Nottingham City Council



Statement of Policy for the use of Barriers on Rights of Way



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Appendix A "The Check List"

Front cover images: left image "A" frame barrier, centre image staggered (off set) barrier, right image "K" barrier

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PREFACE

This Statement of Policy sets out Nottingham City Council's (referred to as 'the Council' in the remainder of this document) position on the use of safety barriers or other objects or structures on the local rights of way network within the Council's area.

This Statement of Policy includes the Policies to which the Council will have regard when undertaking its duties under the Highways Act 1980 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council is the Highway Authority for the purposes of the Highways Act 1980.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this Statement of Policy, the definition of the local rights of way network includes footpaths, cycle paths, cycleways, bridleways, riverside walkways, greenways, restricted byways, byways open to all traffic and any other path, track or way that the public have used "as of right¹" for at least twenty years regardless of whether or not it is recorded in the Definitive Map and Statement. The Definitive Map and Statement is the Council's legal register of all known public paths within its area. Vehicular carriageways including the footways (pavements) are not the subject of this Statement of Policy.
- 1.3 In Nottingham, like many other major cities, the local rights of way network suffers abuse from unauthorised mechanically propelled vehicles (mainly offroad motorcycles, quad bikes and mini-motos) which disrupt the community and cause safety concerns. In an attempt to address this problem, safety barriers or other objects or structures have been installed at a number of known "hot spots".
- 1.4 The challenge for the Council is to identify a solution that will deter unauthorised mechanically propelled vehicles whilst maintaining adequate and safe access for legitimate users. Whilst the safety barriers or other objects or structures have been reasonably successful in deterring unauthorised users, they also compromise, and in some cases actually deter, users of mobility aids, pedal cycles, people who are of above average size and users of double buggy prams and push chairs. It is necessary to strike a balance between ensuring, for example, that disabled users have equal access whilst at the same time ensuring that their safety is not compromised. Balancing the competing interests of user groups therefore requires very careful consideration and the Council has been mindful of this in its approach to tackling the problem of

¹

[&]quot;As of right" means the use by the public must be without force, secrecy or permission

unauthorised users. Thus, adopting a course of action based on investigating problem sites and installing safety barriers or other objects or structures as and when appropriate can be an effective way of addressing the problem.

- 1.5 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2006/7 to 2010/11 (ROWIP) was approved by Full Council on the 15th October 2007. The ROWIP sets out the Council's actions for improving the local rights of way network. The ROWIP acknowledges the difficulty that some users face when trying to negotiate particular safety barriers or other objects or structures. This Statement of Policy provides the framework to progress the Statement of Actions for Policy ROWIP 13, Policy ROWIP 14, Policy ROWIP 15 and Policy ROWIP 17. These are:
- 1.5.1 ROWIP 13: The City Council will prepare a new Guide for the control of unauthorised mechanically propelled vehicles on public paths and other public areas
- 1.5.2 ROWIP 14: The City Council will provide a safe and user friendly environment to encourage more people to walk to their destination and will continue to improve existing paths and create new paths wherever possible
- 1.5.3 ROWIP 15: The City Council will provide a safe and user friendly environment to encourage more people to cycle to their destination and will continue to improve existing paths and create new paths wherever possible
- 1.5.4 ROWIP 17: The City Council will continue to consult people with limited mobility the blind and partially sighted and where possible ensure all paths are accessible by all

2 DUTY OF THE HIGHWAY AUTHORITY

Section 130(1) of the Highways Act 1980 places a statutory duty on the Highway Authority to:-

- (a) assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are the Highway Authority; and
- (b) prevent as far as possible the stopping up or obstruction of those highways

3 POWERS OF THE HIGHWAY AUTHORITY

- 3.1 The Highways Act 1980 Act provides the Highway Authority with a number of discretionary powers to help them carry out their duty. These powers include:-
- 3.1.1 Section 62 empowers a Highway Authority with the "general power of *improvement*" and more specifically Section 62(3)(a) may be used for the "provision of subways, refuges, pillars, walls, barriers, rails, fences, or posts for the use or protection of persons using the highway."
- 3.1.2 Section 66(3) covers "*safety provisions*" and provides that "a Highway Authority may provide and maintain in a highway maintainable at the public expense by them which consists of a footpath² such barriers, rails, fences as they think necessary for the purpose of safeguarding persons using the highway."

