

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has been included in the relevant Forward Plan.

Report of the Executive Director of Place

Maximising Free Parking Post Multi-Storey Demolition

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to amend and fund the change of parking restrictions in order to prioritise shoppers and maximise free weekend parking post the demolition of the multi-story car park.

2. Recommendations

The recommendation is that to ensure sufficient parking capacity for all car park users cabinet approve:

- 2.1 Authorisation for the head of highways, engineering and transportation and the Director of Legal and Governance to make and implement the amendments to; Off-Street Parking Place Order, Town Centre Parking Place and CPZ Orders Facilitating the creation of new parking zones and maximise parking capacity efficiency.
- 2.2 Additional funding for signage, public and staff communications.
- 2.3 Authorisation to enter into an agreement with the Brooke group to undertake the management of Gateway Plaza car parks.
- 2.4 Authorisation to further explore the repurposing of the old needle exchange on John Street to increase John Street car park's capacity.

3. Introduction

As part of the Glassworks Phase 2 developments, the demolition of the multi-story car park has been scheduled for 2018 (Date TBC) with the replacement due for completion in 2020. As a consequence town centre parking capacity will be reduced by a total of 598 spaces.

- Multi-story - 495 spaces;
- Market Basement – 80 spaces and;
- Lambra Road – 23 spaces.

The impact of the loss is amplified as all 598 spaces fall within 400m of the shopping district and further amplified as the spaces form part of the free weekend parking offer to support the town centre economy.

Surveys were conducted by Aecom and measured the impact of the losses and since those surveys took place, Barnsley FC has achieved promotion to The Championship and as a direct result parking demand has increased.

To ensure accurate of information, additional surveys were conducted by BMBC parking services to understand peak demands and trends.

Surveys were conducted to understand the following:

- Shopper Demand – Parking demand on a non – football Saturday;
- Football Demand – Parking demand on a Saturday with a Barnsley FC home game and;
- Commuter demand – parking demand at 8.30am on football Saturday.

The combined results of Aecom and BMBC studies have shown that despite the loss of spaces, sufficient capacity remains to meet weekday (Monday to Friday) demand.

The survey highlighted that peak parking demand occurs on Saturdays. As a result the changes outlined within the proposal below are restricted to weekends and weekday parking restrictions will not be affected.

4. Proposal and justification

4.1 Justification

The Aecom study has shown that in order to make it easy for potential shoppers to identify a parking space and attract shoppers to their business its car parks, a carparks' maximum capacity should not exceed 75%. Projections based on car park surveys have shown that total capacity available within the town centre used would be 90.9%. As a result there is a risk of losing 628 shoppers as a consequence of not being able to access desirable parking spaces. It is projected that the perceived lack of parking would create the belief that that shoppers cannot find a space Barnsley Town Centre. Economic data shows that the average shopper spend in Barnsley is £27 per person and an average party size of 1.54 people, therefore there is the risk of an annual loss of £1.36m from the town centre economy.

The resulting increase in alternative out of town shopping destinations would negate any economic benefits that free weekend parking brings. The effects of this could also increase risk to the early success of the Glassworks as it would further increase the challenge to win customers back to the town centre. In addition, the lack of capacity could increase traffic and reduce air quality due to drivers searching for parking spaces and negatively affect public health.

4.1.1 Worst affected

Shoppers, specifically those using the free weekend parking offer, will be worst affected as all 598 spaces lost fall within a 400m radius of the shopping district.

The Market is also at great risk, specifically losing 80 basement spaces allocated to market traders and 518 spaces at the Multi-storey and Lambra Road car parks.

Given that the closest spaces to any destination are naturally be the most desirable, the current first come first served unrestricted parking policy, rewards those that arrive earliest with the most desirable spaces. As retail business within the town

centre need to prepare for opening before shoppers arrive, town centre workers and traders will be earliest and rewarded with the most desirable spaces.

Surveys conducted at 8.30am on Saturday morning show a 27% average capacity usage, with 21.2% of total courthouse car park and 34% of the Multi-story car park capacity being used at that time. As a result, shoppers arriving after 9am will be often forced to park outside the 400m zone.

Shoppers are more likely to require the closest spaces to minimise the effort required to carry shopping, therefore distance is the key factor influencing their choice of shopping and parking locations. This is evidenced by the Aecom survey of all car parks within the town centre; the pay and display car park within the Alhambra is utilised almost to capacity, despite free parking being available elsewhere. Therefore, it is concluded that shoppers prioritise distance to destination above cost and to increase the town centre economy, priority of the closest spaces should be given to shopper.

