

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S  
REPORT TO CABINET**

**3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024**

**Report Title:** Car Parking Strategy 2019-29 Update

**Submitted by:** Deputy Chief Executive

**Portfolios:** Finance, Town Centres and Growth

**Ward(s) affected:** Town

<b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b>	<b><u>Key Decision</u></b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>To provide an update to Members on the Newcastle -under-Lyme Borough Council Car Parking Strategy 2019-2029, which sets out the Council's plans and ambitions for its owned car parks, in particularly considering the development of the new multi-storey Castle Car Park.</p>			
<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p><b>That Cabinet:-</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Approves the updates to the Council's Car Parking Strategy 2019-29.</li> <li>2) Commences consultation on a Traffic Regulation Order amendment and authorises the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to make any necessary recommendations and adopt the Traffic Regulation Order.</li> <li>3) Notes and endorses the Christmas Period Free Parking times, as set out in the report.</li> <li>4) Approves that the Portfolio Member for Finance, Town Centres and Growth has flexibility in setting the Castle Car Park parking charges once open, as noted in the report below.</li> </ol>			
<p><b><u>Reasons</u></b></p> <p>The current car parking strategy was adopted in 2019 for a 10-year period and an update was made in 2021. It is appropriate to undertake a further review to ensure the car parking strategy continues to deliver the best outcomes and specifically considers the development of the new multi-storey Castle Car Park.</p>			

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Council has a wide range of car parks in Newcastle town centre which play an important role in the operation of the town centre for visitors and businesses. The car park strategy sets out how the Council will utilise these

resources to balance the demands of the various users of car parks, support town centre businesses, and ensure operational costs are met.

- 1.2 Management of car parks also involves wider partners such as the Newcastle Business Improvement District and wider strategic objectives including reducing carbon emissions and supporting the use of electric vehicles.
- 1.3 The Car Parking Strategy 2019-29 has established three objectives, which are:
  - To provide car parking which meets the current and future needs of the town centre for visitors, businesses and residents that will live in the town centre;
  - Optimise the cost-efficiency of the car park assets;
  - Minimise congestion and improve air quality.

Under these objectives, a number of priorities have been set:-

- Priority 1- to provide good quality car parks.
- Priority 2 - to improve the customer experience of parking in Newcastle.
- Priority 3 - to support the economic development of Newcastle Town Centre.
- Priority 4 - To ensure that car parks meet the future demands of car users.

## 2. Issues

2.1 An update on these priorities is contained below and in the attached updated Appendix Car Parking Strategy Action Plan.

### 2.2 **Priority 1 - to provide good quality car parks.**

One of the key actions within the Car Parking Strategy is the delivery of the new multi-storey Castle Car Park with EV charging points, good lighting and a safe modern environment to service the Town Centre.

Linked to this is the ambition to see the redevelopment of the Midway Car Park with the consultation for the removal of the Midway car park to commence upon approval of this report. Working with Capital&Centric, the Council is seeking planning permission for this later this year.

### 2.3 **Priority 2 – to improve the customer experience of parking in Newcastle.**

Twelve new ticket machines were installed with the facility to pay by card – either chip or contactless, as well as by cash. The ticket machines in the new Castle Car Park will also take card payments with an increasing number of drivers choosing this method of payment. Over the medium term the Council will review types of payment methods and could seek to reduce cash collections from the machines as these types of payments reduce.

The Council continues to contract with one of the leading providers in the country, PaybyPhone. The contract includes a minimal 7p convenience

charge and increasing APP usage, this reflects national market moves away from a QR code system. Through its contractor the Council wishes to ensure that all customer transactions are safe.

The new Castle Car Park will have CCTV monitoring and surveillance with new cameras and monitoring provided by our CCTV contractor.

The Borough Council will support Staffordshire County Council's implementation of the new street signing as part of the Wayfinding Strategy. This has involved replacing older signage, updating directional information, and showing capacity numbers for borough car parks. New signage will be erected to direct drivers to the new Castle Car Park.