4 PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT OF POLICY

4.1 This Statement of Policy forms the basis of a consistent evidence based approach which considers, fully, the circumstances when a safety barrier or other object or structure is or is not the most appropriate action. It highlights the other measures that should be tried and tested, for example enforcement action, using available legislation (and shown to have failed) and

²The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the Highways Act 1980 Section 66(3) and inserts "or bridleway", after "footpath" and inserts "posts" after "barriers".

who should be consulted before a safety barrier or other object or structure is authorised and installed. Finally, if the decision is to install a safety barrier or other object or structure, this Statement of Policy will help the Council determine the most appropriate type to use for a particular problem and location. In short, this Statement of Policy provides a consistent approach for dealing with unauthorised mechanically propelled vehicles on the local rights of way network.

- 4.2 The purpose of this policy is to:
 - provide a clear basis for determining requests for safety barriers or other objects or structures
 - to show that decisions are evidence based and take into account, amongst other factors, intelligence provided by the Crime and Drugs Partnership³
 - provide a means of ensuring consultation with potentially affected parties is carried out and any responses are taken into account in decision making
 - provide a framework for determining what other measures must be tried, tested and shown to have failed (for example using the least restrictive options set out at Policy BP1 first)
 - ensure that the least restrictive option is used first
 - help decide which is the most appropriate design of safety barriers or other objects or structures for a particular problem and location
- 4.3 Through this Statement of Policy the Council will establish an evidence based approach to the use of safety barriers or other objects or structures that is based on principles of fairness, reasonableness and proportionality. This will be achieved by:
 - Carrying out a site based assessment of the problem;
 - Using intelligence from the Crime and Drugs Partnership;

³ The Crime and Drugs Partnership facilitate meetings with representatives of the Council, the Police, the Probation Service, Nottingham City Homes, local NHS Trusts and the Fire and Rescue Service. The meetings discuss geographical "hot spots" of crime and anti-social behaviour on the basis of incident data on a regular basis.

- establishing and building upon best practice;
- engaging local citizens and relevant user groups before making a decision whether or not to install a safety barrier or other object or structure;
- reviewing the effectiveness of the safety barriers or other objects or structures;
- reviewing the effectiveness and relevance of this Statement of Policy on a three yearly basis

5 CONSULTATION IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS STATEMENT OF POLICY

- 5.1 Following discussions with Transport Initiatives, as part of the Cycling England Professional Advice Programme to Local Authorities, a consultation event was held in October 2007. Different users including walkers, cyclists, users of pushchairs, less able/mobility aid users, the Nottingham Disability Advisory Group⁴ and the Nottingham Local Access Forum⁵ were invited to a consultation event and asked to try three different safety barriers and then share their experiences by completing a questionnaire.
- 5.2 The following documents and guidance notes have been considered in the preparation of this Statement of Policy:

Regulating the use of motor vehicles on public rights of way and off road. A Guide for Local Authorities, Police and Community Safety Partnerships Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs December 2005.

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs tackling noise nuisance issues www.defra.gov.uk/environment/noise/neighbour.htm

The Home Office Respect Task Force www.respect.gov.uk

⁴The Nottingham Disability Advisory Group is made up of representatives from various national disability organisations and independent individuals and advise the Council on disability access issues. ⁵The Nottingham Local Access Forum was formed as a result of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 section 90-95 and advises the Highway Authority and other agencies on strategic access and recreation issues.

