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**PROPOSED RESIDENTS' PARKING SCHEME - DARLINGTON COLLEGE**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Nick Wallis, Highways and Transport Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for a strategy to manage potential parking displacement from the new Darlington College on Central Park.

**Information and Analysis**

2. As Members will be aware the new Darlington College is to open on Central Park in September 2006.
3. The new college car park provides approximately 342 spaces in total compared with 270 at the existing site. However, as part of discussions about the Travel Plan it was highlighted that the College plan to impose a parking charge. It has yet to be confirmed but it is understood that the daily rate will be 50p initially increasing to £1.50.
4. As part of the planning process the College are obliged to produce a Travel Plan. It is hoped that the majority of students will make use of sustainable modes of transport and the facilities provided to encourage this. However, it is inevitable that some staff and students will travel to and from College by car and the parking charge may result in them parking in the nearby streets to avoid the charge.
5. A study has commenced investigating the potential parking displacement with a view to protecting resident parking and managing traffic in the surrounding areas.
6. At this stage areas of influence have been identified that spread a considerable distance around the site. Some areas identified in the study have existing problems created by commuters that may be exacerbated. Some areas do not have any significant commuter parking issues at the moment and the college may be a new source of parking demand.
7. The study has also highlighted the need for waiting restrictions to assist road safety and regulate traffic flows in and around some of the areas surrounding the college access.
8. When looking at the issue of protecting residents from potential displacement parking there are a number of approaches that can be taken:
  - (a) **Introduce schemes covering wide areas to pre-empt any potential parking displacement -**

- (i) This approach could impose restrictions in areas where problems may never materialise. The Council would have additional capital costs for introducing preventative measures and revenue implications of managing and enforcing the schemes and, more importantly, residents may have unnecessary restrictions placed upon them.
- (b) Introduce resident parking schemes where problems currently exist and where they are going to be exacerbated -**
  - (i) Areas where problems already exist need to have schemes designed and residents consulted to prevent any exacerbation of the existing problem.
  - (ii) There will be areas identified that at present do not have parking problems but which it is predicted will experience parking pressures once the college opens. In these areas residents should be consulted on whether they want a resident parking scheme to pre-empt any problems.
- (c) Monitor the areas that may be influenced by the college parking and implement schemes if problems arise -**
  - (i) It is proposed that the feasibility work underway at the moment produces designs for these areas that could be introduced in relatively short timescale should problems materialise.

It is suggested that approaches (b) and (c) be adopted to provide a positive and practical course of action.

### ***Residential Areas Within the Feasibility Study Area***

#### **9. Borough Road Area and Eastmount Road Area**

- (a) These are the areas that are at high risk of having parking displacement or having existing problems exacerbated. It is recommended that a resident parking scheme be designed and the residents consulted to establish whether they wish to pre-empt a potential problem or an exacerbation of the existing problem. The Borough Road area has requested a resident parking scheme for some time but the opening of the College has given increased weighting to this request and the scheme has been brought forward on the waiting list.
- (b) The permit charge is always a material consideration for residents during the consultation process. In this situation the Council foresee a potential problem and wish to intervene before residents are disadvantaged and suffer parking problems. Residents may not fully realise the problems that they may experience and the thought of having to pay for a permit may be a barrier in the consultation process. If residents are consulted on a scheme and a charge is proposed it is considered that the scheme will be rejected, only to be resurrected when the parking problems materialise. This will result in residents having to endure parking problems for a considerable period whilst the scheme is progressed. It is suggested that the principle of charging residents for permits be waived on this occasion.

- (c) Consideration will also be given to the need for waiting restrictions to assist road safety and regulate traffic flow.

#### **10. Haughton Road, Hundens Lane and Albert Hill Areas**

- (a) These areas currently do not experience significant commuter parking and as such residents may find it more difficult to appreciate the potential issues that may arise. Officers consider that these areas are not as vulnerable to displacement and may not experience displacement to any significant extent.
- (b) It is envisaged that the properties on Haughton Road directly opposite the access to Central Park may experience parking displacement and it is recommended that they should be consulted on some form of resident parking scheme. The principle of charging should also be waived for these two areas for the reason given in the second sentence of 9(b) above.
- (c) It is recommended that resident parking schemes be designed for the other two areas that have been highlighted above (Hundens Lane and Albert Hill areas) and the areas monitored to establish whether there is a parking displacement problem taking place. If a problem materialises the scheme could be consulted upon and introduced in a relatively shorter timescale. The principle of charging should also be waived for these two areas for the reason given in the second sentence of 9(b) above.
- (d) Consideration will also be given to the need for waiting restrictions in the three areas to assist road safety and regulate traffic flows.
- (e) Resident parking schemes are generally introduced in terraced housing environments where off-street parking facilities are limited. Without the detailed design being undertaken at this stage it should be pointed out that some of these areas, or parts of the areas, might not be entirely suitable for a traditional basic resident parking scheme and some adaptation may be necessary.

#### ***Industrial Areas Within the Feasibility Study Area***

##### **11. Valley Street/Chesnut Street Area**

- (a) This area is predominantly industrial and experiences considerable on-street parking. This could be exacerbated with additional motorists searching for spaces. As part of the feasibility work the waiting restrictions are being reviewed in this area with a view to proposing additional restrictions to ensure road safety and traffic flow in the industrial area.

#### **Future Developments Within the Feasibility Study Area**

- 12. Central Park and the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor (DETC) are two developments in this area that are being considered as part of the feasibility work.
- 13. It will be essential to develop a strategy for parking management within the Central Park development to minimise potential parking problems as the development progresses. One of the outputs from the feasibility study will be to look at this issue.

14. Similarly, the DETC will be extremely close to Central Park and as such a parking restriction scheme is being considered as part of the design process.
15. It has been mentioned earlier that for areas around the new College, the charge for a resident parking permit be waived. Members should be aware that the total nett income currently from residents parking permits is about £15,000 per annum for all the schemes currently in operation. Hence waiving the charges as outlined in the report is therefore not going to have a significant budgeting implication. Once the scheme has been finalised the figure will be determined.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

16. Consultation to be carried out at appropriate stage.

### **Legal Implications**

17. This report has been considered by the Legal Services Manager for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Legal Services Manager considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

### **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

18. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. In this respect, the introduction of residents' parking schemes could reduce potential conflicts between residents and commuters. A uniformed enforcement presence could reduce car crime in the area.

### **Council Policy Framework**

19. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

### **Decision Deadline**

20. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

### **Key Decisions**

21. This is a key decision since the scheme is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more Wards in the Borough.

### **Recommendation**

22. It is recommended that:

- (a) Areas identified by the feasibility report that are extremely vulnerable to parking problems associated with the new college have a resident parking scheme designed and are consulted on the basis that a charge to residents is waived for permits. These are likely to be Borough Road Area, Eastmount Road Area and a small section of Haughton Road (shown as Areas 1, 3 and 4 on the attached plan).
- (b) Areas identified by the feasibility report that may be vulnerable to parking displacement have a resident parking scheme designed and are monitored once the college is open. If problems materialise residents are consulted on the basis that a charge to residents is waived for permits. The resident parking schemes are progressed as soon as possible to alleviate any parking problems that may arise. These are likely to be Hundens Lane Area and Albert Hill Area (shown as Areas 5 and 6 on the attached plan).
- (c) Waiting restrictions to assist road safety and to regulate traffic flow highlighted by the feasibility report are progressed.

### **Reasons**

23. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) To regulate parking and protect parking areas for residents.
- (b) To ensure road safety and regulate traffic flow.

**John Buxton**  
**Director of Development and Environment**

### **Background Papers**

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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