

## Report on Draft Parking Strategy 2007-2011 – Record of Comments

In the following, the comments in black on the Draft Parking Strategy are by R Smith and as forwarded to Mr Kevin Ridpath on 31 May 2007.

The sections in blue are taken from a response from Mr Andrew Flynn, dated 17 October, to a series of e-mails messages and also follow a meeting with Mr Flynn and Mr Cowey at the Killingworth site in September .

The sections in red are further comments by R Smith.

This document was compiled by Robin Smith on 23 October, 2007.

1. The shopping frontage for Whitley Bay, as illustrated in the street map on page 21 is not correct. In addition to that shown the retail frontage in Park View stretches the length from its junction with Norham Road to that with Marine Avenue.

Whilst it is accepted retail units exist with Park View from its junction with Norham Road to Marine Avenue, I would draw your attention to the Council's Unitary Development Plan (March 2002) which indicates the Primary Shopping Frontage, as that which is indicated on page 21 of the Draft Parking Strategy Document.

The Report and the UDP are incorrect and the latter should be corrected when it is updated.

2. The table at the top of page 12 that shows the number of "Council-maintained parking spaces" and the proportion of parking spaces which are charged includes parking spaces that are currently un-marked but not those that are charged privately (Park View shopping centre, for example) or the provision for commuter parking by Nexus. The figures used bias the argument for a "level playing field" in charged parking. The bias is towards raising the level of charged parking, particularly for Whitley Bay: -

Your comments are noted, however, I can confirm the privately owned car parking spaces you identify within Whitley Bay, together with those within Wallsend (The Forum) and North Shields (Beacon Centre) were not included within these calculations. The table refers specifically to those spaces within council control.

3. The consultants' report # referred to on page 23 lists 1434 parking spaces in Whitley Bay of which 7 % are "pay and display". This must be the source of the figures in the table on page 12. Of these 1434 parking spaces, 918 are referred to as "unrestricted" and 194 as "miscellaneous". Only 516 fall under the headings, "Pay & Display", "Free 1 Hour Duration", "Free 2 Hour Duration", "Disabled" and "Miscellaneous". Most, if not all the "unrestricted" spaces must be in residential areas. This is why residents fear that it is residential streets that will be on the hit list for extending charged parking. (# Whitley Bay Parking Study - Scott Wilson Transportation Planning - page 12.)

Whilst we note your comments, it is felt as the majority of streets identified fall within that as defined in the council UDP defined town centre, it is not

unreasonable to expect them to be of a mixed-use nature. The potential schemes as outlined within the Draft Parking Strategy document recognise this usage and reflects the needs of residents / visitors and the commercial sector, i.e. charged parking with resident permit exemption.

The figures in the Scott Wilson report were as of November 2002. During the period that the Whitley Bay Parking Strategy Group met additional charged parking was introduced in Whitley Bay (despite the consistent opposition of the Chamber of Trade representative). The figures in the Scott Wilson report are not correct.

4. The levels of parking provision should be clearly stated, before and after any implementation of that proposed in the illustrations at the end of the report. These levels should include that provided for off-street parking by others. (For example, 173 parking places in the Park View shopping centre and the Metro station in Whitley Bay.) The terms used in the table at the top of page 12 must be clearly defined and the area covered by the category, "Council-maintained parking spaces" delineated. (What is a "Council-maintained parking space"?)

It is our opinion the Draft Parking Strategy document clearly defines the parking arrangements controlled by North Tyneside Council, with appropriate statements being made in respect to those car parks within private ownership, i.e.

North Shields – Beacon Centre page 14

Wallsend – The Forum page 18

Whitley Bay – Park View Shopping Centre page 22.

5. If the on-street parking spaces such as marked along the unrestricted length of Grosvenor Drive (in Whitley Bay) within the last 2 years are included this would give an exaggerated count of "Council-maintained parking spaces".

As the highway is unrestricted and forms part of the adopted highway network, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this should be included within any parking provision

6. In Whitley Bay examples of un-marked parking spaces relevant to the Parking Strategy (for town centres) include stretches of Norham Road from its junction with Park View to beyond its junction with the west end of Grosvenor Drive, and from near the junction with the west end of Grosvenor Drive to its (Norham Road's) junction with Marine Avenue.

Agree

The stretch of Norham Road from near the junction with the west end of Grosvenor Drive to its (Norham Road's) junction with Marine Avenue now has double yellow lines in accordance with TRO published on 5 July 2007.

7. Nowhere in the report is there any reference to the relevance of parking control by use of single and double yellow lines. These, and the lengths of road sides that are unmarked have a direct and substantial influence on parking within nearby restricted "Council-maintained parking spaces" and other off-street parking places outside the control of the Council.

We agree with the comment made, however, the intention of the parking Strategy was to designate those areas in which short/medium and long stay parking would be provided subject to cabinet approval. The detailed schemes would then be consulted upon and implemented through a formal legal process (Traffic Regulation Order) at which time the specific needs for the introduction of additional single/double yellow lines where protection is required, i.e. junction visibility, would be identified.

8. Northumbria Police (Inspector Blacklock) told a Whitley Bay area forum in July 2005 that "parking has been decriminalised". For more than 2 years Northumbria Police have not been enforcing any parking control measures in Whitley Bay, except for parking/waiting on yellow lined roadsides that causes heavy congestion, such as blocking the flow of traffic in Park View, outside St. Pauls Churchyard.

We can confirm North Tyneside Council assumed the powers of parking enforcement through approval from the Secretary of State for Transport as from 24<sup>th</sup> June 2007. Prior to that date any information you require concerning parking enforcement should be directed to Northumbria Police, North Tyneside Area Command, Upper Pearson Street, North Shields, for the attention of their, Chief Superintendent S. Storey.

9. The absence of enforcement over the last 2 years has suited the local traders but not the local residents. Residential streets near the town centre have suffered from shoppers and employees of retail outlets parking vehicles indiscriminately, without fear of penalties.

We agree with the comments made, with the aim of the Parking Strategy to remove the majority of long stay parking, which currently exists within many of our residential streets by providing residential permit parking and charged parking schemes.

10. There is a direct conflict between the objectives of encouraging short-term parking along streets with primary shopping frontages and traffic congestion. Raising the turnover of vehicles means more traffic movements in and out of the main streams of through traffic.

We accept through increased turnover of parking space, traffic movements will also increase, However, that is not unusual issue to encounter on a Primary Shopping Frontage, where vehicles will be entering/exiting on a much more regular basis, but in line with usual driving practise any driver must be aware of the conditions he/she might meets and should therefore drive with due care and attention. There are currently no highway capacity issues on any of the primary shopping frontages.

11. Most of the cars using the Marden Road route to and from the town centre shopping area (see map on page 21) are not stopping in the town centre. Most of these vehicles are owned by residents from the "suburbs" of Whitley Bay, many commuting without using local public transport. Such traffic has increased over recent years, partly due to increased car ownership (see recently published Area Plans that record the North East Area as having the highest percentage of commuters by car, as well as car ownership) but also due to the increase in housing, mainly apartment blocks, within and near the town centre. Reliance on the car

for work and other journeys (PPG13) is not being reduced. The substantial increase in the number of commuters using Whitley Bay and Monkseaton Metro station over recent years is explained by the increased housing in the their catchment areas.

We agree with your comments, however all planning applications are dealt with in accordance with approved guidance and legislation and I would draw your attention to the statement made within PPG13, " As part of an overall approach on parking, covering both the Local transport plan and development plan, local authorities should adopt on-street measures to compliment land use policies. Car parking charges should also be used to encourage the use of alternative modes of transport". To this end the strategy aims to remove long stay commuter parking within the town centres.

The point of my comments was that, despite your best endeavours, traffic congestion and problems arising from parking near the town centre are getting worse. This is because of the excessive density of dwellings in Whitley Bay and it is clear that the Council is not paying attention to the source of the problems and blindly following central government guidelines. The Council should be taking into account the macro as well as the micro scale when dealing with planning applications.

12. In one respect, there is a common interest between local residents and town centre traders, the local residents are also local shoppers. Residential streets are thus used by shoppers who are residents, and their visitors. Conflict arises from traders expecting local residents to provide parking places for their clients as well as their employees. Residential streets must be protected from being viewed - and abused - as places for shoppers to park. The introduction of ticket machines in residential streets advertises the street as a parking place. Shared use with limited waiting also has the same effect. Both ideas flout the principle that residents, who are currently subject to shared use parking controls, support. This principle was expressed in a report for the residents of the Grosvenor Estate (Grosvenor Drive, Kings Drive and Queens Drive) 20 years ago: -

"Residents of the streets should have priority of parking rights over all others; they should not feel any obligation, nor should any obligation be placed upon them, to provide parking spaces outside their homes for local businesses, private or public offices, shops or places of public entertainment etc."