The Home Office and the Department for Transport www.respect.gov.uk/members/article.aspx?id=7684 and www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_0391 26.hcsp

Misuse of Small Vehicles. Information for Members of Parliament. Department for Transport. January 2007

Structures on Rights of Way. Guidance for Local Authorities – including the implications for the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) Version 1 Draft 1 (not released at time of writing) February 2009.

Cycling England Design Portfolio. B.08 Access and Speed Controls. http://www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/

Inclusive Mobility. A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure. Department for Transport 2002 (and amendments)

Authorising Structures (Gaps, Gates & Stiles) on Rights of Way – Good Practice Guidance for Local Authorities on Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs October 2010)

A Guide to Controlling Access on Paths – Sustrans January 2012 http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/design%20and%20construction/Access %20Control%20Guide%20Jan%202012.pdf

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

6.1 Delivery of this Policy will be in accordance with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and Equality scheme – 'Fair and Just Nottingham'. This Policy has been formulated with the benefit of an Equality Impact Assessment (see Section 5 above) which involved engaging representatives from the community which in turn informed the Policy. The Policy will be subject to on-going monitoring and user / citizen / stakeholder consultation within the framework of its objectives. Relevant matters that come to light as a result of monitoring and consultation may result in changes to service delivery and, where necessary, may result in changes to this Policy.

6.2 All Council documents are available in alternative formats via the Language Solutions Team.

7 OFFICERS INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS STATEMENT OF POLICY

The preparation of this Statement of Policy has involved the following:

Access Manager, Advice, Technical Excellence & Reactive Maintenance and Facilities Management Access Officer, Building Control, Planning and Transport Strategy Corporate Planning and Review Team Equality and Community Relations Team Strategy Manager, Crime & Drugs Partnership Partnerships Team Rights of Way Officer, Traffic Management Solicitor for the Council Team Leader, Traffic Management Team for Visual Impairment

8 LINKS TO OTHER COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- 8.1 This Statement of Policy will help the Council meet the objectives of the following Plans:
- 8.1.2 The Council Plan 2009 2012 is fully aligned with the Nottingham Plan to 2020 (Sustainable Community Strategy) and sets out six Strategic Priorities to achieve the type of City we are all proud of. These Strategic Priorities include

"World Class Nottingham" a key element of which is to improve accessibility to and across Nottingham; "Neighbourhood Nottingham within which key elements include improving both the attractiveness of housing offer, and physical access and infrastructure; "Safer Nottingham" to reduce crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour; "Healthy Nottingham" to improve health and well being -This Statement of Policy will support these Strategic Priorities. It will also support the Nottingham Plan's cross cutting themes, in particular green (being environmentally sustainable) and fairness (achieving fairness and equality of opportunity). The Local Transport Plan and Crime and Drugs Partnership Plan (see below) are integral to the Nottingham Plan to 2020.

- 8.1.3 The Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP3) was published in April 2011 which sets out its programme to deliver improvements to the walking and cycling network up to 2026 This Statement of Policy will help deliver these improvements.
- 8.1.4 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2006/7 to 2010/11 (November 2007) includes a number of Policies and Statement of Actions (as described earlier in this Policy at paragraph 1.5). The ROWIP (ROWIP2) will be refreshed in 2012 so it's fully aligned with priorities set out in The Nottingham Plan to 2020 (Sustainable Community Strategy) This Statement of Policy will support ROWIP2.
- 8.1.5 Crime and Drugs Partnership Plan 2011/12 2013/14 includes a number of specific targets to reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour across Nottingham by 2014 This Statement of Policy will help meet these and future targets.

9 POLICY LISTING AND REASONING

POLICY: BP1

The Council shall use the 'least restrictive option' as far as possible. The options (in order of the least restrictive option first) are:

•criminal prosecutions under road traffic legislation including warning notices issued by the Police and anti-social behaviour orders / abatement notices for statutory nuisance issued by the Council and other action by the Police Authority and / or other partner agencies including education / publicity campaigns. These options are the least restrictive in terms of the degree of access to the local rights of way network that will be reduced as a result of such measures being implemented. On the other hand, they are aimed at addressing the behaviour of the individuals responsible for the unauthorised use of mechanically propelled vehicles so that the impact on members of the public is to promote their safe and quiet enjoyment of the local rights of way network without compromising their level of access.

