
COMMENCEMENT OF THE OVAL DEVELOPMENT

**Responsible Cabinet Members - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio
Councillor John Williams, Economy Portfolio**

Responsible Director - Richard Alty, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)

Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines the construction programme and communications strategy for construction of Discovery Properties' shopping and leisure development known as The Oval.
2. The report makes proposals for compensating for the temporary loss of car parking whilst a new multi-storey car park is being built, as part of The Oval development, on the Kendrew Street surface car parks.

Information and Analysis

The Oval

3. The site chosen for this development comprises the existing surface car parks at Commercial Street and Kendrew Street. The proposed new shopping centre, to be known as "The Oval", will be built on the site of the existing Commercial Street car parks and will be linked to the existing Queen Street Shopping Centre. A multi-storey car park, providing 815 'short stay' parking spaces is to be provided on the site of the existing two Kendrew Street car parks, linked to the shopping and leisure centre by a pedestrian bridge and at grade pedestrian crossing over St Augustine's Way. 31 residential apartments are also to be built as part of this development flanking the car park fronting Gladstone Street and King Street.

Construction Programme

4. The first phase of the development involves the construction of the new multi storey car park, hence, Kendrew Street East & West Car Parks are to close with the permanent loss of 187 long stay car parking spaces. (Kendrew St East also operates as short stay car park on Saturdays). The new car park will ultimately provide 815 spaces, but once constructed it will operate as a short stay "shoppers" car park. There will also be 31 additional car parking spaces to serve the new residential flats, which will not be accessible to the public.
5. The developer plans to start construction of the new car park in the first part of 2008 (assuming outstanding conditions in the Development Agreement between the Council and the developer, conditions in the planning permission and highways requirements are met by

then). Construction of the shopping and leisure part of the development would commence late in 2008, on the site of the Commercial Street car parks, with opening planned for Christmas 2010 or Easter 2011. This report deals with the temporary position from the time the construction of the new car park starts. Should any works on the Commercial Street car parks be required to start before the new car park is complete then a further report would be brought to Cabinet.

6. Prior to construction of the car park, some diversion of services around the Kendrew Street car parks is required. This work will mainly take place in the highways around the Kendrew Street car parks, and other highway, and this will allow most of the spaces in the Kendrew Street car parks to remain until Christmas 2007. This work is taking place under a licence, separate from the main development agreement.

Communication Strategy

7. Although most of the development is on Council land, responsibility for the development, its construction, and for communication with the public and businesses about it, rests with the Developer, Discovery Properties. Whilst the construction itself will not be as disruptive as the Pedestrian Heart works, it is vital to the public, local residents, businesses and the health of the town centre, that there is good liaison and communication and that the impact of the construction programme is minimised. To achieve this, officers are agreeing with Discovery and their construction team, a communication strategy and officers are also working through with the developer the detailed programming of works to minimise its impact, for example, by ensuring that good pedestrian routes across St Augustine's Way and around the construction sites remain available at all times.

Displaced Demand for Car Parking

8. The remainder of this report deals with the implications for car parking.
9. When the construction of the car park starts, motorists who currently park in the two Kendrew Street Car Parks will be displaced and will have to seek other locations to park. Currently, on an average weekday, Kendrew Street West is 65% full (63 spaces) at peak times and Kendrew Street East is 44% full (40 spaces). On Saturdays, Kendrew Street West is on average 69% full (67 spaces) at peak times. It is likely therefore that over 100 vehicles will be displaced as a result of the closure of these two car parks. (See Figures 1, 2, 3 & 4).

