

Item 8

REPORT TO CABINET

20 January 2005

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

Portfolio: Culture and Recreation

Car Parking at Locomotion, National Railway Museum at Shildon

SUMMARY

The success of Locomotion since opening to the public in September 2004 has seen the annual visitor number target of 63,000 being achieved by November, with anticipated visits by March 2005 reaching in excess of 90,000.

Car parking provision currently provides for 47 car parking spaces, 8 disabled spaces and 4 coach spaces located on the plan marked 1 attached.

A great deal of concern has been expressed by local residents about their inability to park outside their own homes because of the lack of parking for visitors to the museum.

It is possible to construct an overflow car park shown at plan 2 at an estimated cost of £65,000 which would help in providing an additional 48 car parking spaces and a further 4 coach spaces, bringing the total to 95 car parking spaces, 8 disabled spaces and 8 coach spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the land shown at plan 2 be developed into an overflow car park
- That monies be made available in the 2004/5 financial year from contingencies

DETAIL

In September 2004, Sedgefield Borough Council agreed to allocate land at Redworth Road to develop a car park with provision for 65 cars and 8 coaches, bringing the total available parking spaces at Locomotion to 95 with 8 coach spaces.

External funding from ERDF of £163,000 was received but was only sufficient to provide an additional 17 car parking spaces and 4 coach spaces.

In the period 25 September 2004 to the end of December 2004, over 80,000 people have visited Locomotion. The average number of visitors on a weekday is 500 where-as at the weekend the average number of visitors is

2800 per day. Recent research has confirmed that 75% of visitors arrive at Locomotion by car.

Clearly demand for car parking spaces will always exceed supply but traffic management is a key issue for both visitors and local residents alike. At present there is a great deal of anxiety and anger by local residents as visitors are parking their cars in the narrow streets adjacent to Locomotion there-by preventing residents from getting access by car to their front door.

Completion of the car park project at Redworth Road will not prevent visitors from continuing to park as close to the venue as they can but with the provision of a total of 95 car parking spaces, this should cater fully for weekday demand.

Special events provide a further difficulty for Locomotion and discussions have been held with a town centre retail outlet to use, particularly on Sundays, hard standing within the town, which would be ideal as a park and ride facility.

Recent discussions at Officer and Elected Member level have been held with Durham County Council and the Police regarding residents permit parking in the narrow streets surrounding Locomotion, but there seems to be a reluctance to develop this idea on the part of the County Council on the basis of being able to have the resources to manage any such permit parking scheme. However, Durham County Council will be consulting with local residents regarding the provision of double yellow lines within the adjacent streets in order to prevent double parking which could restrict access for emergency vehicles.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

To develop the area of land marked on plan 2 into a permanent car park fully lined with the necessary landscaping requirements will cost in the region of £150,000 and be a permanent feature.

By contrast, to provide an over-flow car park on the same land with a substantial sub-base on the main spinal route will cost in the region of £65,000.

Although monies within the 2004/05 capital programme for Culture and Recreation have been allocated, the amount of money necessary to construct an over-flow car park would be available from contingencies.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The 2005/06 tourism season commences again at Easter. The Easter period starts at the end of March 2005 and therefore it is imperative that the over-flow car park is ready for visitors as soon as possible.

The report does confirm that even after the construction of the over-flow car park demand for car parking on weekends and special events will not be fully accommodated without alternative strategies, for example park and ride and highway restrictions within the streets adjacent to Locomotion. However the

importance of providing the over-flow car park cannot be under-estimated for local residents who can then see that the Borough Council is taking the issue of car parking very seriously.

By constructing an over-flow car park rather than a permanent car park also allows the Borough Council to keep its options open regarding future enquiries from developers who may wish to construct retail/business premises on this land as a direct result of the success of Locomotion as a visitor attraction.

CONSULTATION

Following the real concerns expressed by residents living adjacent to Locomotion at the end of September, they have been kept informed of the strategy that is being developed by the Borough Council and by the County Council.

Durham County Council are currently seeking the views of local residents regarding restricted parking and should members of Cabinet agree with the recommendation contained in the report local residents will be informed of the construction time table.

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Ward(s) All

Key Decision Validation

Background Papers

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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