from residents during the engagement.
- 2.8. The possibility of undertaking an experimental prohibition of motor vehicles was discussed, with ward members in agreement to undertake this.
- 2.9. The experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for the prohibition of motor vehicles was brought into force from 23 September 2019, with the experimental TRO advertised both on site and in the local press. The experimental TRO can be in place for up to 18 months and must be in place for a minimum of 6 months with no changes or alterations. During this period it allows objections to the experimental TRO to be received.
- 2.10. In response to the TRO advertisement the council received 1 objection. In response to the road closure being in place the council received 2 objections. The proposals are shown on plans in Appendix A, the approximate locations of the objectors are shown on a plan in Appendix B, with a summary of the objections in Appendix C and full copies of the objections in Appendix D.

### 3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1. The introduction of the proposed scheme of highway works would have a positive impact on vulnerable and mobility impaired road users including the elderly and children, by preventing vehicles using this route to access A1018 Newcastle Road by avoiding the signalised Grange junction.

3.2. The use of this area to avoid the signalised junction at Thompson Road and Newcastle Road causes a large number of vehicles to enter the area, causing difficulty for all highway users, particularly pedestrians and visitors to the nursery on Viewforth Terrace.

3.3. The large volume of traffic travelling through the area also increases the possibility of a collision within the area.

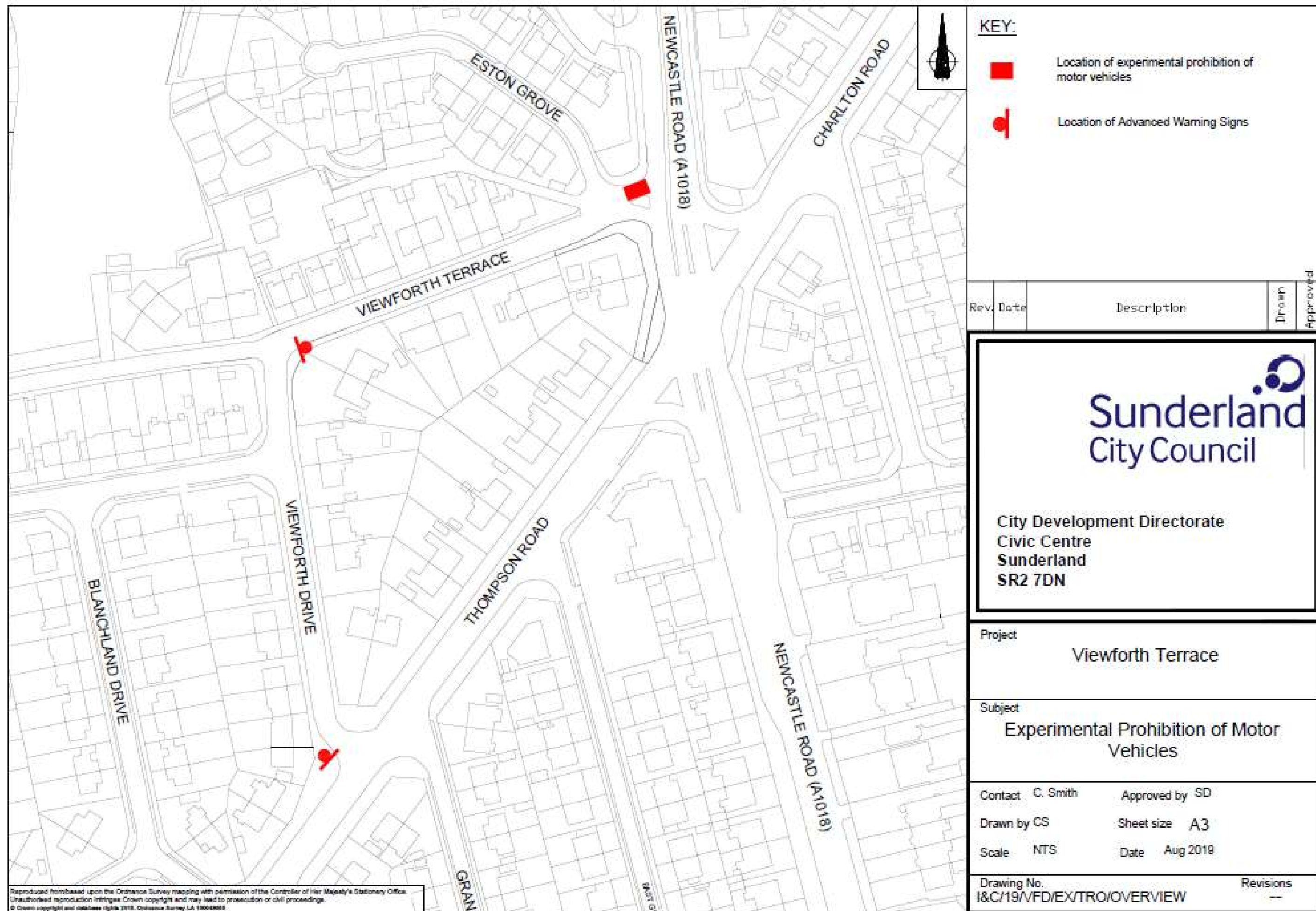
3.4. It is therefore considered necessary to introduce a permanent prohibition of motor vehicles at the junction of Viewforth Terrace / A1018 Newcastle Road to increase safety to all highway users within the area.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATION

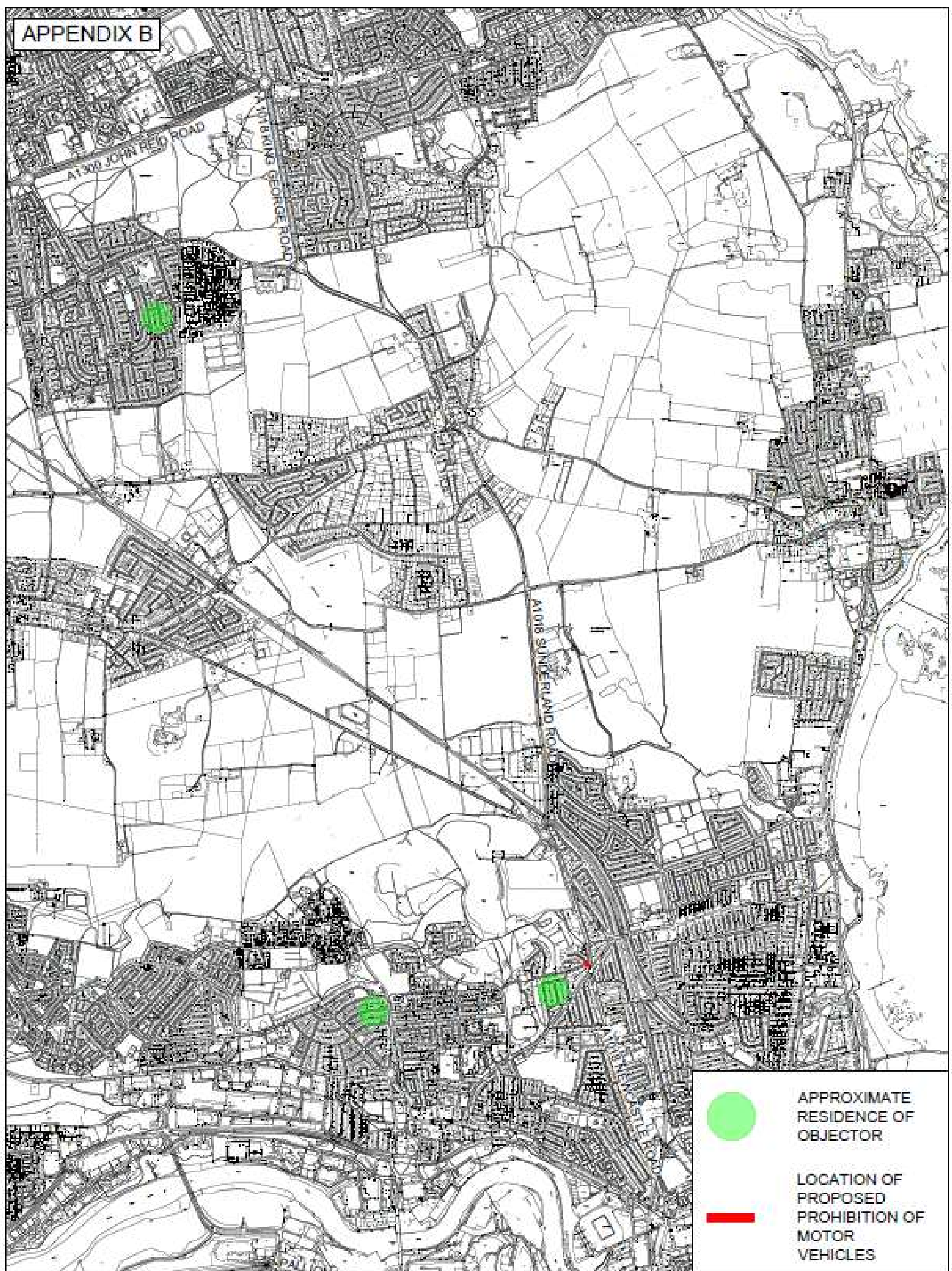
It is RECOMMENDED that the Head of Infrastructure and Transportation be advised that:

- 4.1. **The objections to the permanent prohibition of motor vehicles at the junction of Viewforth Terrace / A1018 Newcastle Road, in the area of Southwick not be upheld;**
- 4.2. **The objectors are advised accordingly;**
- 4.3. **All necessary preparatory works are carried out to enable delivery of the permanent prohibition of motor vehicles on site.**

# APPENDIX A - PROPOSALS



## APPENDIX B- APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS OF OBJECTORS



## **APPENDIX C – SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS**

Objector	Nature of Objection	Consideration of Objection
Objector 1	<p>1. The new route that needs to be taken to leave the area and access Newcastle Road will add around 15 – 20 minutes to a morning journey.</p>	<p>Surveys were carried out at different times and different days to measure the time it would take to reach A1018 Newcastle Road / Viewforth Terrace junction when exiting both Viewforth Drive and Blanchland Drive. The longest period of time taken to reach this point when leaving from Viewforth Drive was 2 minutes and 5 seconds. The longest period of time taken to reach this point when leaving from Blanchland Drive was 1 minute and 59 seconds.</p>
	<p>2. The traffic accessing the nursery on Viewforth Terrace will all now need to leave using Viewforth Drive. This will add to the already bad queue of traffic on Thompson Road. The overflow of this queue will also cause queues of traffic on Blanchland Drive.</p>	<p>Monitoring of traffic movements within the area has been undertaken by Sunderland City Council. No large queues of traffic have been observed during the monitoring. No overflow of traffic into Blanchland Drive has been observed.</p>
Objector 2	<p>1. The route is used as an overflow to relieve congestion when traffic queues at the signalised Thompson Road / A1018 Newcastle Road junction are large. Removing this route is adding too large a vehicle capacity to the junction.</p>	<p>The entrance to Viewforth Drive from Thompson Road is located close to the signalised junction so traffic overflow is not an issue for vehicles that have reached this point. The timings on the signals are also being looked at to provide a longer period of time for the green light to be displayed at the Thompson Road / A1018 Newcastle Road junction.</p>
	<p>2. The signage highlighting the closure of the Viewforth Terrace / A1018 Newcastle</p>	<p>During the experimental road closure, temporary signage mounted on A-</p>

<p>Objector 3</p>	<p>Road junction is minimal and does not clearly highlight the closure ahead.</p> <p>1. The road closure has only been done to pacify a small number of complainants who live in the street.</p> <p>2. There is only half a dozen vehicles that use this route to avoid the traffic signals.</p>	<p>frames are placed within the area, including on the entrance to Viewforth Drive. The signs state that there is no access to A1018 Newcastle Road. Following introduction of a permanent closure of the junction, permanent signage will be displayed showing that the area north of Viewforth Drive is a cul-de-sac.</p> <p>Sunderland Council will consider and investigate all complaints when received. If there is justification and feasibility in carrying out a scheme the council will. The scheme has been put in place using an experimental order to allow all residents / road users the opportunity to raise issues.</p> <p>Surveys carried out prior to the road closure showed 601 vehicles travelling through the area in a 5-minute window between 7am and 7pm.</p>
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## APPENDIX D – FULL COPIES OF OBJECTIONS

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: [REDACTED]  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Experimental road closure viewforth terrace

Hi Stephen,

I've tried to catch you a couple of time on the phone and we keep missing each other.