## **2.4 Priority 3 – to support the economic development of Newcastle Town Centre.**

A shopper's discount of £1 after 1pm was proposed as a trial for 8 months, however due to the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on shopping habits, this has continued. Whilst this offer has been neutral in respect of impact overall, there has been some negative impact on the customer experience at J2. School Street and Barracks Road are key car parks for the operation of J2 and the Council should seek to provide relatively close car parking to parents and carers wishing to take their children to swimming lessons after school. The centre's peak time is for children's swimming lessons from 3.30pm to 6pm, followed by adult J2 member attendance from 5.30pm onwards as customers visit after work.

The development of Deakins Yard is progressing and the increase in contractor parking is already having a negative impact on availability of parking spaces for J2 customers. Once the building is occupied there may be a demand for daytime and overnight parking. It is therefore proposed to commence an evening charge on these car parks from 8pm. This would mean that the £1 after 1pm charge would expire at 7:59pm, with an overnight charge of £1 from 8pm until operational hours the following day.

The £1 after 1pm will continue on Cherry, Corporation, Goose, Hassall, King, Silverdale, and Windsor Car Parks and monitored to ensure that the offer continues to attract visitors to the town centre. Part of the benefit of having parking offers is to maximise the marketing of the town centre and to do this fresh offers and varied marketing messages can be beneficial.

Currently the Council offer free parking for 5 event days per year where there is a clear business engagement plan where it demonstrates economic impact. It is proposed that this continues subject to the BID providing the evidence.

To support business owners and workers in the town centre the council continues to offer simplified quarter permit scheme. Moving forward the Council will offer permits in the Castle Car Park for £172 per quarter.

## 2.5 Priority 4 – to ensure that car parks meet the future demands of car users.

Following the introduction of EV chargers on several sites, the Council have procured Zest to install EV chargers in the new multi-storey Castle Car Park. With the continued growth in electric vehicles, it is anticipated that the need for charging facilities will increase and the County Council is seeking to meet the needs of residents where they have no facilities at home. Working in partnership with the County Council there are plans through the LEVI programme to procure a Charge Point Operator in 2025, with them conducting soft market testing on the suitability of the following sites:

- Windsor St / Hassell St
- Silverdale Road
- King Street
- Wharf Street
- New Chapel Road - Pump Track at Kidsgrove.

## 2.6 Consultation on under-utilised assets

2.6.1 Within the Asset Management Plan, which was adopted by Cabinet in 2023, the Council identifies that assets that are under-utilised should be considered for alternative uses and where there is no Council operational need they can be disposed of. Several car parks were considered and it was identified that the Hassell Street site needed to retain some public parking alongside other sites where appropriate.

2.6.2 In line with the Asset Management Strategy the Council can consider when to take forward the full and partial site disposals identified for brownfield development:

Blackfriars car park, Newcastle	0.21 acres (Full disposal)
Hassell Street, Newcastle ST5 1AY	0.32 acres (partial disposal)
Cherry Orchard Newcastle ST5 2UB	0.30 acres (full disposal)
Goose Street Newcastle ST5 2EA	0.84 acres (partial disposal)
King Street Newcastle ST5 1HX	1.39 acres (partial disposal)
Bankside/ Well Street Newcastle ST5 1BP	0.10 acres (full disposal)

2.6.3 It is important that the Council considers the usage of its car parks to inform future provision. Car park counts taken over a mix of days and times for the Council town centre have identified the average space requirements and these have been used to predict the usage of car parks if changes occur as outlined above.

