
BEAUMONT STREET ONE WAY

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Nick Wallis,
Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**

Responsible Director - Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Members of an objection received to the proposed one way traffic system in Beaumont Street and seek a decision on whether to proceed with the proposal.

Summary

2. The new “Feethams” 650 space multi storey car park is opening in February 2016. Changes to the existing highway layout are required to maintain traffic flow, accommodate the new access and egress into the MSCP and avoid a potential safety hazard at the junction of Beaumont Street and Feethams (adjacent to the Barker and Stonehouse store). It is proposed to develop a one way system from Feethams to link to the existing one way system on Houndgate, provide a filter lane into Feethams MSCP and make associated changes to waiting restrictions.
3. A copy of a plan showing the proposed one way system is attached at **Appendix 1**. A copy of a plan showing the proposed changes to the road network, associated signage and lining and physical measures at the Feethams/Beaumont Street junction is attached at **Appendix 2**.
4. An objection to the proposed one way system has been received following the statutory consultation. The objector has a business in Houndgate (situated between Beaumont Street and Feethams) and is objecting to the one way system because it will generate increased traffic in Houndgate. He believes that this increase in traffic is going to cause a bottle neck in Houndgate as traffic from Grange Road, Skinnergate and the Market area already are funnelled down Houndgate. The objector has suggested an alternative access arrangement using South Arden Street but we do not consider that such an arrangement is justified or practical. Further details of the objection are provided in Table 1 in the main report.
5. Changes to the waiting restrictions in Beaumont Street and Houndgate are also proposed but no objection has been received to these proposed changes.

6. The proposed changes will increase traffic movement along Houndgate past the objector's business property. We have considered the capacity of the road and the Feethams/Houndgate and Beaumont Street/Houndgate priority junctions. Both Houndgate and Feethams are not heavily trafficked at the moment and there are ample gaps in traffic flow to enable traffic to emerge from side roads and pedestrians to cross the road.
7. The additional traffic that that will result from the MSCP and associated changes to access arrangements will not be of a scale that will exceed the capacity of the local highway network. There may be some temporary traffic queuing associated with the Cinema development due to the nature of this type of establishment releasing a number of patrons over a short time, though in reality the capacity of the exit gates to the MSCP will dissipate part of this traffic surge.
8. If the proposed one way system was not implemented there would be likely to be a significant increase in the number of vehicles turning right out of the junction of Feethams and Beaumont Street. This manoeuvre is difficult to make due to the proximity of Feethams roundabout, speed and visibility of traffic leaving the roundabout and entering Feethams and the increased traffic and possible queuing of vehicles leaving Feethams. Such an arrangement would be likely to create road safety problems. This would be exacerbated by the presence of one of the main pedestrian desire lines from the MSCP to the cinema complex.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that:-
 - (a) Members consider the objection and set it aside.
 - (b) Authorise officers to proceed with the proposal to introduce a one way system in Beaumont Street as advertised.

Reasons

10. The one way system is required to prevent a large volume of traffic leaving the car park from driving towards Feethams and making a difficult right turn through the splitter island where it is not easy to see traffic exiting the roundabout into Feethams and to enable a traffic lane into the car park to be marked in Beaumont Street. The proposed arrangement one way system is likely to have traffic capacity and highway safety benefits.

Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth

Background Papers

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

Andy Casey : Extension 6701

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no direct implications.
Health and Well Being	The proposed one way system is intended provide a safer route for vehicles to access and egress the MSCP and in so doing mitigate the risk of additional casualties arising from road traffic collisions.
Carbon Impact	The proposed one way system will result in a marginally longer journey for drivers using the local highway network which will result in a marginally greater carbon impact.
Diversity	The wider traffic management scheme has been designed in consultation with Darlington Association on Disability and includes level access routes from the MSCP to the Cinema and Town Centre.
Wards Affected	Park East
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	There are no direct implications.
Efficiency	There are no direct implications.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

11. It is proposed to operate a one way system in Beaumont Street from Feethams to Houndgate to assist movement of through traffic and traffic flow into the MSCP. This will also enable a traffic lane to be marked for cars going into the car park and another lane for general traffic so that at peak times traffic queuing for the car park will not obstruct other traffic.
12. The proposal for a one way traffic flow in Beaumont Street is made on road safety grounds as having a one way system from Feethams to Houndgate avoids an increased volume of traffic in Beaumont Street from making the difficult right turn into Feethams where it is not easy to see traffic exiting the roundabout from Victoria Road into Feethams.
13. An objection to the proposed one way system has been received following the statutory consultation. The objector has a business in Houndgate (situated between Beaumont Street and Feethams) and is objecting to the one way system because it will generate increased traffic in Houndgate. He believes that this increase in traffic is going to cause a bottle neck in Houndgate as traffic from Grange Road, Skinnergate and the Market area already are funnelled down Houndgate.

14. The objector also refers to the proposal resulting in traffic from three car parks all exiting via Beaumont Street and Houndgate to Feethams. After the multi-storey car park is operational the public car park Beaumont Street East will be closing and Beaumont Street West car park is a contract car park where cars are normally parked for the full day so there is not traffic movement coming and going all day. Cars leaving Beaumont Street West car park also have the option to exit via Beaumont Street West and South Arden Street to Victoria Road.

