

## **NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS**

**Submitted by:**            **Engineering Manager (Graham Williams)**

**Portfolio:**                **Environment and Recycling**

**Ward(s) affected:**    **Town**

### **Purpose of the Report**

To inform Members of the results of recent surveys of Borough Council owned public car park usage and to enable consideration of possible alternative uses in the future.

### **Recommendations**

- (a)    That Members receive the report.**
- (b)    That officers conduct a further survey in mid 2012 and report back to members with the findings to enable consideration of any further action.**
- (c)    That the findings be reviewed as part of both the emerging Site Allocations Development Plan Document and the next version of the Asset Management Strategy.**

### **Reasons**

Whilst the report includes occupation levels for the Borough Council's car parks during both holiday and term time, it would be prudent to revisit the car park usage following the opening of Jubilee 2, completion of the repair works to the Midway Car Park and the opening of the car park at Ryecroft.

## **1.    Background**

- 1.1    The Borough Council owns 12 town centre pay and display car parks which are patrolled by the Civil Enforcement Officers, plus the recently opened Ryecroft car park (jointly owned by the County and Borough Councils).
- 1.2    In general charges apply from 8am to 9pm Monday to Saturday, with Sundays and Bank Holidays free. Recently members resolved to offer free parking on Saturdays on the King Street car park and free after 6pm on the School Street car park.
- 1.3    The car parks are divided into 3 bands (A, B & C). Band A (The Midway) being the most highest band, with charges reducing in cost on those car parks that lie further away from the centre of the town (see **Appendix A**).

## **2.    Issues**

- 2.1    Due to challenging national economic conditions there has been a reduction in the use of cars and car parking usage. To provide an accurate picture to assess any future alternative land use, two surveys have been carried out.
- 2.2    These surveys were undertaken during a holiday period (mid August) and term time (mid October). The results of the surveys are depicted in the graphs at Appendix A.
- 2.3    The table in Appendix A also indicates the average occupancy levels between 9.00am and 4.00pm.

2.4 Whilst there were empty spaces on the Midway Car Park during the recent repair works, it is considered likely that a number of users have avoided using the facility because of the disruptive effect of the work. Some have displaced to other Borough car parks, others have sought other places to park. It is anticipated that patronage to this car park will increase following the imminent completion of the repair works.

2.5 Since there is a relatively significant level of over-provision, it would appear there is scope for reviewing the long term provision and distribution of car parks. This has the potential to generate capital receipts from the disposal of surplus sites. Additionally it would be prudent to review any such opportunities in light of wider redevelopment proposals.

### 3. **Options Considered**

At this early stage it is possible to speculate as follows:

3.1 King Street may be considered for partial redevelopment along with adjacent redevelopment sites or could be selected for targeted use by nearby businesses (season tickets);

3.2 Blackfriars Road may lend itself to assimilation into adjacent redevelopment sites.

3.3 The car parks at School Street, Windsor Street and Hassell Street should be kept under review as development continues on sites to the east of Barracks Road..

3.4 Whilst the Goose Street car park has a number of services passing through it (constraining its development potential), it may have potential for assimilation into adjacent land should there be any plans for redevelopment of adjacent land.

3.5 Of course any review of the car parks – with the objective of disposing of surplus sites – will need to take account of a range of factors including spatial distribution (convenience for users), regeneration opportunities, development potential and impact upon income.

### 4. **Proposal**

4.1 A further survey should be undertaken in mid 2012 when the car parking use has stabilised following the opening of Jubilee 2 and the completion of the Midway Car Park repair works.

4.2 A review of both the land usage and charging regime should be undertaken following the next survey.

4.3 That the findings be reviewed as part of both the emerging Site Allocations Development Plan Document and the next version of the Asset Management Strategy.

### 5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

5.1 To enable a reasoned approach to be taken to the management of the parking facilities within the town centre

### 6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

6.1 Rationalisation of the car park land usage and charges will impact on creating a Borough of opportunity and a more sustainable Borough.

### 7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

None at this time

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 A more detailed consideration will be undertaken following the reassessment of car park utilisation.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 It is estimated that £3000 would be required to conduct a survey of the car parks; this would be found from existing budgets. In the medium term there would appear to be opportunities to realise capital receipts from the disposal of any surplus car parks (in whole or part).

10.1 **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - Newcastle Town Centre – Off-Street Parking Provision  
Appendix B – Car Park Usage