

## Highways Committee

17<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Crimdon (Off Street Parking Place)

Traffic Regulation Amendment Order  
2024

Ordinary Decision



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### Report of Corporate Management Team

**Amy Harhoff Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy & Growth**

**Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Economy and Growth.**

#### **Electoral division(s) affected:**

Blackhalls

#### **1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To advise Members of objections received in response to the consultation on the introduction of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in Crimdon beach car park.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Members are asked to decide, in principle only whether the TRO should be made, which will then guide the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth in the exercise of delegated decision making. The final decision is therefore one for the Corporate Director, under delegated powers.

#### **2 Executive Summary**

- 2.1 Corporate Management Team (CMT) approved a report in September 2023 which recommended the introduction of measures to address the availability of parking space and pricing to encourage the use of alternative, more sustainable transport modes.
- 2.2 With the above in mind, it is proposed that a pay and display parking zone (Monday-Sunday, 8am-6pm) with tariffs of £1/hour; £3 all day be introduced for the extent of Crimdon beach car park alongside 'no waiting at any time' restrictions.

2.3 Officers have determined that the changes listed below would be of benefit in terms of facilitating the turnover of vehicles in the identified location. It is therefore proposed to introduce the Crimdon (Off Street Parking Place) Traffic Regulation Order to allow the identified changes to be implemented.

2.4 Both Local Members were consulted with one raising an objection to the proposals. Durham Constabulary were also consulted and noted concern over potential displacement, suggested further restrictions are considered as part of an additional amendment order to the Blackhall TRO.

2.5 Consultation Period:

	From	To
Statutory Consultees	05-July-24	26-July 24
Informal Consultation	23-Oct-23	13-Nov-23
Formal Consultation	09-Aug-24	30-Aug-24

2.6 The informal consultation exercise for this proposal took the form of an online questionnaire which invited comments on the proposals.

### **3 Recommendation(s)**

3.1 Committee is recommended to:

Endorse the proposal, in principle, to introduce the Crimdon (Off Street Parking Place) Traffic Regulation Order 2024, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.

### **4 Proposal, Objections & Responses**

4.1 To introduce pay and display parking in Crimdon beach car park, to encourage a turnover of vehicles and to improve access to local amenities, whilst aiding the Authority's policies on sustainable travel.

4.2 Proposal Background

Crimdon Beach Car Park is recognised as having a high demand for parking and the Council has tailored its parking approach accordingly to promote maximum usage of spaces and discourage inappropriate parking.

Government guidance says that local authority parking enforcement should be self-financing and that authorities need to bear this in mind. If their scheme is not self-financing, then they need to be certain that they can afford to pay for it from within existing funding. The Secretary of State does not expect either national or local taxpayers to meet any deficit.

Income from both on and off-street parking is therefore ringfenced to provide the service and maintain facilities to a good standard. Any surplus from on-street parking charges or on-street and off-street enforcement activities, must be used in accordance with the legislative restrictions in Section 55 of the RTRA 1984.

Within the parking sector 85% occupancy is considered to be the figure whereby operational capacity has been reached within a parking area. Beyond this level of usage people find some difficulty locating a vacant space and either continuously circulate the car park; queue within the car park; or leave to go to another destination. This affects future decision making whereby people choose to go to a destination where there is an expectation of easily finding a space. The County Council therefore monitor their charging regime and amend tariffs and restrictions where necessary to manage occupancy, increase turnover and increase the expectation of a space being available for visitors.

It is also important to note that these proposed measures also tie in with the County Council's long term environmental objectives. Durham County Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019 and it is expected that these changes will assist in the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy by improving air quality and encouraging modal shift.

Transport emissions accounts for 33% of all emissions in County Durham. Free or cheap parking will make car travel a more attractive option when residents are deciding by which mode of transport to travel by. By incentivising people to drive on these journeys, this increases both congestion and transport emissions.

#### 4.3 Statutory Consultation:

Consultation dates	Expressions in favour	Expressions against
05.07.24 – 26.07.24	0	3

#### 4.4 Informal Consultation:

A questionnaire was hosted online to invite comments from residents and visitors to the area where changes are proposed.

