

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL EXPERIMENTAL ORDER No.2 2021

STATEMENT OF REASONS

The Order is made pursuant to sections 9 and 10 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. In compliance with section 1 of the Act it is considered expedient to make the Order for the following reasons:

1. for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising; and
2. for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs.

A letter from Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP - Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government dated 5 March sets out the road map for the Supporting the reopening of outdoor hospitality. This states *“Given the continuing importance of the outdoors to reduce transmission of the virus, I strongly encourage you to plan for outdoor dining and make all necessary changes to local high streets, squares and the public realm so this is as convenient as possible for businesses and members of the public.”*

This is as a direct result of the extension to the pavement licence provisions on 22 July 2020 in the Business and Planning Act 2020. These temporary provisions are currently due to expire on 30 September 2021, but to give further certainty to businesses will be extended for a further 12 months, subject to Parliamentary approval.

Information and Analysis.

Traffic entering Skinnergate is currently controlled by a lowering/raising bollard at the end of Duke Street and TRO to prohibit motor vehicles entering Skinnergate south of Duke Street junction between the hours of Mon-Sat 10am-5pm and Sun 10.30am-5pm with exemptions. The exemptions include emergency vehicles, local authority or water authority vehicles, events vehicles, bullion vehicles, a qualifying vehicle being driven by a permit holder and the vehicle is displaying a permit in the relevant position and a Universal Services Provider.

An experimental order is being used as a trial to ascertain whether there would be an appropriate level of uptake from interested hospitality businesses to provide al fresco dining longer term and what affect closing Skinnergate for a longer time period each day would have on traffic patterns and movement through this area of the Town with a view. This experimental process would provide information to enable the Council to consider whether there should be consideration and engagement of moving to a more permanent arrangement.

The exemptions would be extended to allow delivery vehicles to enter the road closure which would directly service takeaway businesses serving food accessed from Skinnergate and this would be policed by a marshal at the start of the road closure.

The existing footways and dropped crossings on Skinnergate will remain clear of obstruction and disabled access will be maintained at all times during the period of the road closure.

A methodology for assessing the success or otherwise of the experimental order will be used to feed into considerations for future proposals in the area and this would involve feedback from local businesses, Town Centre Management Team and local stakeholders including bus and taxi firms and whether suitable traffic flow has been maintained during the closure hours.

A review of the road closure would be carried out 12 months after first implementation to provide sufficient time for the responses to be assessed.

The Police have been consulted on the above proposals and have no objection to the experimental order being introduced.