

Highways Committee

12 March 2014

The County Council of Durham
(Albert Road, Consett)
(Off-Street Parking Places)
Order 2013



Report of Ian Thompson Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development

Councillor Neil Foster, Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Regeneration and Economic Development

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To advise Members of objections received to the formal consultation on the proposed traffic regulation order relating to Albert Road Car Park, Consett.
- 1.2 To request members consider the objections made during the consultation exercise.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Albert Road Car Park, Consett is generally recognised as the most convenient off road parking facility within the town and is well used by workers and shoppers alike on a regular basis.
- 3.0 As the local authority our intention is to try and manage the parking facilities within the town to encourage economic activity. Previous parking surveys have shown that the optimum occupancy level a car park is around 85%. This gives any potential customer the expectation that they can travel to the town and reasonably expect to find somewhere to park.
- 3.1 A meeting was held with a number of traders from Consett and during the course of this meeting, concerns were raised as to the efficiency at which the Albert Road car park was currently operating at. As a result, parking surveys were undertaken on the car park on Tuesday 9th and Thursday 11th July 2013. The results from these surveys indicated that at 9am on both days the car park was already at least 90% occupied. The car park remained at a level of occupancy higher than the optimum (85%) right through the day until 4pm. Furthermore, during the course of the two days surveyed, it was noted that 94 vehicles entered the car park and exited without being able to find a space.
- 3.2 On average 477 vehicles use this car park on a daily basis. Of these vehicles, approximately 356 use the car park for a period of less than 3 hours. Whilst this figures sounds promising, the survey also determined that an average of 121 vehicles used the car park for 3 hours or more. This equates to an

average of 80% of the available space being occupied by the same vehicle for a prolonged period of time.

3.3 It was concluded that such elevated levels of occupancy would need to be managed to ensure that a more efficient turnover of vehicles could be achieved.

3.4 To this end it was proposed that a 3 hour, no return 1 hour restriction be employed within the car park between 8am – 6pm Monday and Saturday.

3.4 The formal consultation exercise for this scheme then commenced on the 17th October 2013 and closed on the 7th November 2013.

3.5 20 objections were received in relation to the proposed scheme. The reasons for objection are addressed below.

4.0 Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that a Monday – Saturday, 8am – 6pm , 3 hour limit, No return within 1 hour restriction be implemented within the car park.

5.0 Objection 1

5.1 Provision of a time limit on this car park will leave the town centre workers with nowhere to park.

6.0 Response

6.1 The restrictions have been proposed following discussions with local traders. They are concerned that the car park is not being utilised by potential customers. Survey works undertaken on the car park have proven that the car park is over 90% occupied by 9am. It is suggested that workers give consideration to parking at alternative car parks such as Sherburn Terrace or Green Street.

7.0 Objection 2

7.1 These restrictions will not encourage people to work in Consett

8.0 Response

8.1 The aim of the proposal is to encourage a higher turnover of vehicles in the Albert Road car park to generate custom for the local businesses and improve the local economy. Other alternative parking locations are available for motorists who wish to stay for a prolonged period.

9.0 Objection 3

9.1 Parking will be displaced into the neighbouring residential streets

10.0 Response

10.1 It is quite possible that this will occur. If this practice becomes problematic then the areas will be assessed and possible remedial measures proposed.

11.0 Objection 4

11.1 Restrictions could mean visitors do not attempt to use the car park

12.0 Response

12.1 Previous parking surveys have shown that the optimum occupancy level a car park should operate at is around 85%. This gives any potential customer the expectation that they can travel to the town and reasonably expect to find somewhere to park. At present occupancy levels within this car park exceed this figure for the majority of the day. Therefore a time limit should encourage visitors to the town as the chance of locating an unoccupied space will be greater.

13.0 Objection 5

13.1 The car park is already full up with resident's cars

14.0 Response

14.1 Parking surveys undertaken at this location have shown that at 7am, the car park is approximately 20% occupied. It is assumed that these vehicles are likely to belong to residents of the adjacent properties or workers who start work prior to 7am. Whilst it is appreciated that this figure is not ideal, it would appear that the objection is not factually correct.