Total Properties consulted	Number in favour	Number opposed
(Notice Via Comms)	33	716

#### 4.5 Formal Consultation:

5 notices were posted and maintained on site across Crimdon beach car park and a formal advert was placed in the Hartlepool Mail. The proposals were also provided in Blackhall Library for the public to view.

Consultation dates	Expressions in favour	Expressions against
09.08.24 – 30.08.24	0	17

#### 4.6 Summarised objections & responses:

Owing to the scale of the consultation exercise undertaken for this proposal the objections have been summarised into categories and are listed below:

#### 4.7 Objection Reason 1:

“These changes will have a negative effect on businesses within the area”.

144 No. of respondents mentioned this reason during the informal and formal consultation exercise.

#### 4.8 DCC Response:

- Within the parking sector 85% occupancy is considered to be the figure whereby operational capacity of a parking area has been reached. Beyond this level of usage people find some difficulty locating a vacant space and either continuously circulate the car park, queue within the car park, or leave to go to another destination. This affects future decision making whereby people choose to go to a destination where there is an expectation of easily finding a space. By effectively managing available parking space through the introduction of pay and display parking, we should help visitors access the coastline and make trips more attractive, encouraging future visits.
- Crimdon beach car park serves as immediate access to one local business on-site, the Dunes Café, which is owned and operated by Durham County Council.
- Planning conditions associated with the opening of the café, in 2022, have meant Crimdon beach car park has been subject to a limit on parking bays as part of a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) mitigation plan.

#### 4.9 See appendix 3 for objection chart.

#### 4.10 Objection Reason 2:

“These changes will make me / others visit the area less”.

212 No. of respondents mentioned this reason during the informal and formal consultation exercise.

#### 4.11 DCC Response:

- Durham County Council are currently the only local authority on the north-east coast to offer free parking in car parks at the coast.
- There have been several instances during summer months where this coastal car park has been operating over-capacity. This has led to congestion during these periods and the purpose of the introduction of paid parking is to manage demand during these occasions.
- We anticipate the introduction of a charge to manage occupancy will increase turnover and increase expectation of a space being available for visitors.
- The introduction of parking restrictions alongside charges will also ensure compliance with the HRA mitigation plan and planning conditions.

#### 4.12 See appendix 3 for objection chart.

#### 4.13 Objection Reason 3:

“These changes will cause parked vehicles to be displaced, leading to congestion and road safety issues in the surrounding areas”.

59 No. of respondents mentioned this reason during the informal and formal consultation exercise.

#### 4.14 DCC Response:

- This TRO has been pursued within the extent of the landowner’s permission (Neighbourhoods and Climate Change). Crimdon beach car park is currently only accessible via an access road which is owned and maintained by Crimdon Dene Holiday Park. We have consulted the holiday park on the proposals who have opted to pursue alternative arrangements in preventing obstructive parking within the extent of the access road.
- ‘No waiting at any time’ restrictions (double yellow lines) will be used to delineate areas of the car park where parking is unsuitable and causes

congestion or road safety concern. Vehicles parked outside of the designated pay & display area, within the extent of the car park, will be in contravention of the Traffic Regulation Order and therefore be subject to a penalty charge notice to manage capacity and discourage inappropriate and obstructive parking.

- Some level of parking displacement is unfortunately inevitable when parking controls are introduced. Monitoring of adjacent areas will be undertaken, where necessary, to determine any effects. The results of this exercise would determine if additional restrictions or alternative measures would be beneficial.
- In order to best ascertain the impact of the proposals, the proposed measures need to be in place before any meaningful information could be gathered. Any new measures would be introduced in line with the relevant individual policies outlined in the County Council's Parking Policies document.

4.15 See appendix 3 for objection chart.

4.16 Objection Reason 4:

"There is currently a cost-of-living crisis and it is wrong to ask people to pay more".