•single bollard or multiples thereof set at a distance of not less than 1.0 metre⁶ (1000 mm) between the inside edge of each bollard (Inclusive Mobility: Department for Transport 2002 and amendments)

•staggered barriers set to a minimum of not less than 1.2 metres (1.5 metres preferred if on-site physical constraints permit) between each barrier and adjacent walls, structures etc (Inclusive Mobility: Department for Transport 2002 and amendments)

•motorcycle inhibitor barrier which is designed and installed specifically to deter motorcycles and quad bikes. This option is the most restrictive in terms of the degree of access that would result from their installation.

⁶The prescribed measurement is subject to amendment by subsequent legalisation and /or guidance

•the Council may use powers under Section 92(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to restrict unauthorised mechanically propelled vehicles using the local rights of way network through the introduction of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). The TRO may authorise such safety barriers or other objects or structures as the Council may consider appropriate for enforcing the restrictions. A TRO may also be introduced without safety barriers or other objects or structures. Therefore, a TRO may be both the least restrictive and the most restrictive option.

POLICY: BP2

The Council shall first consider all other available options to address the problems arising from the unauthorised use of mechanically propelled vehicles before it decides upon the use of safety barriers or other objects or structures.

There are a number of legislative powers that may help to resolve the problems which are summarised in the Government Guidance issued by DEFRA referred to in section 5 above. These include the powers mentioned below (but it should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list):

- Police powers to prosecute under Section 34(1) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 which provides that anyone driving a mechanically propelled vehicle without lawful authority on land not forming part of a road or on a road that is a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway is guilty of an offence.
- The Road Traffic Act 1991 extended the scope of the main driving offences under Sections 1-3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 to include acts of dangerous driving and careless and inconsiderate driving of a mechanically propelled vehicle in a public place. This has enabled prosecutions to be brought for offences committed whilst driving such vehicles in off-road areas to which the public have access.

• The Police have powers under Section 59 and Section 60 of the Police Reform Act 2002 where (a) such vehicles are being used in a manner which constitutes careless and inconsiderate driving or in breach of the prohibition against driving elsewhere than on roads, and (b) is causing or is likely to cause alarm, distress or annoyance to members of the public. These powers include the power to order the person driving the vehicle to stop, the power to seize and remove the vehicle, and powers regarding the release or disposal of such motor vehicles. The Police also have a power to issue a fixed sum penalty notice (£80.00 at the time of writing) for disorder and for behaviour likely to cause alarm, distress or harassment.

• Section 33 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 provides a person must not promote or take part in a trial of any description between motor vehicles on a footpath or bridleway unless such an event has been authorised by the Local Authority. It is an offence under Section 33 (3) to promote or take part in an unauthorised event or to contravene any conditions attached to an authorisation.

• Under the Criminal Damage Act 1971, it is an offence to damage any property belonging to another person. If the value of the damaged property is below £300.00 (at the time of writing), the Police have powers under the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 to issue a fixed sum penalty notice (£80.00 at the time of writing), for the criminal damage. In addition to the possibility of being prosecuted for the criminal offence, the landowners may also initiate civil proceedings in the County Court to recover the cost of repairs. For example, a school playing field may be damaged because of ruts left behind by riders of quad bikes and/or off road motorcycles.

 In addition to the Police powers under the road traffic legislation, the Council has powers of enforcement under Section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 where statutory nuisances have been committed.
These include: (a) noise emitted from premises so as to be prejudicial to health ('premises' include land and so is not restricted to buildings or structures); and (b) noise that is prejudicial to health or a nuisance which is emitted from or caused by a vehicle, machinery or equipment in a street. The Council may issue abatement notices once satisfied that a statutory nuisance exists or is likely to occur. It is an offence not to comply with an abatement notice which is punishable by a fine up to £5,000 (at the time of writing of this policy) together with a further fine of an amount equal to onetenth of that fine for each day on which the offence continues after the conviction. The Council also has the power under Section 81 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to seize and remove any equipment used whilst committing noise nuisance.