Car Park Name	Future Status	Current Capacity	Current Average Spaces used	Current % Usage by Car Park	Current % of Total Used	Future Spaces	Average Spaces Used	% Usage by Car Park	% of Total Used
Bankside (Well Street) - permit only	Close d	13	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	null	null
Blackfriars	Close d	25	0.875	3.50%	0.16%	0	0	null	null
Midway Car Park	Close d	624	174.25	27.92%	30.98%	0	0	null	null
Cherry Orchard	Close d	24	23.25	96.88%	4.13%	0	0	null	null
Ryecroft (Former Sainsbury)	Close d	182	88.75	48.76%	15.78%	0	0	null	null
Silverdale Road	Open	66	18	27.27%	3.20%	66	18	27.27%	3.20%
Goose Street	Partial	114	25.125	22.04%	4.47%	51	25.125	49.26%	4.47%
Barracks Road (School Street for 11/7/23)	Open	114	79.125	69.41%	14.07%	114	79.125	69.41%	14.07 %
Rear of High Street-Bridge Street - permit only	Open	15	10.5	70.00%	1.87%	15	10.5	70.00%	1.87%
King Street	Partial	170	67.125	39.49%	11.93%	148	124.875	84.38%	22.20 %
Fogg Street East - permit only	Open	12	10.125	84.38%	1.80%	12	10.125	84.38%	1.80%
Windsor Street	Open	21	19.75	94.05%	3.51%	21	19.75	94.05%	3.51%
Corporation Street	Open	9	8.75	97.22%	1.56%	9	8.75	97.22%	1.56%
Hassell Street	Partial	39	36.875	94.55%	6.56%	15	15	100.00 %	2.67%
<b>Newcastle New Car Park</b>	<b>New</b>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<b>403</b>	<b>251.25</b>	<b>62.35%</b>	<b>44.67 %</b>

(Within the new Castle Car Park there will be 16 accessible parking bays plus 6 accessible EV parking bays – all located on the ground floor.)

	Available Spaces	Average Spaces Used	Utilisation %
Current Car Park Numbers	1428	562.5	39.9%
New Car Park Numbers	854	562.5	65.87%

This shows that the car parks would have sufficient empty spaces should drivers wish to park but that the car parks would be better used and therefore a sensible commercial decision.

Subject to Cabinet approval of this report, it is proposed that consultation commences on changes to these car parks as set out above as part of a Traffic Regulation Order amendment.

## **2.7 Christmas Offers**

In the run up to Christmas 2024 it has been decided that the following days will have free car parking across all car parks in Newcastle town centre, to encourage residents and visitors to shop locally in the town centre and enjoy all of the facilities that are on offer.

- Sat 21/Sun 22 December
- Sat 28/Sun 29 December; and
- Sat 4/Sun 5 January

In addition to this the Midway Car Park was made available until 10pm for the Town Centre Christmas Lights switch-on on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November, to support the residents and businesses to enjoy the celebrations.

## **2.8 Castle Car Park Parking Charges**

It is anticipated that the new parking charges to the new Castle Car Park will be slightly different to the remaining surface level car parks due to the modern facilities available in the new car park. This has been reflected in the new Fees and Charges of the Council. In order to promote the new car park, it is assessed to be necessary to provide promotional rates in the first few months of the car park. Dependant on usage figures these may be extended or ended accordingly. It is requested in this report that officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth review these charges and usage figures and decides upon appropriate and adequate revisions to these new Castle Car Park charges, during the first six months of the new Castle Car Park operation.

## **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1** That Cabinet approves the updates to the Council's Car Parking Strategy 2019-29.
- 3.2** That Cabinet commences consultation on a Traffic Regulation Order amendment and authorises the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the portfolio Member for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to make any necessary recommendations and adopt the Traffic Regulation Order.
- 3.3** Notes the Christmas Period Free Parking times, as set out in the report below.

- 3.4 Approves that the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth has flexibility in setting the Castle Car Park parking charges once open, as noted in the report.

#### 4. **Reasons**

- 4.1 The development of the new multi-storey Castle Car Park is a significant improvement for the provision of car parking in Newcastle town centre. The development of this car park was identified in the 2019 strategy as it identified that the Midway car park was nearing the end of its useful life as a car park and was not meeting customer expectations. The development is intended to change drivers behaviour and to encourage parking within the ring-road at this key site which provides clean, safe, secure modern facilities including electric vehicle charging and a variety of payment methods. It is therefore appropriate to take the next steps to review the existing car parks and at this time review the 2019 strategy.
- 4.2 As part of the Asset Management Strategy the Council identified that there would be underutilised car parking and that some of the sites would most appropriately support the town centre if they were considered in the future for brownfield development.