Table 1 – Grounds for Objection

Reason for Objection	Officer response
<p>The changes that you propose will result in further increased traffic over and above that which we previously complained of in relation to the new multi-storey car park which is in itself going to dramatically increase traffic down Houndgate without this proposed change. The change will result in all traffic from the existing car park adjacent to Feethams, the new multi-storey car park, from Beaumont St West, from the Town leading down from Coniscliffe Road, Grange Road (and Skinnergate in allowable hours), and from the market all being funnelled and exiting down Houndgate as the only exit. Houndgate is thus going to be a bottle-neck for all the said traffic.</p> <p>It is notable that Beaumont Street itself is two lane leading on to a single lane road. The two major car parks are going to lead onto Beaumont Street, while those exiting the third car park on Beaumont Street West also habitually exit via Beaumont Street</p>	<p>The proposed changes will increase traffic movement along Houndgate past the objector's business property. We have considered the capacity of the road and the Feethams/Houndgate and Beaumont Street/Houndgate priority junctions. Both Houndgate and Feethams are not heavily trafficked at the moment and there are ample gaps in traffic flow to enable traffic to emerge from side roads and pedestrians to cross the road.</p> <p>The additional traffic that that will result from the MSCP and associated changes to access arrangements will not be of a scale that will exceed the capacity of the local highway network. There may be some temporary traffic queuing associated with the Cinema development due to the nature of this type of establishment releasing a number of patrons over a short time, though in reality the capacity of the exit gates to the MSCP will dissipate part of this traffic surge.</p>
<p>Even the new multi-storey car park design allows a two lane exit from the car park itself onto Beaumont Street to prevent internal congestion inside the car park. [Refer drawing Level 1 Plan drwg no. 13-030/01/02]</p>	<p>The two lane exit is required due to the time it takes to pull up to the barrier, insert the ticket and for the barrier to raise. It also means that the car park can still operate if a car that is pulled up to the barriers with an unauthorised ticket.</p>
<p>In the current circumstances before the new car park has even opened, and even with bi-directional traffic on Beaumont Street, there can be traffic build-up at the junction of Houndgate and Feethams. By any standard town planning funnelling all the traffic as described above is poor in the extreme, and was one of the original objections raised in the first place in respect of</p>	<p>There has been some significant disruption on both Houndgate and Feethams in the past year due to the various construction projects including service connections and diversions. These works are now substantially complete and there is very little queuing of traffic.</p>

<p>the new multi-storey car park. The need for this proposed change underlines the fact that the Council had not addressed the complaint of traffic congestion in the vicinity of the new multi-storey car park before awarding planning consent to the planning application.</p>	<p>As mentioned above we have assessed the ability of the local highway network to accommodate the additional traffic associated with the MSCP and consider that there is sufficient capacity.</p>
<p>There is an alternative to this proposed plan, and that is to open up South Arden Street to connect with Beaumont Street at the junction of Beaumont Street and Beaumont Street West while maintaining bi-directional flow on Beaumont Street. This option unloads the majority of the car park traffic of all three car parks more directly onto the inner ring road on Victoria Road where 99% of that traffic will go in any event. Facility to make this connection already exists at Beaumont Street West car park and adjacent to it opposite the end of South Arden Street. [See attached sketch A] Indeed we believe that this link did originally exist in past times. In addition to this an opening to providing access to and egress from the existing open-air car park directly onto Feethams instead of onto Beaumont Street could be provided which would also alleviate the traffic on both Beaumont Street and Houndgate.</p>	<p>We do not consider that the access through to Arden Street will be required for the reason mentioned above.</p> <p>The suggested route is less attractive than the Houndgate route as it is relatively convoluted, utilises a back lane and requires traffic to enter the inner ring road via a simple T junction. This route would be likely to queue back as there would be limited gaps in the traffic on the inner ring road for traffic to merge into. The proposed route via Feethams roundabout has significantly greater capacity.</p> <p>The existing Beaumont Street East car park will be closed once the MSCP is open.</p>

15. There will be a significant increase in traffic using Houndgate but the level of traffic should be accommodated within the existing highway network. The MSCP will operate as a short stay shoppers car park therefore there will be a steady flow throughout the day rather than a large increase at any one time that could cause congestion i.e. as would happen with a commuter car park. The cinema will be likely to create some surges in traffic flow particularly if a number of films end at the same time, though in reality the capacity of the exit barriers from the car park will go some way to dissipate the impact.
16. The increase in traffic in Houndgate associated with the MSCP is considered acceptable and preferable to increasing the traffic turning right from Beaumont Street into Feethams which could cause a road safety hazard.
17. The objector has suggested an alternative to the proposed one way system. It is suggested that South Arden Street is opened up to create a junction at Beaumont Street West adjacent to Beaumont House so that MSCP traffic can exit to Victoria Road via Beaumont Street and South Arden Street. Officers do not consider this suggestion to be necessary. The route suggested is actually inferior in terms of width and alignment and the exit junction onto the inner ring road at South Arden Street is a simple T junction, which would be likely to lead to extensive queuing back from the junction.
18. The proposed arrangement directs traffic onto the Feethams roundabout which has much greater capacity than South Arden Street junction and offers greater priority

for traffic leaving the Feethams area. It is therefore considered that the proposed access arrangement, utilising a one way system along Beaumont Street leading to Houndgate and Feethams roundabout is the best option for accessing the MSCP and the wider Feethams area.

19. Changes to the waiting restrictions in Beaumont Street and Houndgate are also proposed but no objection has been received to these proposed changes.

Financial Implications

20. The proposal will be funded from existing capital budgets through the Local Transport Plan.

Consultation

21. The proposed changes require a legal order. This has been advertised in accordance with the requirements of the regulations. An objection has been received, as detailed above. This is being considered by Cabinet in accordance with the Council constitution.