176 No. of respondents mentioned this reason during the informal and formal consultation exercise.

4.17 DCC Response:

- It is acknowledged that most motorists would prefer not to pay a charge however, paying for parking ensures that it is the end user who contributes to the operational costs of the facility rather than the community at large, via direct taxation.
- Revenue generated by this proposal would assist the Council in maintaining its car parking asset within the County.

4.18 See appendix 3 for objection chart.

#### 4.19 Objection Reason 5:

“Free parking is one of the main reasons people visit the area”.

29 No. of respondents mentioned this reason during the informal and formal consultation exercise.

#### 4.20 DCC Response:

- There have been several instances during summer months where Crimdon beach car park has been operating over-capacity. This has led to congestion which, on numerous occasions, has restricted access for several vehicles including those of the surrounding residential properties. There is significant concern that should current parking patterns continue, blue light access will be prevented in the event of an emergency.
- The increased demand for parking has also led to significant vegetation damage as vehicles attempt to utilise every part of the car park. The proposals will therefore ensure parking is restricted to areas that can accommodate access without compromising the biodiversity of the coastal heritage land.
- The purpose of the introduction of paid parking is to manage demand and prevent inappropriate parking.

4.21 See appendix 3 for objection chart.

#### 4.22 Objection Reason 6:

“People will not use sustainable travel methods instead of their car. The sustainable travel offer in the area is inadequate”.

113 No. of respondents mentioned this reason during the informal and formal consultation exercise.

#### 4.23 DCC Response:

- It is anticipated that the introduction of charges will assist people in making reasoned choices about their mode of transport when planning their journey.
- Transport emissions accounts for 33% of all emissions in County Durham and unfortunately free parking will make car travel a more attractive option than public transport or walking / cycling to the areas of interest.

- A number of objections noted that public transport did not directly access the site. There are bus services available which operate to stops located on the A1086 which is an approximate 7-minute walk from the car park.
- Some responses were concerned that no details were provided as to what improvements were to be made to the existing sustainable travel offer supplying the town. They were also concerned that the existing cycle routes on the coast are hilly and unsafe and people would be reluctant to use them. The County Council are committed to monitoring, reviewing and where possible improving our sustainable transport offer.
- Despite this, the primary objective of this TRO is to address and manage the road safety concerns around access within the car park in accordance with similar policy identified within the HRA mitigation plan.

4.24 See appendix 3 for objection chart.

4.25 Objection Reason 7:

“These charges will have a negative effect on people’s physical and mental health”.

113 No. of respondents mentioned this reason during the informal and formal consultation exercise.

4.26 DCC Response:

- It is recognised that many people visit the coastal areas for exercise and to maintain and improve their mental health. Some objectors also mentioned that they liked to visit the area to walk their pets.
- These proposals will create a safer environment for all visitors. By controlling parking and managing capacity we can ensure access is maintained at all times which we consider to be essential should emergency access be required.

4.27 See appendix 3 for objection chart.



#### 4.28 Objection Reason 8:

“The money made from this proposal will not be reinvested within the area”.

54 No. of respondents mentioned this reason during the informal and formal consultation exercise.

#### 4.29 DCC Response:

- Income from both off (and on-street parking) is ringfenced to provide the service and maintain facilities to a good standard in accordance with the legislative restrictions in Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- If the parking regime within the area does generate a surplus, then this will be utilised on Transport Improvement schemes across the County.
- Whilst it is inevitable that changes to parking tariffs will be unpopular with many car owners, it should be recognised that any changes will potentially lead to a positive impact for those who rely on other modes such as public transport, walking or cycling, as any surplus income generated from parking is ringfenced for transport measures.

#### 4.30 See appendix 3 for objection chart.

#### 4.31 Objection Reason 9:

“There isn’t enough parking within this area”.

18 No. of respondents mentioned this reason during the informal and formal consultation exercise.

#### 4.32 DCC Response:

- Crimdon beach car park has been subject to a limit on parking bays under planning permission granted for the opening of the Dune’s Café on-site in order to protect and maintain heritage coastal land in the immediate area following an initial Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).
- Unfortunately, there are no restrictions currently in place that allow Durham County Council to restrict or enforce appropriate parking in order to adhere to the HRA regulations. The car park has therefore been operating over capacity for a prolonged period to the detriment of the coastal site.

- The proposals will see parking formalised in unobstructive areas within the car park that will allow Durham County Council to enforce the parking capacity imposed by planning permissions, and in line with HRA regulations.

4.33 See appendix 3 for objection chart.

4.34 Objection Reason 10:

“These proposals will not be cost effective”.

24 No. of respondents mentioned this reason during the informal and formal consultation exercise.

4.35 DCC Response:

- It is anticipated that these amendments will assist the service in managing and maintaining their parking asset(s) whilst managing demand within the area and assisting the environmental goals of the Authority.

4.36 See appendix 3 for objection chart.

4.37 Objection Reason 12:

No specific reason was given but those responding simply were opposed to the proposal.

238 No. of respondents mentioned this reason during the informal and formal consultation exercise.

4.38 See appendix 3 for objection chart.

## **5 Conclusion**

5.1 Having considered the objections to the proposals, Officers remain of the view that it is necessary to introduce the proposals in order to manage parking capacity and encourage the use of sustainable travel alternatives. Accordingly, it is recommended that Members agree in principle to endorse the proposal to proceed with the implementation of the Crimdon (Off-Street Parking Place) Traffic Regulation Order 2024, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.

## **6 Background papers**

6.1 Available on request.

### **Author(s)**

[Strategic Traffic]

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[Dave Lewin]

Tel: 03000 263582

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

Imposing charges under the powers of section 35 of the 1984 Road Traffic Regulation Act, section 32 or 33(4) requires a Traffic Regulation Order.

Increases in parking charges introduced by Order can be made either by Amendment Order or, under section 35C or 46A of the 1984 Act (as appropriate), by Notice. Making changes by Notice means that objections to the changes need not be entertained, as would be the case if an amendment order was advertised. Changes can thus be made more quickly.

### **Finance**

LTP Budget.

### **Consultation**

Is in accordance with SI:2489.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

It is considered that there are no Equality and Diversity issues to be addressed.

### **Climate Change**

It is considered that there are no Climate Change issues to be addressed.

### **Human Rights**

Any interference with human rights is considered to be necessary in accordance with the law and proportionate in order to address highway safety issues.

### **Crime and Disorder**

This TRO will allow effective management of traffic to reduce congestion and improve road safety.

### **Staffing**

Carried out by Strategic Traffic.

### **Accommodation**

No impact.

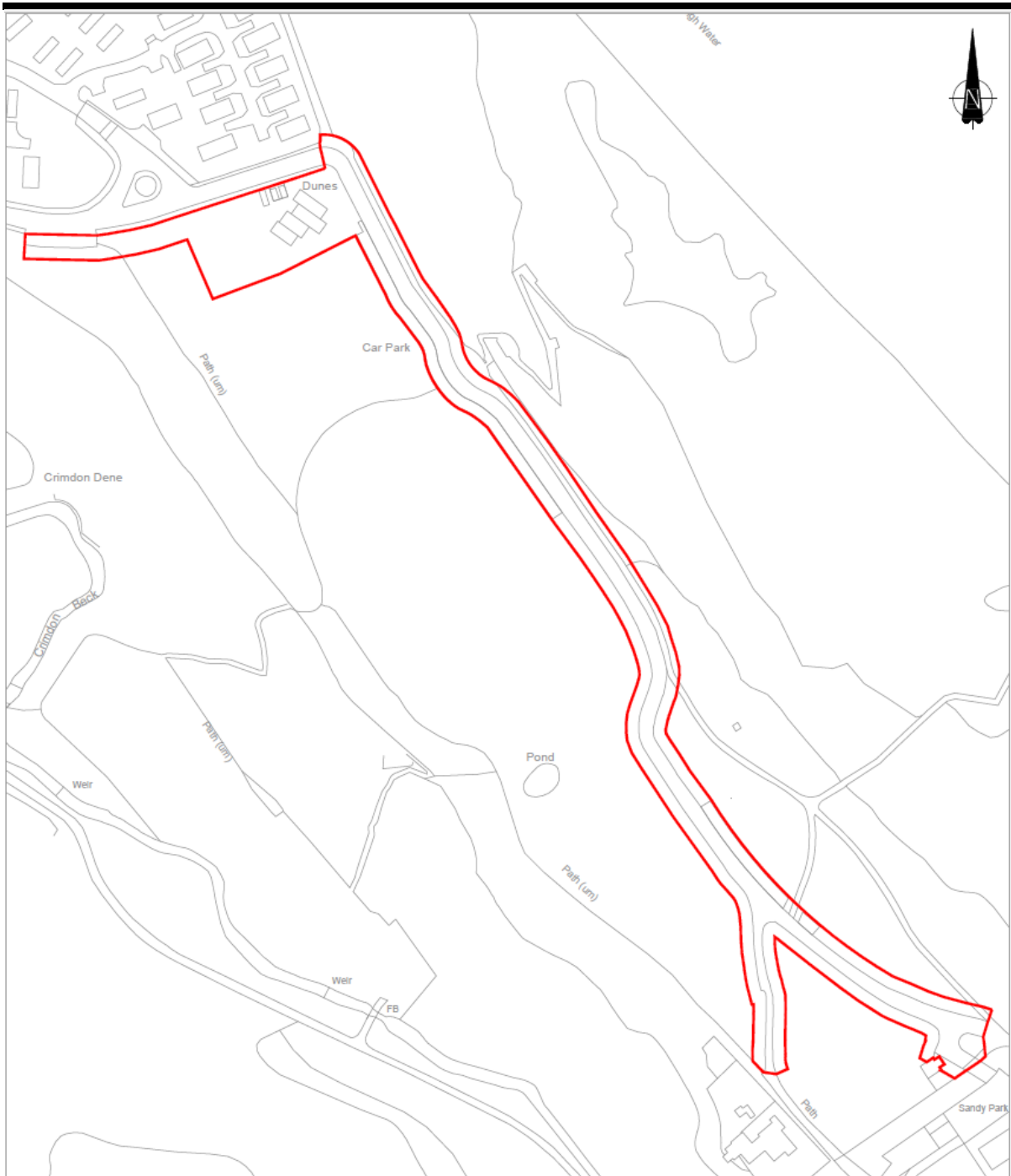
### **Risk**

Not Applicable.


## **Procurement**


Operations, DCC.

## Appendix 2: Location of Proposals



**LEGEND:**

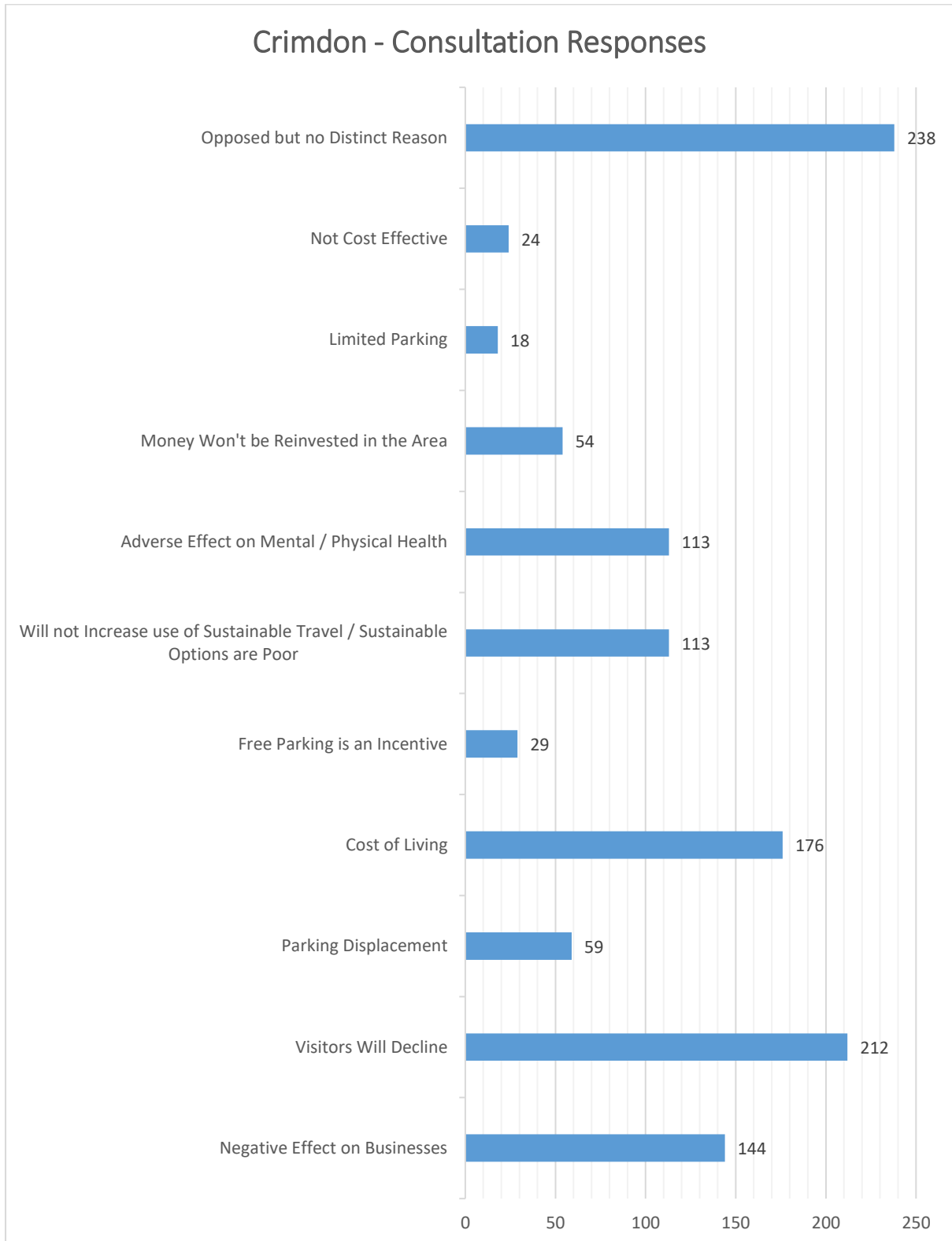
 Extents of Proposed Pay and Display Zone

Rev	Drawn By		Approved By		Description Of Amendments
	Name	Date	Name	Date	
0	B. Brown	03/04	L. Newbery	03/04	
<small>Reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. © Durham County Council, LA 10046086, 2020.</small>					
 <p><b>Durham</b> County Council</p> <p>Corporate Director Regeneration, Economy and Growth Strategic Traffic Management Corten House, Aykley Heads Business Park Durham DH1 5TS</p>			<p>Project: <b>Crimdon Beach Car Park</b></p> <p>Drawing: <b>CCP1</b></p> <p>Scale: <b>NTS @ A3</b>    Project/Drawing No: <b>TM40038/23/034</b>    Rev: <b>0</b></p> <p><small>TRAFFIC REGULATION DESIGN &amp; IMPLEMENTATION/Proposed Traffic and Duration Change/Crimdon</small></p>		

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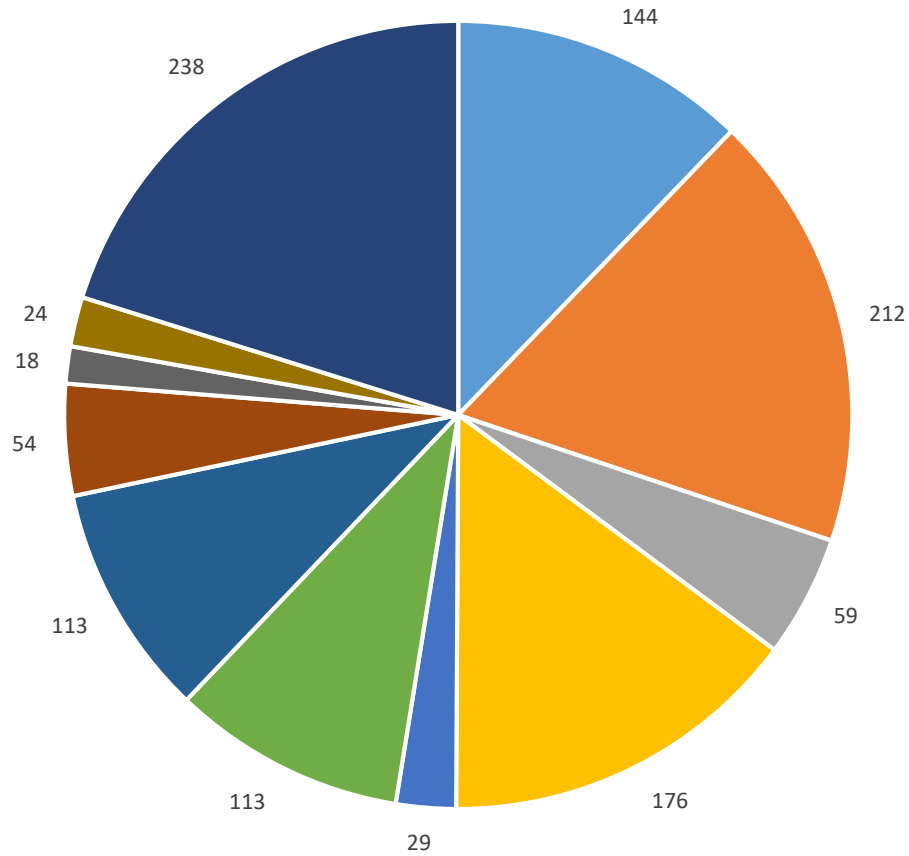
## Appendix 3: Objection Details

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*\*Data shown represents all responses from all stages of consultation*

### Crimdon - Consultation Responses



- Negative Effect on Businesses
- Visitors Will Decline
- Parking Displacement
- Cost of Living
- Free Parking is an Incentive
- Will not Increase use of Sustainable Travel / Sustainable Options are Poor
- Adverse Effect on Mental / Physical Health
- Money Won't be Reinvested in the Area
- Limited Parking
- Not Cost Effective
- Opposed but no Distinct Reason

*\*Data shown represents all responses from all stages of consultation*



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## Appendix 4: Statutory Consultation Responses

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**From:** Durham Constabulary  
**Sent:** Friday, August 9, 2024, 14:12  
**To:** Traffic Consultations  
**Subject:** 0996 - Crimdon Dene Coastal Car Park

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Hi,

As per previous comments made to DCC on this proposal, from a Police perspective the consequences of charging for parking is the main consideration relative to potential displacement and obstruction rather than the charge itself.

Concern remains around potential displacement of parking at the A1086 Coast Road around and near to the Crimdon junction as there is an alternative route to the Beach through the trees near the junction.

Regards

[Durham Constabulary](#)

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**From:** Cllr Rob Crute  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 25, 2024, 09:09  
**To:** Traffic Consultations  
**Subject:** Crimdon Dene Coastal Car Park

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Good morning,

Please take following comments as my formal objection to the introduction of parking charges at Crimdon:

I support the introduction of measures to prevent obstructive parking practices at the access to the bungalow at the southern edge of Crimdon. However, I do not support the introduction of parking charges at Crimdon.

Since the proposal to introduce parking charges at Crimdon was first suggested I have been contacted by a significant number of residents and visitors who agree with me that parking charges will drive tourism away from Crimdon at a time when everything should be done to attract visitors to Crimdon and the villages along the East Durham coast. I can confirm that I have received no indication of support for parking charges at Crimdon.

Opposition to this proposal was reflected in a consultation exercise carried out at the time when parking charges at Crimdon and Seaham were first suggested as part of the council's latest MTFP proposals earlier this year. There was an unusually high level of public engagement with the consultation exercise, with similarly huge levels of opposition expressed by members of the public to the introduction of parking charges. It is noted that there was no discernible element of support. Despite those objections parking charges were eventually introduced in Seaham and judging by many reports since then the charges have had a devastating impact on local businesses in the town. I have no doubt that if residents are ignored again, and parking charges are introduced at Crimdon, there will be a similarly regressive effect on visitor numbers and local businesses.

Introducing parking charges at key tourist/visitor locations like Crimdon will have a negative impact on the resort itself, alongside the nearby villages where additional business generated by visitors is welcomed and needed now as much as it ever was. The proof that parking charges will damage the local economy and drive down visitor numbers can be seen just a few miles up the road in Seaham.

Finally, I would urge the council to carry out a thorough and meaningful public consultation exercise to gauge public feeling about this issue. Members of the public, the business sector and visitors were ignored before parking charges were introduced at Seaham, and the result has been catastrophic for the town and several local businesses. The same mistakes must not be repeated. The

people deserve to be heard and they must be assured that their opinions on this matter will be treated with respect and taken fully into account before any final decision is reached.

For the reasons set out above I wholeheartedly oppose the introduction of parking charges at Crimdon, and I know from their representations that thousands of residents, businesses and visitors are fully supportive of my position on this matter. I urge the council to test public feeling and then respect the outcome.

Regards,

Rob.

**Cllr Rob Crute (Blackhall Division)**  
**Deputy Leader of the Labour Group**  
**Chair, Corporate O&S Management Board**  
**Durham County Council**

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**From:** Grahame Morris  
**Sent:** Monday, October 23, 2023 14:06  
**To:** Traffic Consultations  
**Subject:** (Case Ref: GM24454)

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To Whom It May Concern,

**Crimdon Beach Car Park: TM/40038/23/034**

I am writing to object to the extension of car parking charges to Blackhall and Crimdon.

The introduction of parking charges in Seaham has been a business and employment disaster, which is damaging the local economy.

There is no justification to extend these charges to Blackhall and Crimdon. The consequence will be to drive people away from our coastline and local businesses into neighbouring areas which have better services and facilities that Durham County Council do not provide on our coastline.

The other consequence will be to displace vehicles, with people finding alternative parking in residential areas. There will also be unforeseen consequences, as demonstrated in Seaham, where previous privately run free parking facilities are now subject to strict conditions leading to people being fined or avoiding the area.

These charges have been imposed on a false pretext, ignoring the views of the public and business community through sham consultation which set aside the views of those most affected by these changes.

These charges are economically harmful and short sighted by Durham County Council, who are trying to raise revenue on the East Coast in order to fund vanity projects such as the cafe/art gallery on the former DLI site, and to cover up for regeneration failures like the Durham City Riverside Development which is yet to open and attract business rates, much to the contention of operators such as BrewDog that have publicly spoke of the failure of Durham County Council.

I ask that Durham County Council prioritise the economic health and well being of our County, and rather than penalising our coastline businesses, instead support them, first through stopping the expansion of charges and secondly review existing charges to determine what action can be taken to support once viable businesses at risk of closure due to the actions and decisions of Durham County Council.

I ask the highways committee to reject this proposals, and in view of the impact charges are already having on our coastline, call for a review in order to protect business and employment.

The economic damage caused by these charges were very much avoidable had Durham County Council listened to the thousands of objections from business, the public and visits. I ask that you do not make the same mistake again, and that you support the economic development and help us to attract people to the coastline by rejecting this proposal to extend parking charge to Blackhall and Crimdon.

Yours sincerely,  
Grahame Morris, M.P.

**From:** Monk Hesleden Parish Council  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 24, 2024 12:08  
**To:** Traffic Consultations  
**Subject:** Crimdon Dene Coastal Car Park

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Good morning,

Monk Hesleden Parish Council oppose the proposal to install a pay & display car park at this location and therefore object to the charging structure.

As highlighted previously, our community cannot be compared to the thriving town of Seaham, our opportunities to attract visitors to the area are very limited and to impose pay and display at Crimdon will only add to the continuing decline of our villages.

Statistics show our community suffers from poor health and disability; this proposal removes the ability for our residents to have access the coastline as many cannot afford the charges.

Regards

Parish Clerk  
[www.monkhesleden-pc.gov.uk](http://www.monkhesleden-pc.gov.uk)

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