Additional statutory measures are available:

Anti Social Behaviour Orders -

ASBOs under Section 1(C) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 can play a part in dealing with the issue of nuisance caused by the anti-social use of mechanically propelled vehicles. These may be particularly appropriate in cases of persistent offending where, for example, other measures such as the issue of warning notices by the Police under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002 have not been effective in discouraging /preventing behaviour such as careless driving or causing alarm or distress or annoyance to members of the public.

REASON: to ensure compliance with the Council's duty to:

- assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are the Highway Authority; and
- prevent as far as possible the stopping up or obstruction of those highways

POLICY: BP3

In relation to young offenders, before recommendations for criminal prosecutions are made, the Council shall have regard to the Code for Crown

Prosecutors. This applies to youths i.e. young people under the age of 18 as well as adults; additional considerations apply which recognise that a prosecution is a serious step to take against young people and should only be taken where the offence is serious or other measures are inappropriate. The Code contains guidance about the common factors to be considered when deciding if it is in the public interest to prosecute minors. In addition, the Council should have regard to the welfare and interests of young offenders. It is also important to assess the history / pattern of offending in order to determine if the young person is a persistent young offender.

REASON: to ensure compliance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors and to follow guidance on the appropriateness of pursuing the criminal justice system in the case of young persons.

POLICY: BP4

The Council recognises the importance of striking a balance between competing interests of access on the one hand, and safety of users on the other hand with regard to all sections of the community. Circumstances may arise where disabled persons may feel that their access is being restricted in favour of others. The Council will have regard to the needs of disabled persons when making decisions to place safety barriers or other objects or structures which may impede their mobility in accordance with Section 175A of the Highways Act 1980. The Council will also be mindful of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to avoid discrimination and to make reasonable adjustments. The Council will have regard to the access and safety needs of all users so that any safety barriers or other objects or structures do not compromise the health and safety of any person (including disabled persons). The duties under the Equality Act 2010 will be exercised in conjunction with the Council's duties to ensure the safety of users (whether disabled or not) as required by Section 62(3) (a) and Section 66(3) of the Highways Act 1980.

The guiding principle in the Equality Act 2010 is whether the treatment [i.e. the action in question] is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Advice from the Government Equalities Office states that the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 relating to indirect discrimination and discrimination arising from disability allow for objective justification. The effect of this principle is similar to the pre-Equality Act 2010 provision contained in Section 21D (4) (a) of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (now repealed) which stated that "the treatment, or non-compliance with the duty [i.e. the duty not to discriminate], is necessary in order not to endanger the health and safety of any person (which may include that of the disabled person". Thus, for example, circumstances may arise where the Council has legitimately installed a safety barrier, object or other structure after having carried out an assessment of its impact on all users, because it is considered to be a proportionate means of achieving the legitimate aim of promoting and safeguarding the health and safety of the public (including disabled persons); and, whilst this may result in some restricted access to some users, it will not constitute discrimination. Each situation will be considered on its individual merits. However, the Council will make all reasonable efforts to understand where the balance of benefits lies and to reach a decision which contains the maximum benefits available to the widest range of citizens.

It should be noted that the definition of mechanically propelled vehicles in the context of the offences mentioned earlier in this Policy have specific exclusions in relation to vehicles used by disabled persons.

REASON: to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and Sections 62, 66 and 175A of the Highways Act 1980.