Surveys have shown that peak demand is recorded when Barnsley FC home games take place, with a 15.2% increase. Due to natural turnover, spaces will become empty throughout the day. As a result of large numbers; distance from the destination (Oakwell); the lack of sufficient capacity closer to Oakwell; and the free to use no restriction policy, any empty spaces will be used by football patrons. Therefore, shoppers will be forced to park in less desirable spaces and contribute to the increase in the use of out of town shopping destination.

It is appreciated that football patrons also form a key element of the town centre economy and that any proposed solution should also meet their needs.

4.1.2 Summary

In summary, of the analysis of the survey data has shown that despite car parking space reductions, sufficient capacity will remain to meet weekday demand. Capacity issues centre on Saturdays and the following issues are the root cause of the predicted problem:

- Lack of overall capacity;
- Unrestricted free parking and;
- Match day football traffic.

Capacity in the shopping demographic will reduce by 39.2%, from 1525 spaces to 927 spaces. As demand is projected to remain constant, total capacity will be exceeded by 53.3% or 494 spaces but the target capacity usage of 75% will be exceeded by 725 spaces. As a result there is a risk of losing £1.57m from the town centre economy.

4.2 Proposal

The recommended proposal addresses the issues within the constraints of the planned Glassworks Phase 2 and be implemented before the multi-story demolition.

The recommendations of the interim strategy are:

- **Increase Capacity** – Create new parking spaces to ensure sufficient parking capacity to meet the needs of all users at peak times;

- **Create New Parking Zones** – Retain free weekend parking for all BMBC car parks and create two distinct zones to give space and priority to shoppers and visitors to the town centre and;
- **Introduce Free On-Street Parking** – Increase free weekend parking capacity by removing on-street charges in areas of low turnover.

4.2.1 Increased Capacity

The following sites currently unavailable for public parking use were identified to increase the overall available capacity by 370 spaces. These were identified as having a likelihood of 50% or more of being available. (Appendix H).

- Gateway Plaza – BMBC and Berneslai Homes currently lease 140 parking spaces within the gateway plaza car park. The building owner has been consulted and confirmed that BMBC has the right to extend its free weekend parking offer to its leased parking spaces;

In addition, we seeking to enter a suitable agreement with The Brooke Group and make the whole of gateway car park subject to the off street parking places order. This will allow BMBC to offer free Saturday parking on all levels with some time restrictions and the ability to pay to extend duration beyond the restricted free period. This will continue to allow hotel users to use the car parking facilities and retain revenues generated as a result.

It is proposed that parking services will enforce these spaces and issue penalty charge notices for exceeding durations or failure to display a valid ticket.

No additional enforcement resource will be required to enforce the additional capacity at Gateway Plaza, as the increase will be offset by the capacity loss at the multi-story and subsequent reduced enforcement:

- The Core – BMBC is in discussions to utilise The Core’s 70 car parking spaces and increase its free weekend parking capacity;
- Eastgate College - BMBC is in discussions to utilise 50 additional spaces at Barnsley College’s Eastgate site.
- Wellington Street – BMBC currently operates a private car park with 28 spaces located on Wellington Street that it proposed to open for public use to increase free parking capacity.
- Improved Efficiency – Analysis has shown that capacity can be increased by approximately 25 spaces through more efficient use of existing space.
- The Metrodome – BPL has undertaken architectural analysis to identify the creation of additional parking and;
- The “Old Needle Exchange” - As the old needle exchange located on John Street is no longer in use, it is recommended that its footprint be repurposed to increase the John Street car parks capacity by approximately 40 spaces.

Demolition the old building and using the existing groundworks would offer cost effective means to increase capacity within 400m of the shopping district.

4.2.2 Create New Parking Zones

In order to avoid the risks identified in the Justification Section of this report, creating suitable locations by sub dividing BMBCs' present parking capacity into the following distinct zones is recommended.

- A Short Stay Zone, with a target audience of shoppers and visitors and;
- A Long Stay Zone, with a target audience of town centre workers, football traffic and other long stay users.

4.2.2.1 Short Stay Zone

The short stay zone will encompass BMBC spaces within a 400m radius of the shopping district. Free parking will be offered with the following arrangement.

- 3hrs maximum stay – no same day return (Weekends only).

The arrangement has been set to prioritise and protect the closest, most desirable spaces for use by shoppers and visitors. It is projected to achieve this as town centre workers require a longer stay durations in line with a standard full and half working days (4 - 8 hrs). It is also anticipated that the duration will encourage football patrons to park in the long stay zone.

The following car parks will be designated in their entirety as Short Stay Zone and seeks the amendments outlined within; Recommendations and associated funding for changes to signage and communities are approved.

- Marketgate;
- Grahams Orchard;
- John Street;
- Wellington Street
- Wellington House and;
- Courthouse County Way*.

*Due to its size, the Courthouse Car Park resides across both the 0-400m and 400m+ radius of the shopping district. It also resides across multiple levels, with multiple entry points. For clarity, the courthouse car park needs to be considered as three car parks; Lower courthouse Upper Courthouse and Courthouse County Way.

Due to its capacity, evaluations have shown that designating an entire level would reduce capacity below the required levels and negatively impact short and long stay users. As a result it is recommended that the Courthouse County car park is divided into both short and long stay zones with a primary focus to prevent confusion between the zones and minimise risk of users parking illegally. The additional parking capacity of The Core must be included within the Courthouse County Way.

As a result, it is proposed that the courthouse car parks be divided into short and long stay zones as per (Appendix A).

It is proposed that further evaluations on the demarcation and division of the Courthouse County Way car park in undertaken to ensure risk of confusion and illegal parking is minimised.

4.2.2.2 Long Stay Zone

It is important that the long stay zone provides sufficient capacity for town centre workers and football patrons. Regarding choice of parking locations, it is anticipated that town centre workers will prioritise using free parking at weekends over distance and would be prepared to walk further to retain free parking. As a result impact on increased demand of pay and display car parks within the shopper zone will be minimised.

Consultation with a small number of football patrons has shown that they are prepared to walk further still in order to ensure continued free parking and it is known that even though Dearne Valley Park's car park is over 15 minutes' walk from Oakwell, it is still utilised by football patrons. By being inclusive, these zones will maintain free parking for those football patrons who also wish to use other town centre facilities.

The following car parks will be designated within as long stay and will maintain the current free weekend parking restrictions.

- Courthouse*;
- Burleigh Street;
- Joseph Street;
- Mark Street;
- Pitt Street;
- St Marys;
- Sackville Street;
- Churchfields and;
- Gateway Plaza.

* As previously established, Courthouse will cover both zones.

4.2.3 Limited Free On-Street Parking

To further increase long stay capacity, it is recommended that free 'long stay' on street parking be offered in locations where high turnover isn't a priority. The following locations are proposed:

- Burleigh Street;
- Thomas Street;
- Heelis Street;
- Westgate;
- Churchfields;
- Falcon Street;
- Eastgate;
- York Street;
- Pitt Street West and;
- St Mary's Gate.

This will provide a further 139 spaces to meet the overall demand as increase free parking capacity available for Experience Barnsley and Cooper Art Gallery patrons.

5. Consideration of alternative approaches

5.1 Park and Ride

The creation of new park and ride facilities was evaluated and discounted due to free weekend parking offering users a more cost effective and convenient alternative. As a result the introduction of a park and ride system would likely be unsustainable. This is supported by previous park and ride facilities at the Peel Centre and Oakwell being underutilised to the point they were discontinued.

5.2 Temporary Decking

Creating additional capacity through the construction of temporary decking was considered. A number of sites were identified to create sufficient capacity to meet peak Saturday demands. Feasibility estimates obtained from suppliers proved this option to be cost prohibitive. Equating to c£3k to £6k per space, making the total cost of implementation is between £1.8m and £3.6m. As this is a temporary solution, the anticipated costs do not offer best value for money. In addition, the lead times for construction were also prohibitive to meeting the timescales required.

5.3 Purchase new sites

New sites were identified at the old YEB between Schwabish Gmund Way and Harbour Hill; and the site opposite Wickes at the bottom of Harbour Hill.

5.4 The Old YEB

The old YEB site was evaluated and established that access from Harbour Hills was prohibited due to traffic safety and would require road network changes to create access from Schwabish Gmund Way. The site was also found to be split over multiple levels requiring substantial remedial works to ensure safe entry for and safe use as a car park. Ultimately the cost and timescale for purchase and completion of works ruled the site out as a potential public car park.

5.5 Wickes development site

The development site opposite Wickes was evaluated, consultation with the head of planning revealed that the sites had already been acquired and planning permission granted for retail use. The land is therefore unavailable for use as a public car park.

5.6 Introduce Pay and Display charges and restrictions

Introducing Pay and display charges at key locations on Saturdays were evaluated as an alternative to control capacity usage. These were ruled as due to conflict with the current town centre free parking strategy, designed to minimise town centre economy leakage to Meadhowhall and the like during the glassworks development phase.

6 Implications for local people and service users

The proposal will ensure sufficient parking provision for all users during the development of the Town Centre.

7 Financial implications

The cost associated with implementation of all the proposals are:

- 7.1 The costs associated with the required legal advertisements for the changes to Off-Street Parking Place Order, Town Centre Parking Place and CPZ Orders are estimated to be £300;
- 7.2 The costs associated with software changes to pay and display machines are estimated to be £2,000;
- 7.3 The costs associated with changes to signage and communications are estimated to be £14,000;
- 7.4 The costs associated with loss of income/guaranteed earnings of Gateway Plaza are estimated to be £8,000;
- 7.5 The costs associated with new machines at Gateway Plaza are estimated to be between £0 - £14,000, dependant on the agreement with Gateway Plaza's owner;
- 7.5 Loss of income associated with the offer of free on-street parking is estimated to be £10,000 and;
- 7.6 Associated costs of demolishing and surfacing the old needle exchange are estimated to be £15,000.

8. Employee implications

Staff permit use will be affected at Courthouse, with restrictions of 3hrs applying within the shopper zone on Saturdays. No other locations or days will be affected.

9. Communications implications

- 9.1 Internal communications to inform Staff Permit Holders of proposed changes.
- 9.2 External Communications plan to be developed.

10. Consultations

Town Centre and Barnsley Markets team, Parking Services, Finance, HR, Planning and the town centre business forum.

11. The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework

The proposal forms part of the Town Centre development and economic strategy.

12. Promoting equality, diversity and social inclusion

There will be a loss of 18 disabled parking bays as a result of the loss of the multi-storey. However, 8 disabled parking bays were created within Marketgate Car Park, resulting in a net loss of 10 bays. Blue Badge holders can utilise all existing on and off street parking and are exempt from restrictions and payment, except in designated blue badge spaces where blue badge rights apply.

The loss of designated disabled parking bays will be addressed as part of the short and long term parking strategies and will advise the from the In Town equality forum.

13. Tackling health inequalities

There are no health inequality issues associated with the proposal.

14. Reduction of crime and disorder

In investigating the options set out in this report, the Council's duties under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act have been considered. There are no crime and disorder implications associated with the proposals.

15. Risk management issues

15.1 Challenge to the proposals because they infringe the Human Rights Act. Issues relating to potential interference with the Human Rights Act are fully explained and dealt with in Section 7 of this report. Any considerations of impacts have to be balanced with the rights that the Council has to provide a safe highway for people to use. The Director of Legal and Governance has developed a sequential test to consider the effects of the Human Rights Act which are followed. Low.

15.2 Legal challenge to the decision to make the TRO. The procedure to be followed in the publication and making of TRO's are set down in statute, which provides a 6 weeks period following the making of an order in which a challenge can be made in the High Court on the grounds that the order is not within the statutory powers or that the prescribed procedures have not been correctly followed. Given that the procedures are set down and the Council follows the prescribed procedures the risk is minimal. Low.

15.3 Detrimental impact on Town Centre economy. It is unlikely that the proposals will be detrimental to the Town Centre economy, because the proposals are generally similar to the current charges in neighbouring authorities. Low.

15.4 Deterioration of health and safety. There are no health and safety implications in connection with these proposals. Very Low.

Key Risk Affecting Funding for Local and Strategic Schemes:

If the proposal is not approved, based on the average party size and spend and the loss of capacity the town centre economy could lose an annual income of £1,57m.

Risks associated with Future Funding

There are no risks associated with future funding.

16. Health, safety and emergency resilience Issues

There are no health, safety and emergency resilience issues associated with the proposal.

17 Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights

The proposals are compatible with the European Convention of Human Rights.

18 Conservation of biodiversity

The proposals do not affect the conservation of biodiversity.

19. Glossary

20 List of appendices

Appendix A – Financial Implications

Appendix 1 – Maps

21 Background papers

None

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Date 23/2/17