

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Tuesday 20 February 2024** at **9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor R Ormerod (Chair)**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors G Hutchinson (Vice-Chair), J Higgins, J Howey, L Maddison, E Mavin, D Oliver, K Robson, A Simpson, G Smith, M Wilson and D Wood

**Also Present:**

Councillor D Freeman, C Hood, D McKenna, E Scott and K Shaw

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I Cochrane and A Sterling.

### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no Substitute Members.

### **3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **4 Declarations of Interest**

The Chair, Councillor R Ormerod noted he was a Local Member in respect of the reports at Item 5, however, he had not predetermined his position in relation to the matter.

Councillor E Mavin noted he was a Local Member in respect of the Item 5a, however, he had not predetermined his position in relation to the matter.

- 5 Durham City Parking and Waiting Restrictions and Durham City On Street Parking;**
- a Durham City (North East) - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 2024**
  - b Durham City (North West) - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 2024**
  - c Durham City (South East) - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 2024**
  - d Durham City (South West) - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 2024**
  - e Durham City - On Street Parking Places - Permits and Tariffs, Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 2024**

The Chair thanked those in attendance and asked the Lawyer (Planning and Highways), Neil Carter to explain the process in relation to the items on the agenda.

The Lawyer (Planning and Highways) reminded Members that they were not the decision makers, rather were providing a guide for the decision maker as set out within the Council's Constitution, the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth. He noted that there were several similar proposed Traffic Regulation Amendment Orders and that a joint presentation would be made for all those proposed Order, with Members voting separately on each of the Traffic Regulation Amendment Orders in turn after the presentation, address by registered speakers and Committee debate.

The Committee considered five reports of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which advised Members of objections received to the consultation concerning changes to the five Traffic Regulation Amendment Orders and requested that they considered the objections made during the informal and formal consultation period (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager Dave Lewin, provided a detailed presentation including maps indicating the location of the proposals, aerial photos, photographs of the sites, and details for the following:

- all relevant on-street bays within Durham City such as loading, disabled parking, permit parking, taxi parking be amended so that they operate on a Sunday between 8am and 6pm.

- income from extending the charging regime to include Sundays and increase of charges by 20p/hour will allow us to extend our Park and Ride operation to provide a Sunday service to facilitate our visitor economy:
  - helping visitors access Durham and make trips more attractive, encouraging future visits.
  - reduce congestion and emissions
  - bring us in line with private sector parking providers in the City.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Traffic Manager and asked the Local Member for Elvet and Gilesgate, Councillor D Freeman to speak in relation to the proposals.

Councillor D Freeman thanked the Chair and Committee and noted that Durham City was unlike any other town or village in the county, having on-street parking within residential areas and some drivers parking all day, presenting an issue for residents parking. He added he supported the increase in charges, to help encourage the use of Durham County Council (DCC) car parks or private car parks, or the Park and Ride. He noted the proposals would also help to tackle air quality in the city centre, and he felt that was positive and largely supported by residents within the city, being a win-win in terms of air quality and increased Park and Ride provision, including Sundays. He reiterated that he supported the proposals, hoping they would help prevent all day parking within residential streets within the city.

The Chair thanked Councillor D Freeman, noted there were no registered speakers from the public and therefore he would ask the Committee for their comments and questions.

Councillor D Wood noted he only heard one Local Member representing one of the areas effected speak, and not in terms of changes to Sundays and asked what the response had been from the other Local Members. He noted the reference to savings and revenue generated and asked how relevant that was, given that in other reports they were not given. He asked if relevant in this case, he could not see specifics within the report. Councillor D Wood noted reference to reduction in carbon emissions and asked what the environmental cost would be in terms of all the required alterations to signage across the area. He noted that the report referred to a meeting of the Cabinet held in September 2023 which set out proposals to extend parking controls, however, he could not see which agenda item was being referred to from that meeting. He noted page 146 of the Cabinet papers from September referred to passenger numbers on the Park and Ride remaining below pre-COVID levels and noted no reference to free parking after 2.00pm and Durham City within those minutes.

The Strategic Traffic Manager noted the Cabinet report covered various interventions and had asked that policy be reviewed to manage parking and provide better services.

He noted that included charges and tariffs, and the Park and Ride. He added that in respect of updates to signage, they would be done via a sticker to be placed on to existing signage.

He explained that all Local Members impacted were consulted, and there had been no objections from Durham Members, and while they had not submitted objections, they had not noted their support, other than Councillor D Freeman who had registered to speak at the meeting. He added that in terms of finances, if there had not been an increase in tariffs and introduction of tariffs on Sunday, then the operation of a Park and Ride service on Sundays would not have been possible. He explained that if there were any surplus, it would be ringfenced for traffic within County Durham.

The Chair noted the Cabinet Member, Councillor E Scott wished to make a point of clarification. Councillor E Scott emphasised that the decision was not one made by Cabinet, rather it was a delegated decision to be taken by the Corporate Director, having considered the comments from the Highways Committee. The Lawyer (Planning and Highways) reiterated that the decision was delegated to the Corporate Director, with the Highways Committee offering guidance, and was not a decision for Cabinet. Councillor D Wood noted that Cabinet had recommended that this report come forward and asked again in terms of whether savings and revenue could be considered as being material. The Lawyer (Planning and Highways) noted that Government guidance on parking schemes required them to be self-financing, with the Officer's report noting the increase from these tariffs would enable the improvements set out to be brought forward.

S Drummond, a member of the public present, noted that the increases proposed represented a disproportionate increase in terms of the lower charges. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted the flat increase was a practical consideration, noting if a percentage increase had been applied this would have represented fractions of pence, impractical to charge or collect.

Councillor J Howey asked if there was going to be more emphasis on advertising the Park and Ride services, and asked if any surplus could be spent upon maintenance of parking areas and bays. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted the Park and Ride service was advertised and the Council would always look to strengthen the promotion of the services available. He added that the benefits would be further than in terms of the positive impact upon parking, there were benefits to air quality and reiterated that Government noted that revenue must first be used to pay for a service, then any surplus ringfenced for traffic schemes, not for other purposes.

Councillor D Oliver noted he felt the proposals were broadly positive, with residents being able to weigh up the Park and Ride cost against parking charges and make a decision basis upon those.

He noted the focus on air pollution and asked what the main challenges were in that regard locally, in the context of the Council having declared a Climate Emergency. Councillor K Robson noted he was not a Member representing the city centre, however, he often used the Howlands Park and Ride and asked if the existing facilities were reaching capacity. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted that Howlands was at around 50-60 percent capacity, numbers not having rebounded post-COVID, and therefore there was around 40 percent capacity. He noted extension to the Howlands Park and Ride, as part of a student planning application, however, noted there was no further land available at the site. He noted that the Belmont Park and Ride had a huge capacity, and that work would start shortly on an extension to the Sniperley Park and Ride. He noted that accordingly, he was relaxed in terms of the capacity of the Park and Ride service.

Councillor L Maddison noted Appendix 3 to the report set out the responses to the consultation with 82 'negative effects business' responses. She noted she used to travel to Darlington weekly, however, parking charges implemented there had impacted visitor numbers. She noted she felt the economy should be encouraged and she felt that free parking for the Park and Ride would be a good option, to stimulate visitor numbers. She noted she would not be supporting the proposals.

S Drummond asked as regards updating Pop Cards online, noting there were not simple options. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted that it could be done online, not at the Park and Ride facilities themselves.

Councillor M Wilson noted she agreed with the comments from Councillor L Maddison in that the proposed changes would deter visitors and noted that for many people in surrounding suburbs and villages driving into the city was quicker than driving out towards the Park and Ride to then return back in towards the city. She reiterated that she felt there would be an impact upon tourists too, and felt it was 'off' to include the Sunday Park and Ride proposals in with the parking charge increases.

Councillor D Wood noted that the Park and Ride was a fundamentally good idea, however, parking charges were based on per vehicle and the Park and Ride charges were per person, therefore were more expensive and less convenient. He reiterated that he was very concerned in terms of the response from Local Members in this regard, noting of eight Members, only one had attended to speak, appreciating that Councillor R Ormerod was one of those Members and was in the Chair at Committee. He asked why bother consulting with Local Members if they were not going to respond, adding that only six percent of public respondents were in favour of the proposals. He noted capacity concerns, carbon concerns, and that the increases in charge disproportionately impact the cheapest tariffs. He noted the issue of charges on Sundays, with most respondents stating they felt it would hurt businesses.

Councillor D Wood noted that the turnover of parking spaces was difficult to quantify, and he felt the issue in terms of Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings was something that should be looked at within the budget proposals being considered at Council next week. He added he felt that surely the Park and Ride service could be put on Sundays without additional revenue from parking charge increases. He noted that Council had supported a motion in relation to Cabinet looking at 'free after 2pm', however, it had yet to be discussed by Cabinet at this time. Accordingly, given almost none of the Local Members had come out in support of the proposals, and that there had been no significant support from the public, he would not be willing to support the proposals as set out in the report.

Councillor J Howey noted that often her experience in Durham had been that there was a queue for parking and suggested that encouraging the use of the Park and Ride would help, with any surplus being used for other traffic uses, such as supporting rural bus routes. She noted that in the past it had been the norm that most businesses did not open and trade on a Sunday. She added that was no longer the case, with many simply considering it another normal day, and therefore she could see no issue in terms of parking charges on Sundays accordingly.

Councillor M Wilson asked for clarification, whether surplus from the Park and Ride could be used to support rural transport, as she understood it was only for parking services and repairs to such facilities. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted the first use of any revenue was to provide the services, with surplus being ringfenced for transport measures.

Councillor D Freeman, in response to the comments from Councillor D Wood, noted that around 80-85 percent of the parking charges referred to within the reports related to his Electoral Division, and therefore the vast majority of the impact was for residents within his area. He reiterated that he supported all the proposals within the reports, including charges, although he could not speak for other Members representing other Electoral Divisions.

Councillor D Oliver noted he agreed with the comments from Councillor J Howey in that Sundays had changed from how they were in the past, adding from his experience that Durham had been very busy, especially the previous Sunday. He added he was not convinced that parking charges were the deciding factor in whether some visited Durham City, with the city being the 'jewel in the crown' of the county and people had moved on from COVID. He added he was very comfortable with the recommendation from Officers and agreed with the comments from Councillor D Freeman and felt that as a Local Member his comments should not be dismissed. He reiterated that therefore he would move that the Officers proposals be supported, and asked how local pollution levels were measured, what data was collected.

The Strategic Traffic Manager noted the air quality was an issue in the city, with around 30 percent of traffic going over Gilesgate Roundabout simply travelling through the city. He noted that the Park and Ride could effectively intercept a number of journeys that were just into the city itself, and impact positively upon air quality. He noted the plans to electrify the Park and Ride fleet, this also adding to improvements to air quality.

Councillor E Mavin noted he would second the motion supporting the Officer's proposals.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor G Hutchinson noted he had travelled from Bowburn to Durham with a cost of £12 for six hours and noted that support for the Park and Ride was positive. He noted that speaking to business owners in Coxhoe, where parking limits had been imposed, there had been an improvement for their businesses. He added he felt that a £2 charge for the Park and Ride, or 90p for parking still represented good value.

The Lawyer (Planning and Highways) noted a vote was required for each of the reports and asked if Councillors D Oliver and E Mavin were proposing and seconding each of the reports. Councillors D Oliver and E Mavin indicated that there were proposing and seconding each of the reports and upon a series of votes being taken, **Moved** by Councillor D Oliver, **Seconded** by Councillor E Mavin, it was:

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the Committee endorsed the proposal, in principle, to introduce the Durham City (North East) - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 2024, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.
- (ii) That the committee endorsed the proposal, in principle, to introduce the Durham City (North West) - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 2024, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.
- (iii) That the committee endorsed the proposal, in principle, to introduce the Durham City (South East) - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 2024, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.
- (iv) That the committee endorsed the proposal, in principle, to introduce the Durham City (South West) - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 2024, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.

- (v) That the committee endorsed the proposal, in principle, to introduce the Durham City (South West) - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 2024, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.

## **6 Seaham Off-Street Parking Places and On Street Parking Places - Parking & Waiting Restrictions**

- a Seaham Off-Street Parking Places - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Order 2024**
- b Seaham - On Street Parking Places - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Order 2024**

The Committee considered two reports of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which advised Members of objections received to the consultation concerning changes to the two Traffic Regulation Orders and requested that they considered the objections made during the informal and formal consultation period (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager provided a detailed presentation including maps indicating the location plan of proposals, aerial photos, photographs of the sites, and details for the following:

- pay and display parking (Monday – Sunday, 8am - 6pm) and terms and conditions be introduced within the six car parks listed below within Seaham:
  - Seaham Hall Beach
  - Vane Tempest
  - Terrace Green
  - Seaham Marina
  - Dock Top
  - Noses Point
- restricted parking be introduced on North Road in Seaham. Additional waiting restrictions will also be introduced on East Shore Drive, Dene House Road and Dene Terrace

The Strategic Traffic Manager referred to a plan showing where free car parking would be retained, noting paid parking would be £1 for up to one hour, and £3 for over one hour, with Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day being free.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Traffic Manager and asked Local Member for Dawdon, Councillor K Shaw to speak in relation to the proposals.



Councillor K Shaw noted as a former Cabinet Member and Town Councillor for Seaham, he felt that the proposals would act to reduce visitor numbers, or as the Strategic Traffic Manager had referred to, 'deter' visitors. He noted that would impact on local businesses and the attraction of Seaham over other local coastal areas, such as Roker, were the lack of parking charges.

He added he felt there would be a knock-on effect, with those that had parked in what now would be charged car parks moving to the remaining free parking, impacting on those car parks and having a massive knock-on effect in those more residential areas. Councillor K Shaw noted that Seaham had been severely impacted since the pit closures and the retail impact was still being felt. He added that it was not just visitors that used those six car parks, local residents also used them regularly. He noted previous intentions in terms of a leisure centre in Seaham town centre, a once in a lifetime opportunity to address the aspirations of the local community, the renovations to North Terrace, including car parking, now to be charged for. He noted the businesses on the marina struggled in the wintertime, and businesses had raised these charges as an issue that would impact upon their viability if the intention was to deter visitors to Seaham. Councillor K Shaw asked for clarification whether the coastal charges were already factored into the MTFP already, making it effectively a done deal. He emphasised that 98 percent of responses were against the proposed parking charges and asked if no weight was being given to the consultation, then why bother carrying it out.

The Strategic Traffic Manager noted that the consultation was a statutory requirement where parking charges were being proposed and that in 30 years' experience in the industry, it was very rare to have those in support of a scheme respond to such consultation. The Lawyer (Planning and Highways) noted that the decision as regards on-street and off-street parking for Seaham had not yet been made, reiterating it was a delegated matter, with Members providing guidance via this Committee.

The Chair asked Councillor D McKenna, Local Member for Seaham, to speak in respect of the proposals.

Councillor D McKenna highlighted the levels of objection to the proposals from local residents, with over 90 percent against proposals. He noted he felt the majority were local residents, however, he noted additional objections from the Local MP, Graeme Morris, as well as from business owners and visitors to the area. He reiterated the comments made by Councillor K Shaw, noting that the free parking was the biggest attraction for Seaham, helping to sustain local businesses and keeping jobs in the area. He noted that he lived on North Terrace and that during the week, Monday to Friday, he very rarely saw anyone struggling to find a parking space in the car parks being referred to, weather dependent, however. He noted if there were better bus and train services, he could see how it may not impact on visitors, however, the poor services meant the majority came via car and many also used their cars as they also make use of the nearby shops and services.

Councillor D McKenna noted that the local economy was extremely fragile and if anything were to undermine the footfall of visitors that would in turn undermine businesses. He noted the impact there would be on the local cafés that have been developed, where business owners have invested, then COVID hit. He added that businesses had just overcome those challenges and were now facing the prospect of the impact of parking charges. He asked who would pick up a coffee on the way to work if you had to pay to park in addition? He suggested no one. He noted that many people visited the area to access the beach and asked if the Police had been consulted on the proposals, as there were yellow lines along the Vane Tempest area and he felt that when large events were being held, there would be a lot of parking that would require enforcement action. He added that this would be an additional burden on Durham Constabulary. Councillor D McKenna noted that it was difficult to justify parking charges in a cost-of-living crisis, especially with there being a lack of investment in public facilities in the area, such as public toilets. He noted there was no real nighttime economy in the area, rather the majority of business was mostly at the weekend. He asked that Members of the Committee reject the proposals that he felt were self-defeating, represented a loss for local businesses, impacted jobs and presented an additional burden on the Police. He concluded by noting that all wanted to encourage people to come and visit Seaham and reiterated that its biggest asset was its free parking.

The Chair thanked Councillor D McKenna and asked Town Councillor E Bell, to speak on behalf of Seaham Town Council in relation to the proposals.

Town Councillor E Bell asked whether the charges were part of a strategy or simply picked out at random. He asked why there were no proposed charges at Consett, a similarly sized town, why was it just Seaham? He noted that local people and businesses had noted it was going to cost them thousands of pounds to park, and asked whether the charges were already factored into Council savings? He noted the costs of implementing charges, cameras, signage, enforcement and appeals did not appear to have been factored, as well as ongoing maintenance. He added the cost could easily be far larger than the projected income. He reiterated he felt that it was part of MTFP savings and noted Consett was not factored into MTFP savings, despite being a slightly larger town.

Town Councillor E Bell noted the parking charges were a huge disincentive to those wanting to shop at or visit Seaham. He added it would impact on residents too, especially those living next to those car parks that were remaining free to park. He noted the large amount of regeneration within Seaham through the previous Towns and Villages regeneration scheme, adding that the charges proposed were effectively a 'local levy' on businesses for just having a shop at Seaham. He reiterated he was using Consett as a comparison, as it was a similar size, however, Consett had recently had a new leisure centre, new swimming pool, all-weather pitch, while all similar schemes at Seaham had been cancelled. He asked why? He noted the proposals felt like a hurried 'quick fix' in terms of the budget, rather than being part of a whole of County Durham strategy.

He asked for confirmation that there were no parking charges being proposed for Consett and asked whether the proposals were effectively a done deal, were they factored into the MTFP? He concluded by noting he felt the proposals were not right and should be reconsidered, especially given how disgruntled residents were and in which way the recommendations and proposals had been made.

The Chair thanked Town Councillor E Bell and noted there were several members of the public to speak, he invited several in attendance to speak in addition to those who had registered prior to the meeting.

S Drummond asked as regards how would people know how long they needed to park and whether they would be required to have a parking app to do so. She referred to the previous items relating to the Park and Ride and noted that cars would still be on the road driving to those, and asked what would people do to access businesses and services after 6.30pm, such as the Gala Theatre? She noted the proposed increases and changes would be very off-putting to some that may wish to access such services. She noted the option of out-of-town shopping, however, that was not preferable and parking charges in the city were therefore a barrier to some. She noted that such barriers could be difference between some people going out at all and that Members need to think in terms of a cost-of-living crisis. She noted that if DCC was in debt, could it not be that it could just say it was going to be in debt anyway? She noted that residents were in poverty and the cost and energy required in terms of worrying about parking was considerable for some. She noted some people in receipt of universal credit may not be able to afford the £3 parking charge to go to Seaham for the day, and the introduction of charges was going to be a big issue.

The Chair noted the Durham reports had already been considered and voted upon, however, her comments were noted.

C Thompson noted he had been a local resident of Seaham for 35 years and praised the regeneration of the town as being excellent, with lots of visitors being very welcomed. He noted he lived at Seaham Lane and had never witnessed a queue of traffic of people waiting to get a car parking space. He noted there were no problems in terms of being able to get parked at any of the car parks within the report. He noted a recent day where the weather had not been very nice and one of the car parks had only three cars all day, he asked what revenue would be gained from such small numbers? He noted that North Yorkshire only charged for parking in summer and suggested this was something DCC should also consider. He added that the Asda carp park at the Byron Place Shopping Centre was included in with the 'free parking' referred to as being retained. He noted that that car park, especially at weekends, was incredibly busy, and if those wanting to shop were unable to park there, they would be displaced into nearby streets impacting upon local residents. C Thompson noted there was no leisure centre within Seaham and many managed to get exercise by visiting the coast, with a number of clubs and meeting in those car parks prior to accessing the coast/beach.

He added that those groups undertaking physical activity, along with those going solo, were helping to positively the mental health of those in addition to physical health. He noted that this was a big positive, helping to keep pressure off the local NHS, with many likely to stop such activities should parking charges be introduced. He concluded by noting that displaced parking from the paid car parks would go into the nearby residential estates.

F Regan noted she was born in Seaham and noted that people's freedom and the openness of Seaham was important. She explained that she worked in the NHS working with those with mental health issues. She emphasised the importance of the ability for those with anxiety and other mental health conditions in being able to access the outdoors freely and easily, highlighting the benefits of regular exercise and socialising, building up important real relationships with those in their local communities. She noted that people wanted Seaham to have a strong family environment, with lots of visitors being a positive thing with the issue of money being the main block for many people.

I Harrison noted that he was retired and lived at Houghton-le-Spring, and explained that during the week he, like many retired people, went to Seaham to enjoy the town, with many families attending at weekends. He noted that by introducing parking charges, the Council was taking away people's freedom and it represented another tax on people. He noted that it was not wanted by anyone and reiterated it was a tax and he would no longer be taking his grandchildren to Seaham at weekends. He noted it was just a tax to enable DCC to balance their budgets. He noted the Council should just balance their budget without additionally taxing the public. He noted he had recently been abroad and had not seen such parking charges in similar locations, and with DCC being just as bad as Sunderland Council. He noted that many preferred Seaham due to the free parking and asked how many would be put off by the charges, adding we were the most taxed country in the world and that he was disappointed by the very poor turnout at the meeting. He asked where were the local Councillors, noting it would not happen abroad and that he was very angry at the proposals.

V Trewitt noted the impact charges would have on mental health, on top of a cost-of-living crisis impacting the ability to pay. She added that the benefits for people being able to access the sea and the beach for exercise and to be in nature were considerable and she felt that both physical and mental health would suffer if people were not able to get to the beach as often. She noted the social strength in the areas, the place being a destination for various walking and running groups, as well as local groups and volunteers, such as litter-picking volunteers. She noted that charges would impact upon those free groups and volunteers. She noted the large number of families that go to the beach, looking in rock pools, a very good resource for local people as well as visitors from further afield. She noted that the proposals would impact a large number of people, including bikers and local schools that make trips to the beach and marina.

She concluded by noting that all those issues, including the impact upon mental health and the cost-of-living crisis, should be taken into account when making a decision.

C Wilkinson noted that she had been part of the fund raising for the local Tommy statue on the seafront, and she felt people's opportunity to visit was being taken away. She noted that if people were doing their shopping, parking would not be transferable and therefore it would not help in that regard. She emphasised that people's mental health and wellbeing needed to be taken into account, and she found the charges proposed for those with a disability to be offensive. She noted that on days with poor weather, there were very few people that actually attended the sea front, and she felt that the Committee had to take the views of the community on board. She asked would someone be walking the six miles between the car parks to check parking tickets were being displayed.

The Strategic Traffic Manager noted for clarity, in response to the comments from the Town Council, that it was only where issues have been identified that interventions would be looked at, such as at Seaham. He noted that in other areas such as Consett, Crook and Stanley among others, there had not been demand issues as there had been demonstrated in Seaham.

The Chair asked the Committee for their comments and questions.

Councillor J Howey noted similarities with the activities she accessed at Bishop Auckland, and emphasised she wanted Seaham to thrive, noting many from her area would travel to Seaham for a visit. She noted she felt a good way to be able to maintain the car parks was to introduce a charge, again similar to the previous item, with any surplus to be put back into transport related issues. She noted the cost of £1 for up to an hour or £3 for over an hour was around the cost of a coffee, and she felt the parking app was very easy to use. She reiterated the similarities with Bishop Auckland, including a food festival, and she understood such locations were marketed as destination towns. She reiterated she felt the parking charges would help to maintain the parking facilities and she would be supporting the proposals.

Councillor D wood noted the report was slightly different to those for Durham City, and noted it was odd not to have the name of the Local MP or Local Members in objection set out within the report, it not appearing to be very transparent. He added that the Strategic Traffic Manager had noted that the consultation was a statutory requirement, however, with 98 percent of respondents saying it was a bad idea and with the recommendation being to implement charges, he felt those view was very difficult to ignore.

*Councillor K Shaw left the meeting at 11.22am*

Councillor D Wood noted the figures within the MTFP savings discussed by Cabinet and noted the cost of the parking charges in relation to those savings. He added that, given the cancellation of the new leisure centre for Seaham, the introduction of parking charges added insult to injury.

The Chair asked why the names of the MP and Local Councillors had not been included. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted that when presenting the consultation response data, names were routinely redacted from the graphs and numbers presented within tables.

Councillor D Oliver noted his impression of Seaham from a recent visit had been that it was a fantastic place, adding he could see the attraction for many people. He asked how many free places would remain, should the proposals be implemented. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted there would be 793 free spaces remaining. Councillor E Mavin asked for clarity from the Officer in terms of the cost of making each of the car parks a paid car park. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted each would cost around £20,000 - £30,000, though that would include non-domestic rates, electricity and water charges as well as maintenance and winter maintenance.

Councillor M Wilson asked how many of the free car parking spaces were within the Asda car park, noting taking those into account that would not leave that many. The Strategic Traffic Manager referred to a slide highlighting the number of spaces at each, with around 348 at Asda.

Councillor D Oliver noted he felt Seaham was a fantastic visitor town and would still be a strong destination and he could not see the fees impacting and therefore he would move that the Committee support the Officer's proposals. Councillor E Mavin noted he would second Councillor D Oliver.

Town Councillor E Bell noted the new car park proposed was on a cliff and asked if the charges were going to pay for that, and where displaced parking would now go. Councillor D McKenna noted it was good that Members of the Committee were praising Seaham, however, the introduction of car parking charges and lack of investment by the Council in facilities such as public toilets were hindering the town. I Harrison noted the proposals would impact on the families and children visiting the sea front. Councillor J Howey noted she felt Seaham would remain a destination town and suggested the matter be put to the vote.

The Lawyer (Planning and Highways) noted a vote was required for each of the reports and asked if Councillors D Oliver and E Mavin were proposing and seconding each of the two reports. Councillors D Oliver and E Mavin indicated that there were proposing and seconding each of the reports and upon two votes being taken, **Moved** by Councillor D Oliver, **Seconded** by Councillor E Mavin, it was:

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the committee endorsed the proposal, in principle, to introduce the Seaham Off-Street Parking Places - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Order 2024, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.
  
- (ii) That the committee endorsed the proposal, in principle, to introduce the Seaham - On Street Parking Places - Parking and Waiting Restrictions, Traffic Regulation Order 2024, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.