**Kendrew Street East Car Park Average Weekday Daily Use
June 2006 to June 2007**

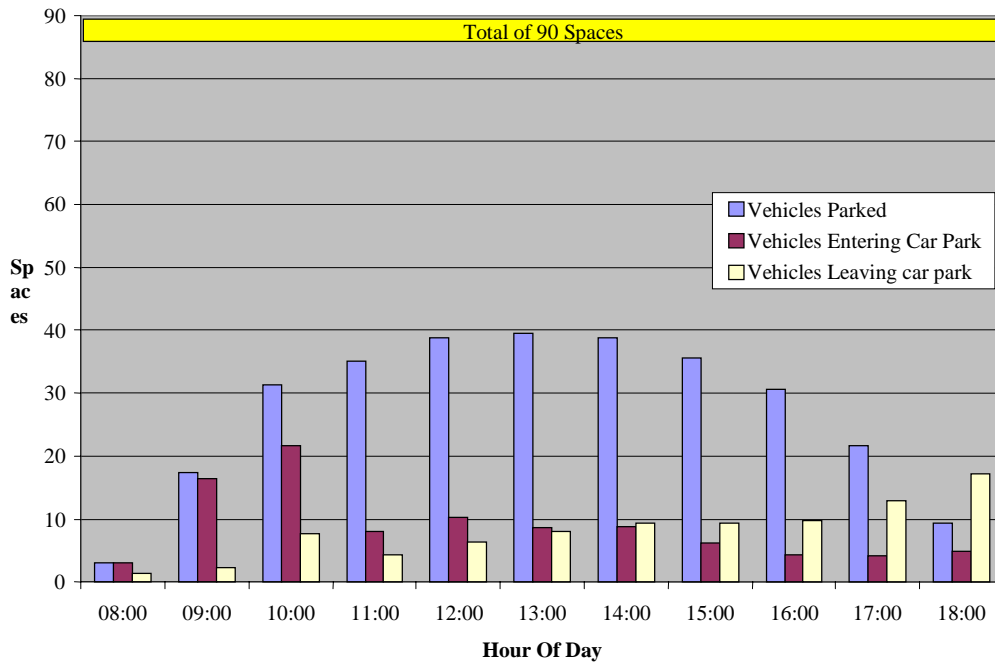


Figure 1

**Kendrew Street West Car Park Average Weekday Daily Use
June 2006 to June 2007**

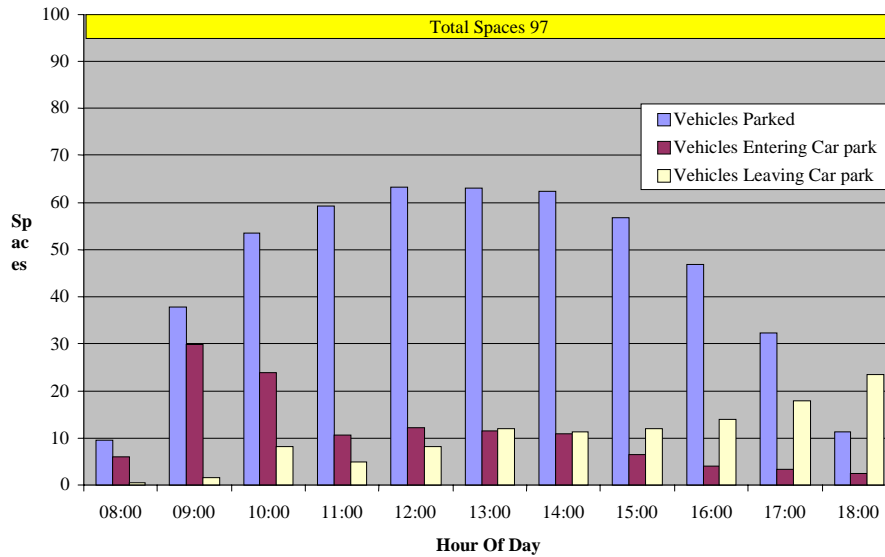


Figure 2

Kendrew Street East Car Park (Saturday) Average Daily Use June 2006 - June 2007

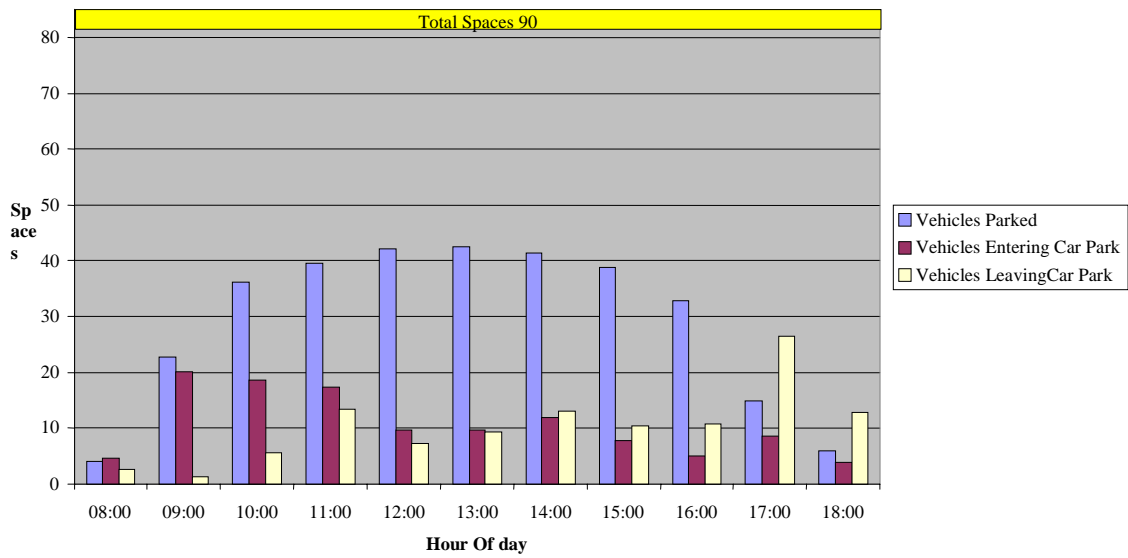


Figure 3

Kendrew Street West Car Park (Saturday) Average daily Use June 2006 - June 2007

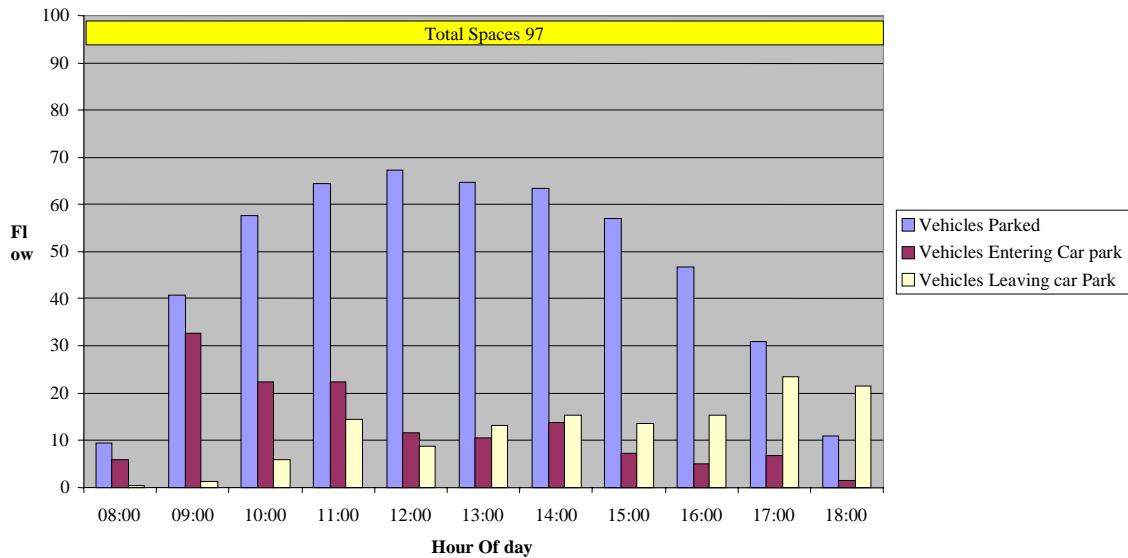


Figure 4

10. There are three types of parking demand that can be identified and which will need to be met as a result of the closures, and these are as follows:
 - (a) Weekday General Demand
 - (b) Weekday Permit Demand

(c) Weekend General Demand

11. In order to ensure that those motorists who currently park in the Kendrew Street car parks do not seek to park for long periods on street in adjacent residential areas, some of which are Residents' Parking Zones, the Council needs to consider whether alternative provision could be made to try to cater for those displaced. Any resultant increased parking in residential areas could create conflicts with residents and increase congestion, as motorists circulate to try to find a parking space.
12. Kendrew Street currently has "Secure Car Park" status and this facility will be lost as a result of the redevelopment, although the new multi story replacement short stay car park is required by planning condition to be a "secured by design" car park.
13. The Primary Care Trust purchase 50 parking permits annually, to allow their staff to park in the Council's long stay car parks. The most convenient long stay car parks to Dr Piper House are currently the two Kendrew Street car parks. PCT staff can already use their permits in other long stay car parks, the nearest of which are Archer Street and Garden Street.
14. There are also some 65 parking permits issued to DBC staff, most of whom work at Central House, who currently use the Kendrew Street car parks when the car park at Central House is full. They will be displaced when the development starts.
15. The nearest long stay car parks in the northern part of the town are:
 - (a) Archer Street (79 spaces)
 - (b) Garden Street (72 spaces)
 - (c) Chesnut Street (180 spaces)
16. There are five other long stay car parks in the eastern part of the town and these are:
 - (a) St Hildas (15 spaces)
 - (b) Hird Street (12 spaces)
 - (c) Park Place West (141 spaces)
 - (d) Park Lane (120 spaces)
 - (e) Park Place East (93 spaces)
17. There is some spare capacity for weekday long stay parking in Archer Street (79 spaces) and Garden Street (72 spaces). These two car parks are located reasonably close to Kendrew Street and displaced general users as well as PCT and DBC permit holders could be directed to these two car parks. In the year June 2006 – June 2007 an average weekday maximum of 64 vehicles used Archer Street car park and a average weekday maximum of 30 used Garden Street car park. So Garden Street in particular would have the spare capacity to accommodate an additional 42 vehicles on average.

18. East Street Car Park is a short stay car park on two levels situated within the Inner Ring Road. At present, it has considerable spare capacity on its top deck. As a result, its position should be considered as part of this appraisal.
19. Chesnut Street Car Park is a free long stay car park which also serves as a charged HGV parking area overnight. The car park urgently needs to be resurfaced (cost £44,000).



Car Parks in Council short and long stay car parks apply Monday to Saturday 8am-6pm follow the electronic signs for information on available spaces

Free Parking Available after 6pm and all day Sunday at all Council short and long stay car parks

Darlington Town Centre is also very accessible by public transport and all buses stop in the Town Centre. For more information Tel 0870 6082608 www.traveline.org.uk / www.dothelocalmotion.co.uk

Figure 5 - Town Centre Car Parks

Proposals

20. Given the three types of demand, the following actions are proposed.

Action 1 - Provide Travel Choice Information

21. Background

- (a) As one of three Sustainable Travel Towns, the Borough Council has been working to try to influence modal shift, particularly for short journeys. Locally this project has been branded 'Local Motion' and has achieved a high level of success. There are now 10,000 members of Local Motion and growing evidence that behavioural changes have been achieved as a result of this work.
- (b) As part of that project, "conversationalists" employed by Steer Davies Gleave (Darlington's "Local Motion" consultants) have visited each household in the urban area and have offered personalized journey planning and travel advice to all residents. This part of the project is to conclude in September of this year, when all households in the town will have been visited.

22. Proposed Action and Timescale

- (a) Before the closure of the Kendrew Street Car Parks comes about, it would be possible to carry out a publicity/information campaign, over a period of a week using the existing "conversationalists" to engage with motorists who use the car park with a view to:
 - (i) Providing them with advice and information on the timescale and reasons for the closure and to advise on the options for using the other long stay car parks.
 - (ii) Offer personalised travel advice to motorists regarding other more sustainable forms of travel, eg public transport, car sharing, cycling, walking etc in line with the aims of "Local Motion".

23. Cost

- (a) The cost of this campaign could be met jointly by Local Transport Plan funding and "Local Motion" funding which has received separate central government funding for a 5 year period. The total cost of this exercise, including the cost of publicity leaflet would be in the order of £5,000.

24. Evaluation

- (a) This exercise would provide motorists with direct personal advice and information to explain the proposals and the Council's intentions.
- (b) The exercise would be intensive and cost effective. Evidence from the 'Local Motion' work with householders has shown that such approaches can be successful and the outcome has been a 9% reduction in car use.

- (c) The campaign would be a unique and challenging opportunity to engage directly with motorists to discuss their attitudes to travel choices.
- (d) This approach would mainly help to satisfy 2 of the types of parking demand, namely general weekday and weekend demand, although permit holders could also benefit from information provision about alternative car park locations and other means of transport.
- (e) It is recommended that this action is undertaken in parallel with other actions to maximise the efficient use of car parking supply.

Action 2 - Improve Chesnut Street

25. Background

- (a) Currently Chesnut Street Car Park has 180 spaces, but the car park does not have marked bays, is unlit, has no CCTV coverage and the surface is in very poor condition. Currently, motorists can park free for an unlimited period, but there is a charge for HGV vehicles to park overnight. The car park is currently used by commuters and others including college staff and students, but there is some spare capacity. (See Fig 6)

Chesnut Street Car Park Average Weekday Daily Use June 2006 - June 2007

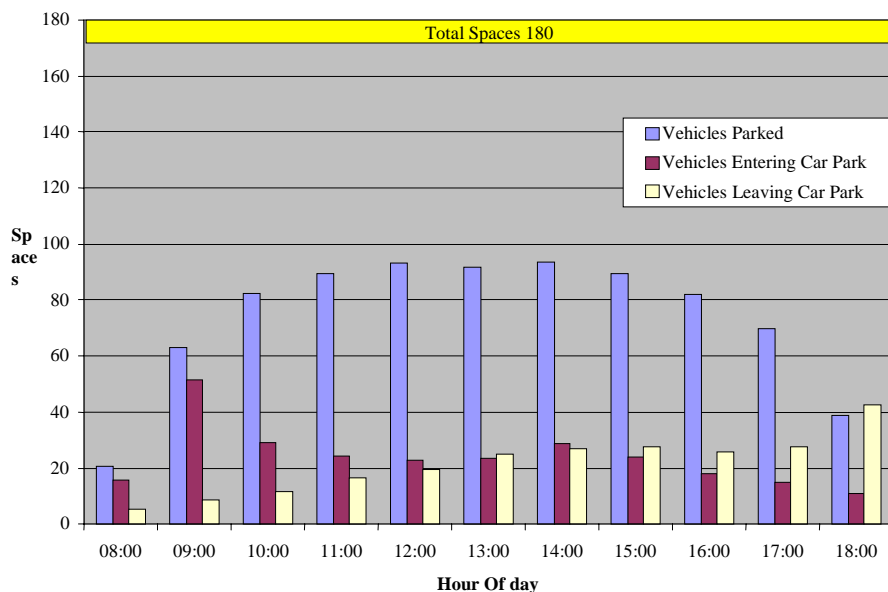


Figure 6

- (b) At present, the fact that it is free is no doubt a strong attraction. In addition, the parking arrangements are haphazard and inefficient because of the lack of marked bays.
- (c) A Residents' Parking Scheme is also being implemented in roads around the College. The scheme will be on site from November onwards subject to Cabinet approval. This will displace some additional commuter parking from nearby roads, although the

current amount is not known.

- (d) The location of Chesnut Street car park is slightly further away from the town centre when compared to Kendrew Street, however, there is a direct pedestrian link to the town centre via Lodge Street, Russell Street and then either Northgate subway or via the light controlled pedestrian crossing across St Cuthbert's Way.

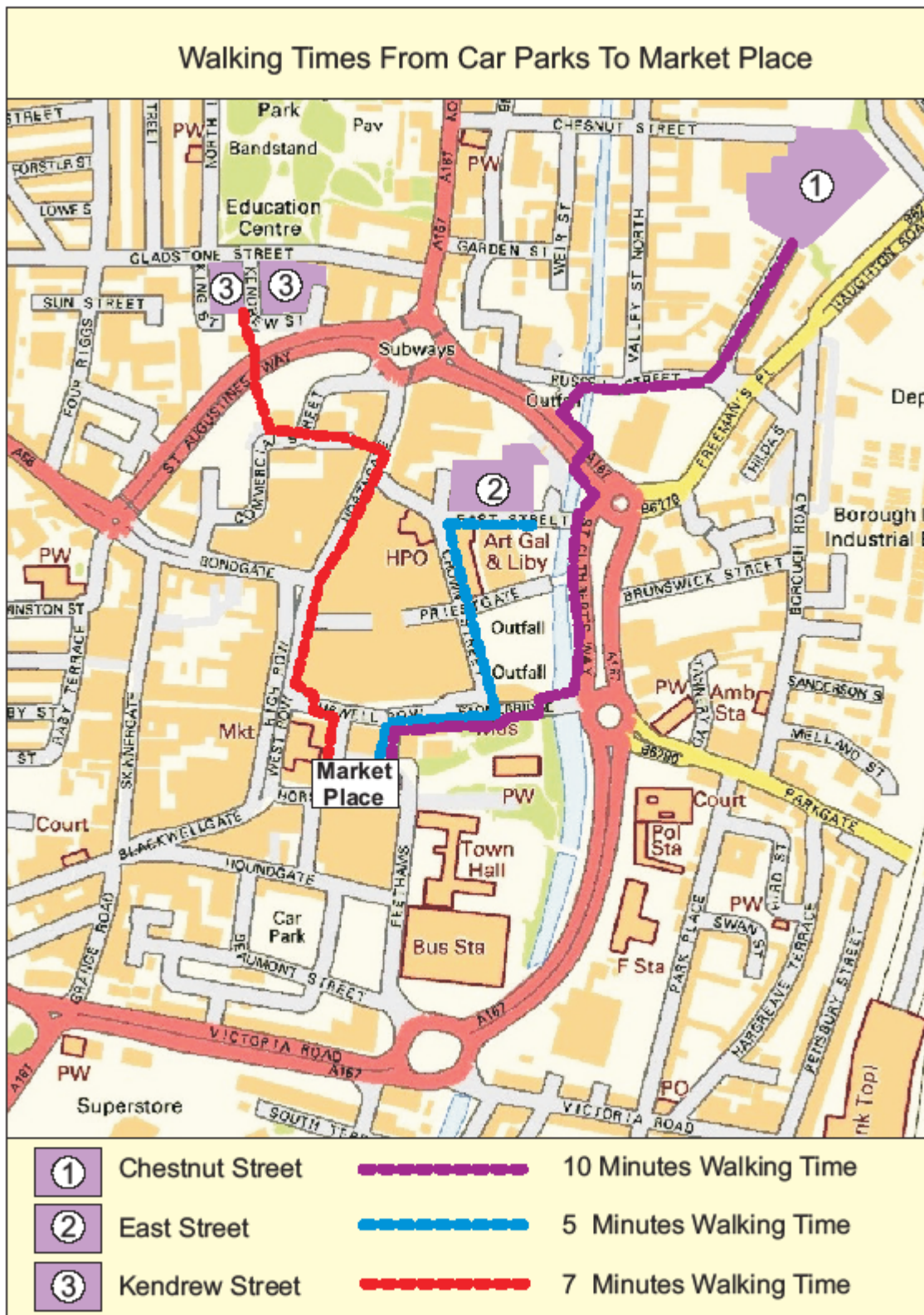


Figure 7

- (e) Chesnut Street Car Park is also located adjacent to Haughton Road. The new Eastern Transport Corridor (currently under construction) will provide a new road link from the A66 to Haughton Road. Therefore, the Chesnut Street car park will be in a good strategic location to provide long stay car parking between that new road link and the town centre, for drivers wanting to leave their vehicles for longer periods in order to access the town centre. The car park can be accessed by car from Haughton Road via Eastmount Road, and Valley Street North.
- (f) The condition of Chesnut Street car park is poor and it is intended that it would be resurfaced this financial year (2007/08) at a cost of £44,000. The inclusion of other desirable actions such as CCTV, lighting and barrier provision would increase this cost to £102,000. In addition, there would be additional costs for ticket machines, lining and signing – assumed to be £23,000.

26. *Proposed Action and Timescale*

- (a) Chesnut Street car park could be refurbished as a high standard long stay pay and display car park. . This would involve the following:
 - (i) Resurface and mark out the car park to modern standards, to include HGV spaces
 - (ii) Allocation of spaces for motor homes and other oversized vehicles, who are unable to access other town centre car parks, because of height or size restrictions.
 - (iii) Provide accessible parking spaces located close to the pedestrian exit to Lodge Street.
 - (iv) Provision of a motorcycle parking bay.
 - (v) Include underground ducting for lighting and CCTV.
 - (vi) Install lighting and CCTV.
 - (vii) Install two modern payment machines (consider machines that accept credit/debit cards). Or reuse Kendrew St. machines if practical.
 - (viii) Extend Park & Pay by Phone scheme to this site and install new signage to include tariff and Park and Pay by Phone information.
 - (ix) Sign safe pedestrian routes to Town Centre, via Lodge Street and Russell Street and to Darlington College via Eastmount Road, Montrose Street and new signalled crossing on Haughton Road.
 - (x) Sign car park routes to and from North Road/ Haughton Road via Eastmount Road.

- (xi) Include publicity to promote changes.

27. *Cost*

- (a) Estimated cost of works £125,000 (outline estimate). Assuming an increase in occupancy rate of 50% (the current typical occupancy), and adoption of the current long stay level of charges, the revenue received should cover the cost of the proposed works within a two to three year period (assumes 4680 x £14 weekly tickets sold per annum). This could be funded via prudential borrowing set against the anticipated income.
- (b) Irrespective of this proposal, there is an urgent need to resurface Chestnut Street at a cost of £44,000 in order to make it safe.
- (c) There may need to be a small increase in funding to include additional enforcement costs – mainly extra walking time, although this should be offset by no longer needing to patrol Kendrew Street.

28. *Evaluation*

- (a) Whilst this option has a significant cost, the outlay for the work should be recouped within a two to three year period assuming a 50% occupancy rate.
- (b) The car park surface needs relaying as it is dangerous and irrespective of these proposals, resurfacing work is urgently needed.
- (c) The car park has a good strategic location for long stay parking viz a viz the Eastern Transport Corridor, Darlington College, and the Town Centre.
- (d) As a free car park, Chesnut Street Car Park is likely to be under increasing pressure when the College Residents' Parking Scheme starts later this year.
- (e) As well as catering for motorists, the improved car park would also continue to meet the need to provide for overnight HGV parking and daytime parking for camper vans and other oversized vehicles.
- (f) The location outside the ring road fits with the strategy of providing long stay car parks outside the ring road on the edge of the town centre.
- (g) This solution would not replace all the spaces lost at Kendrew Street, although some new spaces would be created by introducing marked bays, which will provide more efficient use of the car park. Introduction of formal markings will allow the car park to accommodate 180 cars.
- (h) If the improvements listed above are implemented, then the resultant car park would be an efficient, well finished long stay car park capable of achieving 'secure car park status'.

- (i) This proposal would help to address the demand for long stay parking that would transfer from the Kendrew Street, as well as providing a better alternative for displaced parking created by the College Residents' Parking Scheme.

Action 3 - East Street Top Deck

29. Background

- (a) East Street Car Park provides a total of 336 short stay car parking spaces with 168 spaces on the top deck.
- (b) Currently the top deck of East Street car park, which was brought back into use at the end of 2006, is used as a short stay car park. It is not currently used to full capacity. From June 2006 to June 2007 the average weekday peak occupancy of the car park was only 30% (100 spaces out of a total of 336). See Figure 8.
- (c) As a result of this low rate of occupancy, it is worth considering whether better use could be made of this car park, particularly the top deck.

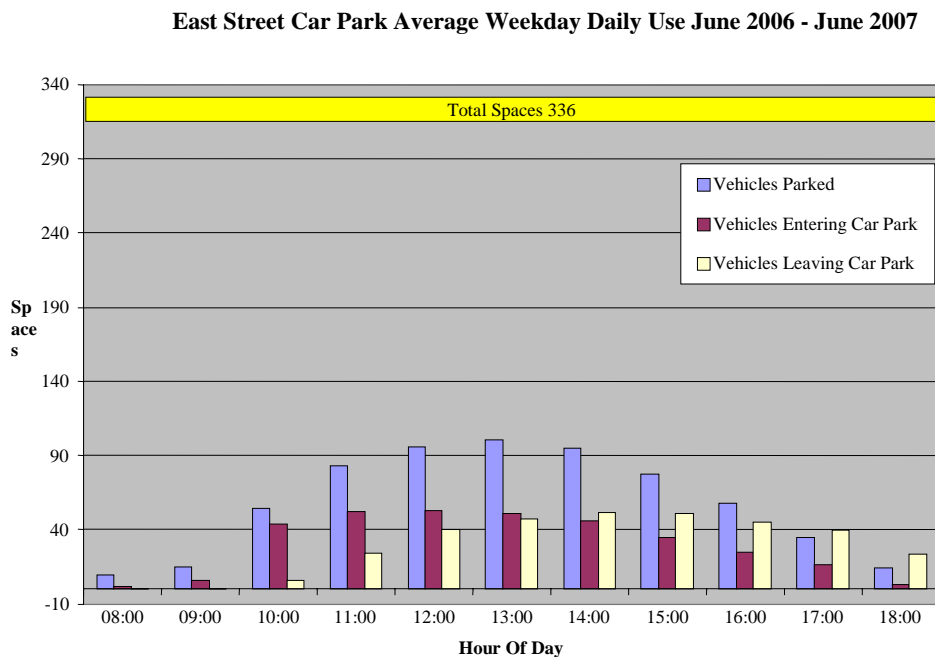


Figure 8

- (d) Most of the unused spaces are located on the upper deck of the car park. Therefore, despite its central location, the conversion of the top deck to long stay car parking is not considered to be critical to the supply of short stay spaces.
- (e) This facility provides a very central location (within the Inner Ring Road) for long stay parking. All other car parks within the area contained by the Inner Ring Road are currently short stay. Therefore, the introduction of long stay parking would be contrary

to the policy of allowing a higher turnover of such centrally located spaces and such action should be considered carefully.

- (f) East Street car park does not open on Sundays.
- (g) At present, East Street car park closes at 1830 hours (the integrated Wilkinsons store also closes at this time) and it is not possible to exit the car park after that time and this may be a deterrent for some long stay commuters who may wish to stay beyond the 1830 hours deadline. There is currently no time restrictions for vehicles wishing to exit the Kendrew Street Car Parks after 1800 hours

30. *Proposed Action and Timescales*

- (a) The top deck of East Street Car Park currently has a low level of usage and could be used for some long stay parking, as well as retaining its function as a short stay car park. This would allow the DBC & PCT permit holders who currently use the Kendrew Street car parks to relocate to this town centre site, which would involve a walk of less than 10 minutes to both Central House and Dr Piper House.
- (b) In addition, the East Street top deck could be used to accommodate the parking requirements of town centre businesses who have little or no parking of their own. To qualify for this facility, it is recommended that businesses would need to sign up to producing a Travel Plan that would need to be approved by the Council. Together with other Tees Valley Authorities, the Borough Council promotes a Travel Plan web site that enables a Travel Plan to be produced. A Travel Plan is a management tool which brings together transport and other business issues in a co-ordinated strategy, with an emphasis on increasing travel choices. The web site address is (www.teesvalleytravelplans.co.uk)
- (c) Having produced an approved plan, including a timescale for implementation, businesses would have proved a commitment to sustainable travel and could then request parking permits for key staff who had no alternative to the private car. These parking permits would need to be charged for at a realistic rate and their may need to be a maximum of say 10 permits per organisation.
- (d) Organisations such as Durham Police, and the Royal Bank of Scotland have previously made enquiries regarding obtaining parking spaces close to their sites and they could be advised of the scheme.
- (e) This dual system could be achieved with minimal financial outlay (see below) and could be introduced without the need to employ any additional staff.
- (f) Recently, some significant queuing has taken place on some Saturday afternoons, whereby traffic exiting East Street Car Park has been unable to filter easily onto St Cuthbert's Way, but this suggestion for weekday long stay permit parking would not add to that problem.
- (g) It may be appropriate not to introduce these proposals more generally for other businesses until the new Oval car park is open.