15.0 Objection 6

15.1 There are no alternative car park options, particularly if starting work mid-morning.

16.0 Response

16.1 There are several alternative car parks throughout the town. The most notable alternatives are at Sherburn Terrace, Green Street, Edith Street or the Bus Station.

17.0 Objection 7

17.1 If this proposal goes ahead, permits should be made available for workers

18.0 Response

- 18.1 Permits would not be made available to workers as this would oppose the objective of the proposal. The aim of the proposal is to improve the turnover of vehicles within the car park and a permit system for workers would work against this.

19.0 Objection 8

- 19.1 The scheme should only be in operation on the busiest days, ie Friday and Saturday.

20.0 Response

- 20.1 Whilst Friday and Saturday may be busier days, it is considered that this proposal would be a worthwhile restriction to implement on all days of the week. The occupancy surveys were undertaken on a Tuesday and Thursday and these showed that the car parks were over occupied for long periods. Should a scheme be implemented only at specific times of the week, appropriate signage would need to be erected to reflect this, and this may be confusing to some motorists.

21.0 Objection 9

- 21.1 There is too much disabled parking and loading areas throughout the town taking up valuable parking space.

22.0 Response

- 22.1 Successful town centres generally need to have a good mix of long stay, short stay and disabled parking to maximise their viability for their potential customers. In addition to this we also have to try and incorporate loading bays to facilitate the various businesses. Loading bays throughout the County are generally provided between Monday and Saturday. All restrictions, including those relating to disabled parking and loading are reviewed on a regular basis and amended or removed if deemed no longer necessary.

23.0 Objection 10

- 23.1 A 3 hour limit will send people to supermarkets

24.0 Response

- 24.1 It is considered that a 3 hour limit is sufficient for a potential customer to visit the town and utilise the various shops and amenities. Should a customer wish to visit the town for longer than this then one of the alternative car parking facilities could be used.

25.0 Objection 11

25.1 Park and Ride options should be explored

26.0 Response

26.1 Park and ride is not considered to be a valid option for Consett at this present time.

27.0 Objection 12

27.1 It is already a well-used car park with a good turnover of vehicles

28.0 Response

28.1 The car park has a capacity of 150 spaces and is used by an average of 477 vehicles on a daily basis. Approximately 121 of these vehicles remain in the car park for longer than 3 hours and it is these vehicles that we are looking to relocate. Essentially, these figures indicate that approximately 80% of the available parking space is utilised by the same vehicle(s) for prolonged periods of time.

29.0 Objection 13

29.1 A 3 hour limit will not work due to heavy usage and easy access to shops.

30.0 Response

30.1 It is considered that a 3 hour limit is sufficient for a potential customer to visit the town and utilise the various shops and amenities. Should a customer wish to visit the town for longer then one of the alternative car parking facilities could be used.

31.0 Objection 14

29.1 There is not enough parking in Consett

32.0 Response

32.1 Consett is not dissimilar to many other towns within the County. The town is well established with very little potential for car park development or expansion.

20.0 Local member consultation

20.1 The Local members have been consulted and offer no objection:
Cllr Glass
Cllr Brown

Cllr Temple
Cllr Watson
Cllr Hicks
Cllr Shield
Cllr Stelling

21.0 Recommendation

21.1 It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee endorse the proposal having considered the objections and support the implementation of the Traffic Regulation Order;

Background Papers

Correspondence and documentation on Traffic Office File and in member's library.

Contact: Lee Mowbray Tel: 03000 263 693

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – LTP Capital

Staffing – Carried out by Strategic Traffic

Risk – Not Applicable

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

Accommodation - No impact on staffing

Crime and Disorder - This TRO will allow effective management of traffic to improve economic activity, reduce congestion and improve road safety

Human Rights - No impact on human rights

Consultation – Is in accordance with SI:2489

Procurement – Operations, DCC.

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications: All orders have been advertised by the County Council as highway authority and will be made in accordance with legislative requirements.