

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

Date 19th July 2017

1. **HEADING** **Lyme Valley car parking**
- Submitted by:** **Engineering Manager**
- Portfolio:** **Town Centres, Property and Business**
- Ward(s) affected:** **Town**

Purpose of the Report

To outline the proposals to improve car parking at the Lyme Valley, A34 car park.

Recommendations

- (a) **To approve the proposals to commence consultation on the Traffic Regulation Order to introduce parking management on the Lyme Valley car park situated off the A34, both in the Borough's and Stoke City Council's administrative areas and any associated agreements.**
- (b) **To authorise the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Town Centres Property and Business to consider the consultation responses and adopt the Traffic Regulation Order and implement the enforcement arising.**

Reasons

The Council receives regular and increasing numbers of complaints about the parking problems at the Lyme Valley Car parks as recreational users of the Lyme Valley are unable to park due to lack of spaces and cars blocking the access to the car park on the A34. It is therefore appropriate that the Council considers introducing car park management through pay and display parking and enforcement of the double yellow lines on the access road to the car park on A34.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Council has to operate car parks within the legislative framework provided by the Traffic Management Act. Traffic Regulation Orders can be made to define the operating requirements of each car park. This enables the Council to set operating times and charges if required. The Council is then bound to manage the car park in line with the Traffic Management Act.
- 1.2 The Council owns three public car parks on the Lyme Valley. These are primarily used for members of the public to access the leisure opportunities at Lyme Valley. The sites have not however had any restrictions placed upon them and therefore due to its close proximity to the town centre and in particular the hospital, cars are being parked for the majority of the day both in the car parks and on the access at the car park off the A34.
- 1.3 Whilst the car parks are owned by the Council the car park off the A34 is within Stoke-on-Trent's administrative boundary therefore the Traffic Regulation Order would have to be made by Stoke-on-Trent City Council. The access to the car park is however within the Borough Council's administrative boundary and therefore the Borough Council would be

required to have a separate Traffic Regulation Order for the access restrictions. Clearly it is beneficial that the Traffic Regulation Orders for both the car park and access route be produced to take into account of the key issues.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 The key issue is to consider the purpose of the Council's car parking provision at Lyme Valley (the A34 car park) and to review the mechanisms in place to influence its use. In summary Members are asked to decide whether it should encourage short stays (thereby targeting leisure users) or to enable people to park all day and then walk into the town centre or hospital (both of which are nearby).
- 2.2 One of the Council's key priorities is to support a healthy and active community and therefore access to the outdoor recreational area of Lyme Valley is important. To support usage by Lyme Valley users it would be beneficial to encourage short stay and therefore a turnover of cars using the spaces. This is especially important with the car park off the A34 where both the access road and the car park area are full with cars causing a nuisance and a hazard to users. This could be done through a charging policy which could limit stays to, say 2 hours and under.
- 2.3 In addition to the above comments it is considered reasonable to expect that both the town centre and hospital sites are adequately provided for in terms of car parking provision for their respective users.

3. **Proposal and Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the current situation with cars parking all day for free including blocking the access road is not acceptable in the long term. It is proposed therefore to introduce charging, this will provide a turnover of cars and some space availability for drivers arriving on the car park. To enforce this the Council will need to have a mechanism for recording the length of time for which a car has been parked and appropriate enforcement through Civil Enforcement Officers. As outlined above the enforcement would need to be in line with a Traffic Regulation Order made by Stoke-on-Trent City Council It therefore makes sense to consider using Stoke-on-Trent's Civil Enforcement Officers to undertaking the enforcement role.
- 3.3 Subject to Cabinet views it would be proposed to enter into an agreement with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, draft the Traffic Regulations Orders, undertake the statutory public consultation of 21 days and subject to the consultation responses make the order. It is proposed that this is done though delegated approval, however, if significant objections were raised then a further report would be submitted to Cabinet.
- 3.4 Time limited free parking period would require additional enforcement visits. To enable effective management of the A34-Lyme valley car park it would require a ticket machine to be installed. In order to optimise use by recreational users' the tariffs would be free for up to 2 hours and £6.00 up to 12 hours.
- 3.5 Due to potential displacement it is proposed that the usage of the other two car parks in the Lyme Valley area (i.e. adjacent to the stadium and to the rear of Homebase) be monitored.

4. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

4.1 Providing access to healthy and active lifestyles is key priority for the Council.

5. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

5.1 The Council would be required to operate the car park in accordance with the Traffic Management Act.

6. **Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 Charging will not affect the protected equality groups as registered disabled users will still be eligible for free parking in line with the overall Council car park fees and charges.

7. **Financial and Resource Implications**

7.1 For the management to be effective enforcement would need to be every day. The cost for Stoke-on-Trent Council to undertake this on our behalf would be about £6,240 per annum. It would be proposed to have a 2 week warning period whereby warning notices are placed on car windscreens to warn drivers that the new time restrictions are in place.

7.2 There would need to be cash collections from the machines, this will cost £30 per week and then 40p cash handling for every £100 collected.

7.3 Three new parking machines would need to be purchased at an approximate cost of £4,000 each including installation and a maintenance cost of £350 per year. Neither of these costs have been budgeted for and would require capital and revenue funding. Therefore it is proposed that [the £12k will be funded via the first £12k of income that the Council receives from the implementation of the new charges.](#)

7.4 The income from the car parks would be dependent on the level of charges proposed, taking account of the fact that the Council is attempting to promote the short term nature of the leisure users compared to all day parking. It is proposed to provide for a nil charge for stays up to 2 hours and £6.00 up to 12 hours. Parking would be free to Blue Badge Holders subject to a maximum stay of 3 hours.

7.5 Should a Penalty Charge Notice be issued the charge is £50, if paid within 14 days this is reduced to £25

8. **Major Risks**

8.1 There main risk is reputational should no changes be made to the car parking restrictions as local users are likely to make more complaints about the situation. There are approximately 6 complaints per month. It should also be noted that the cars blocking the access road is also affecting the access to the neighbouring commercial business. There is a risk that the Council will not achieve at least a break-even financial position.

9. **Key Decision Information**

9.1 This is not a key decision.

10. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

10.1 None.

11. **List of Appendices**

11.1 None.

12. **Background Papers**

12.1 None.