- (h) The whole of East Street car park could still operate as a short stay car park on Saturdays and Bank Holidays.

31. *Costs*

- (a) Signage marking and operational changes £5,000.
- (b) Publicity £1,000.
- (c) These costs could be met from the Second Local Transport Plan if the travel plan element was included in this action.

32. *Evaluation*

- (a) The proposal would provide a solution for DBC and PCT permit holders who are to lose the facility to park at Kendrew Street. This would help to meet that demand from weekday permit holders.
- (b) The offer of long stay “contract” parking in such a central location would be a valuable facility for town centre businesses and could provide an impetus for local employees to produce travel plans, thus helping Darlington achieve its targets for air quality, reducing traffic congestion and promoting sustainable travel.

Action 4 - Short Stay Solutions for Saturdays

33. *Background*

- (a) Kendrew Street East car park (90 spaces) serves as a short stay car parks on Saturdays.
- (b) In the long term, the loss of these car parks will be amply compensated by the replacement 815 space multi storey car park. However, there will be a short term issue in respect of motorists who will be displaced from these two car parks and action 2 (provision of travel information) is designed to help motorists make informed choices about how best to travel to the town centre.

34. *Proposed Action and Timescales*

- (a) Motorists could be directed to other short stay car parks where there is spare capacity eg East Street, Town Hall and Beaumont Street car parks.
- (b) This advice could be given to motorists on an advance warning sign in Gladstone Street, which serves as the main approach route to Kendrew Street.
- (c) Further notification of the Kendrew Street closures could be given to motorists on advance warning signs positioned before the existing variable message car park signs at North Road and Woodland Road. Motorists would then be able to choose one of the other short stay car parks based on the availability of spaces in them.

35. *Costs*

- (a) The cost of these three signs would be in the order of £500.

36. *Evaluation*

- (a)
- (b) It is important to give motorists warning of the closure so they can divert their trip accordingly.
- (c) Providing clear information to motorists approaching the town centre will benefit public perception of the town centre.
- (d) Providing clear information with regard to Saturdays will serve to help meet the identified general weekend parking demand.

Outcome of Consultation

- 37. The Town Centre Board has considered options addressing the temporary loss of car parking spaces and supported the proposals set out in this report.

Legal Implications

- 38. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor 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

- 39. 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. The proposals to improve Chesnut Street car park, including lighting and CCTV, should have a positive effect in this regard.

Council Policy Framework

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

Decision Deadline

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

Key Decisions

- 42. This is a high priority issue that affects the economy of the town centre.

Conclusions

43. The four actions proposed will together address the range of parking issues arising from The Oval development.

(a) Action 1: Travel Choice Information:

Direct engagement with current users of the car park would ensure that they are fully aware of the proposals and the options available to them, including alternative car park locations. The suggestion to combine the approach with providing alternative sustainable travel choice is a pioneering one and would fit with the town's status as a sustainable travel demonstration town.

(b) Action 2: Chesnut Street

Despite the initial substantial financial outlay, it will involve the upgrading of what is currently a fairly dilapidated surface car park that is urgently in need of maintenance. It is anticipated that the revenue from this upgraded car park will cover the capital outlay within a two year period. There are good reasons to upgrade this car park based on its strategic location near to the town centre, Darlington College and the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor. The improvement works could be achieved within a relatively short timescale.

(c) Action 3: East Street

This action is relatively cheap to implement, and does not result in a major loss of well used short stay spaces. Any concerns with regard to delays for traffic leaving the car park in the evening peak and congestion on the Inner ring Road can be overcome. The fact that the car park closes at 6 pm is a minor difficulty for the suitability of this option which could provide big benefits.

(d) Action 4: Saturdays

Providing effective parking information for motorists is considered to be crucial.

The total cost of all recommended actions is £136,500 with the main cost, of about £125,000 for Chesnut Street car park, met from prudential borrowing and the remainder met from existing approved budgets.

Recommendation

44. It is recommended that:-

(a) Actions 1 to 4 outlined in this report be implemented.

(b) Capital expenditure of £125,000 to implement Action 2, funded by prudential borrowing, be approved.

Reasons

45. The recommendations are supported for the following reasons:

- (a) To facilitate the funding of alternative long stay town centre parking provision and provision of alternative travel advice to motorists.
- (b) To ensure that the economy of the town centre is supported by provision of adequate car parking.

Richard Alty, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)

Background Papers

- (i) Second Local Transport Plan 2006/11.
- (ii) Report to LGCO - 5 October 2007.

Jeremy Smith : Extension 2652
cc