POLICY: BP5

All requests for a safety barrier or other object or structure shall be subject to the same 'Check List' assessment before a decision is made on whether or not to install a safety barrier or other object or structure. The 'Check List' is attached to this Statement of Policy as Appendix A. Should the decision be to install a safety barrier or other object or structure, it must be monitored over a period of at least 12 months with recorded evidence to determine whether the safety barrier or other object or structure has helped to reduce the problem. It is important that local residents should formally report their concerns to the Police as this will assist them, in conjunction with the Council's Community Protection Service, to make a full and proper assessment possibly leading to the location becoming designated as a "hot spot" requiring appropriate measures to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

REASON: to establish whether or not there is an evidence based need for the safety barrier or other object or structure

REASON: to ensure that all decisions are consistent, fair and justified

REASON: to show what other measures have been tried and tested and failed to solve the problem before a safety barrier or other object or structure is installed

REASON: to provide an audit trail of who has been consulted leading to the decision on whether or not to install a safety barrier or other object or structure **REASON:** to establish whether or not the safety barrier or other object or structure has been effective and reduced the problem

POLICY: BP6

All potentially affected parties shall be consulted and their views taken into account before a decision is taken on whether or not to install a safety barrier or other object or structure

REASON: to ensure the decision is informed by those who may be most affected by either the unauthorised mechanically propelled vehicle(s) or by the installation of a safety barrier or other object or structure

POLICY: BP7

Before a safety barrier or other object or structure is installed, authorisation must be obtained in writing from the proper authorising person

The request for authorisation must include:

(1) details of the problems and evidence in support of the safety barrier or other object or structure; and

(2) details of any other measures to resolve the problems that have been tried, tested and have failed; and

(3) a clear description of the type of safety barrier or other object or structure to be authorised and installed; and

(4) a plan showing the location of the proposed safety barrier or other object or structure.

REASON: to ensure there is an evidence based audit trail and that the safety barrier or other object or structure is deemed a lawful structure having been authorised by the proper authorising person

POLICY: BP8

An authorised safety barrier or other object or structure shall have the appropriate safety features and will include any or all of the following;

- (1) visibility strips
- (2) tactile treatments

(3) any other safety features that are deemed appropriate for a particular location

REASON: to ensure that the safety of any persons with limited mobility or who are blind or partially sighted is promoted.

10 MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Policy will be formally reviewed every three years from its implementation. However, it will also be subject to ongoing monitoring and review and may be amended in the interim as and when considered appropriate. In preparing the succeeding Policy, regard will be had to data and information collated over the operating period of the current Policy together with trends and the outcome of related initiatives from both local sources and nationally issued information and guidance.

<u>APPENDIX A</u>

Who / why / what	Who / what	Tick <u>√</u>	Reason for no tick	Other comments
Who requested the safety barrier or other object or structure?	Police / Council's Community Protection Service			
	Local residents / community group			
	Local Councillors / Neighbourhood Management Team			
	User group(s) (please specify)			
	Other (please specify)			
Why is the safety barrier or other object or structure needed?				
	Public safety (incident already occurred)			
	Anti-social behaviour			
	Crime			
	Other (please specify)			

Who has been consulted?	Police / Council's Community Protection Service	
	Local residents / community group	
	Local Councillors / Neighbourhood Management Team	
	User groups(s) (please specify)	
	Other (please specify)	
What other measures to deal with the problem have been tried, tested	Legal enforcement by Council (e.g. Notices)	
and have failed?	Legal enforcement by Police / Council's Community Protection	
	Service (e.g. Fixed Penalty Notice)	
	Publicity vehicle crushing campaign	
If the decision is to	A Frame	
install a safety barrier or		
other object or structure,	K barrier	
what is the most		
appropriate type /	Chicane / staggered	

design?	Bollard (multiple of)		
	Other (please specify)		
Monitoring: It is	Consultation with:		
necessary to carryout monitoring of the safety	the Police / Council's		
barrier or other object or structure to establish its			
effectiveness	Local residents / community group		
Include the results of the monitoring on a separate sheet and attach it to this Form			
	User groups(s) (please specify)		
	Other (please specify)		

ASSESSMENT AND CHECK LIST COMPLETED BY:

NAME.....

TITLE / POSITION.....

SIGNED......DATE.....

ON BEHALF OF NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL, TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT