

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET**

**Date 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017**

1. **HEADING** Traffic Regulation Order – Newcastle town centre
- Submitted by:** Head of Housing, Regeneration and Assets
- Portfolio:** Town Centres, Property and Business
- Ward(s) affected:** Town

**Purpose of the Report**

To review the progress with the implementation of the changes to the car parking charges as approved by the January fees and charges and the proposed adoption of the Traffic Regulation Order.

**Recommendations**

- (a) To consider the Traffic Regulation Order for which consultation has been undertaken and to receive information at the Cabinet meeting on the consultation responses.
- (b) To authorise the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Property and Business to make any minor modifications to the Traffic Regulation Order and proceed to adoption.
- (c) To amend the fees and charges to incorporate a 10% discount for the purchase of 10 permits or more and a 20% discount for the purchase of 20 permits or more.

**Reasons**

The Council has a responsibility to manage its car park portfolio effectively in order that it is fit for purpose and meeting its objectives. A report on the review of the management of the car parks was considered by Cabinet in October 2016 and the principles were endorsed; this led to the proposal to amend the fees and charges. In order to regulate the charges there is a requirement to update the relevant Traffic Regulation Order. This report outlines the steps taken to commence the Order, including minor amendments through discussion with the Highway Authority and next steps to implement the Order.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Council owns, manages and operates a range of car parks in Newcastle town centre, Kildgrove and other villages. They provide a valuable resource to support the function of town and village centres including local communities and businesses. In providing such facilities the Council has a duty to provide them in a safe manner and in order to maximise usage they should provide a good quality environment that customers value. Should the car parks not fulfil a valid business purpose or other strategic function then they should be considered for disposal.
- 1.2 The Council currently only charges customers to park on the car parks in Newcastle Town Centre. The charging times and fees vary between car parks as historically the charges have

been introduced by different Traffic Regulation Orders and, to an extent, the tariffs have been set to reflect the preferred customer usage.

- 1.3 The Council has reviewed the approach to managing the car parks and in October 2016 Cabinet agreed in principle to review the charging hours. Taking into consideration the changing nature of the town centre with the introduction of student accommodation, it was agreed that all Newcastle Town Centre car parks become chargeable 24hours Monday to Saturday, retaining Sunday as free parking. In addition it was resolved to introduce a lower specific evening charge between 8pm and 8am of £1, together with overnight parking Permits being made available. These principles were taken forward as part of the annual fees and charges approved by Cabinet in January 2017.

## **2. Issues**

- 2.1 Changes to car parking charges can be completed through a minor variation to the existing Traffic Regulation Order whereas the introduction of charges to the car parks at Fogg Street Rear High Street and Bankside requires a new Traffic Regulation Order to be made. Officers therefore drafted a new Traffic Regulation Order to cover all the Newcastle Town Centre Car Parks and in line with the legislation consultation was undertaken with the statutory consultees; the Freight Association, Road Haulage Association, Highway Authority and Chief of Police.
- 2.2 At the time of writing, representatives of the Highway Authority were in a dialogue with officers about the practical implications of the overnight charging, particularly at Bankside as this is in a residents' parking zone. The Council has to consider the consultee responses and make suitable amendments. Officers have reviewed the proposed operation of the overnight charges in light of the Highway Authority's comments and as a result minor amendments were made primarily to propose Permit-only overnight parking on Bankside, Fogg Street and Rear of High Street, with the overnight Permits valid from 6pm to 7am (see appendix 1).
- 2.3 Following consideration of the consultee comments, the next stage of progressing the Order is to advertise and undertake public consultation. This was done through an advertisement in The Sentinel and 21 days public consultation has been undertaken. Due to the timing of the production of this report the outcome of the consultation will be reported to the Cabinet meeting. In line with the legislation the Council will need to review consultee comments and consider making any appropriate alterations. Once this has been undertaken the Order can be made and a response to consultees must be made within 14 days of making the Order.
- 2.4 As part of the October Cabinet report it was recognised that it is normal practice for to offer a discount to block purchases based on the number of Permits purchased. It is normal practice to offer a 10% discount for the purchase of 10 Permits or more and a 20% discount for the purchase of 20 permits or more and it would be appropriate for Members to consider implementation of that approach as part of the proposed new arrangements for reasons of consistency.

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

- 3.1 It is proposed that the consultee responses are considered at the Cabinet meeting and, subject to any minor modifications, that the Order is adopted.
- 3.2 To formalise the practice of offering discounts for the block purchase of car parking permits by amending the fees and charges to clearly identify that 10% discount for the purchase of 10 Permits or more and a 20% discount for the purchase of 20 Permits or more.

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

4.1 The Council manages a range of car parking facilities to provide car parking for business and leisure users. The recommendations in this report have been considered in the context of the priorities of a Borough of Opportunity and a Clean, Safe and Sustainable Borough.

**5. Legal and Statutory Implications**

5.1 The Council operates the town centre off-street car parks in line with the Traffic Management Act 2004 and is required to be covered by a Traffic Regulation Order to state the operational conditions as per the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

**6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 The recommendations in this report do not adversely affect any protected groups.

**7. Financial and Resource Implications**

7.1 The Council's budget for 2017/18 and the fees and charges have been set based on income from the introduction of overnight parking and charging on the car parks outlined in this report. It is therefore appropriate that the Council progressed consultation on a new Traffic Regulation Order and subject to consideration of the consultation responses that the Order is made.

**8. Major Risks**

8.1 There are no major risks arising from the adoption of the Traffic Regulation Order.

**9. Key Decision Information**

9.1 This is not a key decision as it does not affect more than two wards or create a budgetary variation of more than £50,000.

**10. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

10.1 January 2017 Cabinet decision on fees and charges and October 2016 Cabinet report on Car Park Management.

**11. List of Appendices**

11.1 Appendix 1 - The Proposed Borough Council of Newcastle under Lyme (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2017 – available on request.

**12. Background Papers**

12.1 None.