#### 5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1 The Council has a choice of the order in which it undertakes consultation on car parking, this includes completing individual car parking consultation of grouping the car parks together into one consultation. Subject to Cabinet reviews it is recommended that the consultation commences based on the car parks outlined in this report. The benefit of this is that it enable consultees to understand which car parks are being proposed all together and thus their consultation response can take this into account.

#### 6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The Council has a Traffic Regulation Order 2017 (with further subsequent amendments) which sets out the management of off-street parking on the town centre car parks. Should the Council wish to alter the car parks included in this order then consultation is required and a review of the responses to assess if the proposed Order amendment should proceed or be amended further.

#### 7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 The development of the new Castle Car Park provides a safer and secure facility for visitors to the town centre, whilst this improves parking for all residents it clearly provides a better option for lone female drivers that are visiting in the evening and supports the Council's safe evening economy and Women's Safe Space scheme.
- 7.2 The Castle Car Park also includes 16 disabled parking spaces which is for the benefit of drivers who hold a blue badge.

#### 8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1** For 2023/24 income generation from parking services totalled £612k, this was £244k less than the income budget (£856k). The income generated during 2023/24 was subject to the £1 after 1pm promotional scheme. There was also a significant reduction in parking related income compared with 2022/23, where £868k was generated. This is a £256k reduction, or 29% less, than the previous year.
- 8.2** In the first six months of 2024/25 49% of payments were made by cashless means (card and APP), 36% was cash and 15% was permit sales. The increase in cashless payments is in line with society's increased use of card as the primary payment method.
- 8.3** For the first six months of 2024/25, £280k has been generated from cash (£161k) and cashless (£119k) parking, with a total of £560k forecast for the year against a whole year budget of £724k. This is a potential shortfall of £164k, but an increase on 2023/24 in real terms of £71k or 14.5%. Further car park related income to end of September 2024/25 consists of permit sales (£51k) and Penalty Charge Notices (£23k).
- 8.4** With regard to parking income from School Street and Barracks Road, if the Evening charge continues to operate then residents of the Deakins Yard development would be able to park from 1pm onwards for one hour's charge. Pre-6pm there may be three payments of £1.20 by parents/carers bringing children for a swimming lesson as parents/carers are parking for less than an hour. The potential income from an evening payment is therefore significant less than those attending a swimming lesson who are paying £1.20 at present. Steps therefore need to be made to cease the £1 offer and alter the evening charge on these two car parks.

## **9. Major Risks & Mitigation**

- 9.1** The proposals are not considered to be a major risk as the consultation responses will be considered prior to making any decisions on adopting the Traffic Regulation Order.

## **10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)**

- 10.1** The car park strategy is aiming to support the following UNSG and Climate Change objectives in a number of ways



## **11. One Council**

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:



### **One Commercial Council** ☒

The Strategy seeks to ensure that the Council is using its assets effectively and that investment is made in car parks that deliver good quality parking to the customers.

### **One Digital Council** ☒

The Council will seek to utilise developments in car parking technology such as payment options to ensure that digital options are available to customers where possible.

### **One Green Council** ☒

As part of the Council's Sustainability agenda the Council will seek to invest in schemes such as solar panels where there is a business case to support this.

## **12. Key Decision Information**

12.1 Not applicable.

## **13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 Cabinet 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019 for the Strategy adoption and Cabinet October 2021 for the Strategy Update. Cabinet September 2023 approved that the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth, be given delegated authority to develop a disposal programme and to undertake consultation on the disposal of sites as set out in the Asset Management Strategy 2023-2028.

13.2 Cabinet Report November 2024 – Traffic Regulation Order Amendments.

## **14. List of Appendices**

14.1 Appendix 1 - Car Parking Strategy Action Plan.

## **15. Background Papers**

15.1 Car Parking Strategy 2019-2029.