As you are aware a substantial consultation exercise was undertaken by council with all residents whose streets were affected by any potential scheme as outlined within the Draft Parking Strategy, with the results of that exercise being reported to Cabinet as of 14<sup>th</sup> August 2007. Cabinet members were informed of the decision taken to remove those streets from any future plans where residents had indicated they did not wish to see changes being introduced. The majority of residents within those streets of specific interest to yourself, Grosvenor, Queens and Kings Drives indicated they did wish to see shared use/charged parking introduced in their street and it is on that basis council is now proceeding. Further consultation will be taken with all residents as part of the legal process at which time objections can be received over a 21day period. It is felt to ensure the continuing vitality of the town centre as both a residential and commercial location, the introduction of shared use parking, in the short/medium and long

stay provides the best option. One should also bear in mind the majority of those residential streets identified currently stand largely unoccupied for the majority of the working day.

The three streets comprising the Grosvenor Estate were consulted in February of last year about the introduction of residents only parking, following a meeting organised by residents of the west end of Grosvenor Drive. The majority were in favour of the scheme. This is consistent with the views expressed nearly 20 years ago and reflected in a report # prepared by officers of the Grosvenor Estate Residents Association at the time. The recent consultation exercise was flawed – see comments below.

#### Consultation (additional heading)

Under new council procedures it will be possible to provide the cabinet with an official briefing note on this matter, which is fully recorded. We shall seek the cabinet members comments on this proposal.

You do not say what the proposal is! The proposal should be to fully implement the TRO of May 2006, issued following consultation with residents in the Grosvenor Estate.

#### Further clarification (e mail dated 10th September)

I can confirm Kings Drive now operates as a Permit Holder Only parking area on both its sides. This operation came into being as from 24<sup>th</sup> June 2007, following the advertising of an appropriate notice both in the press and on site dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 2007, and replaces the existing order which had been in operation for some years.

The existing order has been in place for about 20 years as it dates back to the time GERA was formed, largely in response to proposals by NTMBC then.

The 5<sup>th</sup> April 2007 TRO is inconsistent within itself and does not reflect the current signage that you say is now correct. In particular schedule 1 and schedule 4 (obtained from the Town Hall on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2007) are inconsistent with plan WHITRES/005 (dated 23/03/07) and do not describe the current limits of Permit Holders Parking Places (schedule 1) and Limited Waiting Parking Places (schedule 4).

As explained at the time of your meeting with Andy Flynn and Mike Cowey at these offices, the existing permit scheme operating within Grosvenor Drive, between its junction with Marden Road and Kings Drive, whilst once covering all days and all hours, now operates Monday – Saturday, 8am – 6pm and was subject to alteration as per the above order. The signage and markings within Grosvenor and Kings Drive are correct and comply with that order. It will however, be our intention to re-examine this current order as part of our review and potential scheme within the Grosvenor Drive area.

At our meeting at the Killingworth site you stated that a TRO would be issued to return the east end of Grosvenor Drive to all days/all hours. Neighbours have told me that they have complained about the change in hours and the signage that encourages casual parking in the street at the times that residents and their visitors have the highest demand.

From the 154 properties letter-dropped within Grosvenor, Kings and Queens Drives, 66 responded with 52% in favour of the introduction of medium stay charged parking with residential permit exemption.

Letters were indeed forwarded to each resident within those streets identified in the parking strategy, in which a potential scheme could be introduced.

# The report for the Grosvenor Estate Residents Association (GERA) may be downloaded from the Internet page, <http://freespace.virgin.net/smith.robin/local.htm>.

Table 1 on page 12 of the GERA report records that there are 152 “dwelling houses” in the Grosvenor Estate. This compares with your figure of 154 properties. Letters were not dropped into Grosvenor Drive east (26 dwelling houses) and their absence led to my querying Cllr. McGarr, ‘where were the promised letters?’

All dwellings in the Grosvenor Estate should have been sent letters as all are affected by any changes in traffic movements in the three streets even if there were to be no changes to particular parts envisaged in the Draft Parking Strategy Report.

The letters that were delivered gave a tick-box choice of ‘no change’ and ‘charged parking with permit holders exemptions’. Given this choice I am surprised at the very small majority who voted for an improvement over ‘no change’!