I feel a bit disappointed and strongly object that the road between Viewforth and Newcastle road is being considered to be closed. I live at [REDACTED], this is my and my families plus many others on the streets primary route to work. Forcing us to use Thompson road will add between 15-20 mins to my morning commute.

I would like to see some numbers from you please as to why you felt this was necessary,

Can I ask to see the results of the public engagement i.e number of houses contacted vrs responses of for and against the road closure?

Can I see the numbers from the traffic counter? I assume you've placed them before and after the junction of Viewforth drive and Thompson road plus half way up viewforth to ascertain the number of traffic actually dodging the lights on a morning?

Have you considered the traffic using High view nursery now being forced back down Viewforth Drive adding further to the already bad Thompson road traffic? There's a fair few vehicles using the junction of Newcastle road both ways for access to the nursery. The closure will simply add a queue of traffic up the length of Viewforth Drive with the overflow from this likely to head down Blanchland drive.

I feel traffic calming measures like those on Cairns Road placed up Viewforth drive would be a better measure than simply closing the road and adding further pressure to an already busy road.

I'd appreciate your response on this



From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: [REDACTED]  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Viewforth terrace road closure

Reference our conversation yesterday, this is my objection to the experimental/permanent closure of the Viewforth terrace and Newcastle road junction.

I object for the following reasons,

#### Rat run

It has been referred to as a rat run, this is not the case, it is an overflow for when the traffic is heavy at the fullwell junction. At present there is a single lane for traffic intending to turn either left, right or carry straight on. If you go ahead with this closure, then filter lanes need to be considered.

#### Safety

Generic road safety has been mentioned as the main reason for the closure. Not a single person I have spoke to has been able to provide figures for accidents on Viewforth terrace. To access Viewforth terrace, you come off from a 'T' junction. At that junction you can only move out slowly due to the restricted view caused by parallel parked cars, you then move onto the Newcastle road junction, again you can only move slowly as you are approaching another 'T' junction. The main hazard in this area is the residents cars that restrict the view of motorists, especially outside the nursery. Alternatives, such as speed bumps, would be a better solution, as well as a no parking area outside of the nursery, like most schools have. It's interesting to note that the Council state road safety as a reason for this closure, when it is the council that turn a blind eye to Taxis parking dangerously on roundabouts, junctions and pedestrian crossings in the town centre.

#### Signage

The only signage indicating the closure, are two signs that state the junction is closed, these signs can easily be mistaken for standard roadwork signs. There is no mention on the signs about the experimental/permanent road closure. I have seen in other areas where similar works are happening, signs that state what is going on and contact details for motorists to gain more information or lodge an objection. At present, there is little to no information available that gives motorists the chance to object, this is unfair and gives those who agree with the closure an unfair advantage. It took me three days to get in touch with someone at Sunderland Council who actually knew that there was a closure, how can motorists be expected to have there say when the majority of the council don't know what's going on. The closure should cease immediately until better signage is in place.

[REDACTED]

Telephoned [REDACTED] to discuss the closure on Viewforth Terrace - she uses this route and is not happy that we have closed it.

I discussed that at the moment it is a temporary measure for us to monitor and we would be revisiting it again in the future.

She asked who she could contact to object against these measures and said that it has only been done to pacify the small number of people who live in the street. I said that in other areas there are several alternative routes to bypass traffic signals such as hospital streets or Sea Road streets. In this instance there was only Viewforth Terrace.

She said she felt the residents there were complaining for the half dozen cars that would use this route.

I stated that we would have monitored the number of vehicles that were cutting through, looked at how many requests that had been received etc. I said I was aware that this issue had been a problem for a number of years and that we had also been contacted by Councillors. She asked me if a Councillor or myself lived in the street.

She asked if she could go to the Secretary of State to complain. I advised that she could use the Council complaints procedure - didn't want to as it was cut and dried and she would not get a different answer to what I discussed

I said she could go to the Ombudsman too who monitor how Council's are ran

I also said she could also go to MP too.

Infrastructure & Commercial informed of conversation