

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

PETITIONS COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Petitions Committee** held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Morpeth on Wednesday, 17 October 2018 at 12.30pm

PRESENT

R. Dodd
(Chair, in the Chair)

MEMBERS

T Cessford
B Flux

L Rickerby
M Swinburn

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

G Castle
R Moore

G Sanderson

OFFICERS

M Bird
P Jones

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Service Director - Local Services

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

One member of the press

01. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED that the committee's membership and terms of reference, as agreed by Council on 2 May 2018, be noted.

02. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Campbell, Cartie and S Davey.

03. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Petitions Committee held on Wednesday, 21 June 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and

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signed by the Chair.

04. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors Castle and Moore declared that they were members of Alnwick Town Council.

05. COMMITTEE PROCEDURE

Reference was made to the procedure that the committee needed to follow when considering petitions. The Cabinet member for Local Services and two local members for the Alnwick electoral division were all also present.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

06. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DELIVERY

Petition: Parking Permits for Workers in Alnwick

Members were advised that the lead petitioner was not in attendance, but she had submitted a response to the committee report. A copy of her response had previously been circulated to committee members, and copies were also provided at the meeting.

In the absence of the lead petitioner, the report was introduced by the Director of Local Services. He explained how the petition opposed the change of some parking spaces from long to short term on Greenwell Road, Alnwick. This change had been implemented as part of a much wider programme of activity that sought to address the key parking issues affecting Alnwick, which had been developed following a detailed study of parking in the town and comprehensive consultation and stakeholder engagement activity. This had resulted in the production of a Parking Action Plan for Alnwick, which had been formally agreed by Alnwick Town Council and the County Council. The agreed position within the action plan was that more short term parking was needed in Alnwick for shoppers and tourists. The new restrictions would widen the range of measures to improve parking in the town. The petitioners' request for permits would go against views raised in the consultation and the agreed action plan, nor would it improve parking capacity in Alnwick.

The Cabinet member for Local Services added that a considerable amount of time had been spent talking to Alnwick Town Council and other partners about how to control and increase the efficiency of parking arrangements in Alnwick. The agreed measures might not suit everybody but they needed time to be tested and would be reviewed in due course.

In response to a question, members were advised that all the parking action plans undertaken had been published on the Council's webpage and widely circulated.

Letters had been sent to all town/parish councils in the county about the review. Numerous face to face discussions had taken place in Alnwick, including with Alnwick Town Council, Alnwick Chamber of Trade, Alnwick Gardens, Tourism Association, and the Civic Society.

Councillors Castle and Moore then spoke as local members for Alnwick. Councillor Castle acknowledged that it was a long standing issue as it was in many local areas. In August 2017 a survey had been undertaken which found that the car park in Greenwell Lane was full by 9am but not of shoppers. Alnwick Town Council agreed that the balance of parking needed to change, and the proposed way forward should be tested for a year. Alnwick Town Council, through the Alnwick Forum, were looking at alternative sites for more parking, which might include the old Duchess High School site and Pottergate. 72 long stay places had been converted to short stay, and hopefully would be replaced with additional new long stay bays elsewhere. The only justified essential use for a special category of parking was for the emergency services. Councillor Moore supported this and added that introducing workers' permits was not the solution. The proposal should be allowed to run its course; it was responding to a desired need locally for more short term parking.

Another member added that allowing workers to park anywhere would result in short term bays being used as long stay ones, and shoppers would then have to park further away. The need for more long stay parking applied throughout Northumberland. Another member added that all town centres had parking challenges and Councillors Castle, Moore and Sanderson would all continue to look at and discuss the situation with local stakeholders. Reference was also made to the permit system at Manor Walks in Cramlington, which was difficult to manage and would be even more difficult if rolled out on a larger scale. Blyth also had parking challenges; a member expressed concern about the precedent that would be set if the petitioners' request was supported by the Council.

The Cabinet member added that complaints about parking had led to the consultation taking place, and the arrangements would be reviewed in 12 months' time. Members agreed that they wished to reject the petition; procedural advice was then provided that members were able to reject the petitioners' request, but petitions could only actually be rejected if they failed to meet certain requirements, for example they were rejected if they concerned categories of exempt information or included false statements. Following this it was then:

RESOLVED that

- (1) the issues raised in the petition be noted;
- (2) the significant amount of work and engagement that has taken place following the Parking Study and the ongoing work to secure additional long stay parking be noted; and
- (3) the request for workers' parking permits is not supported for the reasons set out in the committee report.

07. FUTURE MEETINGS

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It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 23 January 2019 at 2.00pm.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....