

Agenda Item No. 7(k)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

15 December 2015

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**PAY AND DISPLAY AT WILLINGTON PICNIC SITE – COMMENTS
RECEIVED FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT LEGAL
ORDER (HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To inform Cabinet of the results of the consultation exercise regarding the making of legal orders covering the Willington Picnic Site car park and to approve the implementing of a charging system, the improvement to the car park and the addition of the work to the 2015-16 Capital Programme.

(2) **Information and Analysis** At its meeting on 26 May 2015, Cabinet “(1) approved that a consultation and other procedures for making the Off-Street Parking Places Order, under sections 32 and 35 of the Road Traffic Act 1984 for Willington Picnic Site, be commenced; and (2) noted that a report with the results of the consultation would be presented to a future Cabinet meeting” (Minute No. 201/15 refers). The proposal to introduce pay and display at Willington had been included in the original parking order but withdrawn following local concerns. Since that time, however, the financial climate has significantly altered and the pressure on revenue budgets is such that the need to generate income to maintain services has increased substantially. Income from pay and display will help maintain countryside services and allow for improvements at Willington.

From 3 October 2015, copies of the Order were on deposit in Swadlincote library, County Hall, Matlock and on site. Notices were posted in the press and interested parties were written to informing them of the proposal and giving them the opportunity of inspecting the Order. Twenty one days were given for representations to be made to the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment.

A total of 40 representations, one unsigned, were received from individuals plus comments from South Derbyshire District Council, Willington, Ticknall and Repton Parish Councils, Cross Country Trains and the local County Councillor and MP. A petition of 351 signatures has also been received objecting to the proposal.

A number of “comments” on the proposal also appeared on social media and You-tube, one of which was referred to in a consultation response. However, as the others were not actually submitted formally to the County Council, they cannot be considered. The general concerns raised were broadly similar to those raised in the formal consultation responses received.

General Objections to the Order:

The main concerns were:

1. The car park is already overused at weekends and marking out bays will diminish capacity.
2. There is limited parking in the village and the imposition of charging will increase parking on adjoining residential streets.
3. There will be an increase in congestion with a resultant increase in safety issues as a result of illegal parking in the village.
4. Drivers would use adjoining residential streets to park to the detriment of households.
5. There were concerns that by introducing a charge, people would be deterred from coming to the village with a resultant impact on local businesses and there was no benefit to the village.
6. The scale of charges will deter the use of Willington Station for commuting and could, in the long term, result in services being withdrawn.
7. The current condition of the car park was unacceptable and users should not have to pay to use it.
8. It would deter car sharing.
9. Some local residents do not have parking space with their homes and have to park in the car park, a reduced or free permit was suggested.
10. It would deter people to come and enjoy the site and canal.
11. The scheme would not generate the income suggested as people would not pay to park there.

Response:

The representations against the proposal were mostly on the grounds of the effect it may have on businesses and parking in adjoining roads and streets and that charging would dissuade the adoption of sustainable commuting from the station. In response to particular issues raised, the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment comments are as follows:

1. Although lining the car park will reduce capacity by a small amount, current usage of the site often results in uncontrolled parking with vehicles causing hazards by reducing the width of the access road and parking on grassed areas. A number of consultees have actually called for the site to be improved by lining, resurfacing, lighting and possible CCTV to improve the facilities.

2. The issue of limited parking in the village and the growth of illegal and potentially dangerous parking is a possible problem and the comments from objectors have been taken on board. It is proposed to address this by offering limited free parking for the first hour to enable people visiting local businesses to park for free. In order for this to be managed, it would be necessary to modify the parking order to prevent return within two hours (otherwise users could just keep drawing free tickets from the machine). This modification would have to be advertised and subject to a separate consultation process. This would also address the concerns about the effect on the local economy. As Parking Enforcement officers will be visiting the site, it will be possible to increase the amount of roadside enforcement to deter illegal parking.
3. It is noted that there may be some growth of parking in adjoining residential streets but this could be monitored and addressed if it becomes a problem.
4. The concerns about the scale of charges deterring the use of the station by rail users and the car park for car sharing could be addressed by revisiting the proposed charges. Given that the charges are as levied at other Derbyshire County Council Countryside Car Parks, and the season ticket is benchmarked against the charges levied by Midland Mainline, the charges are felt to be reasonable.
5. The current condition of the car park is a concern and a problem due to the pressure on maintenance budgets. However, one of the advantages of the proposal is that it would include a recommendation to improve the site and generate income for its future maintenance.
6. A number of residents inferred they use the car park as they do not have off-street parking with their property. The County Council has no obligation to provide parking for residents. However, it would be possible to sell season tickets to people who could show that they were directly affected by the proposal at a price pegged to the season ticket at other Countryside Car Parks. This is currently £66 which would allow parking at a cost of a little over £1 a week, which is felt to be reasonable.
7. The suggestions that the charges will deter visitors to the canal are noted. However, the imposition of charges at other countryside sites has been accepted without a significant reduction in visitor numbers.
8. Concern has been expressed that the scheme will not be viable as people will not pay to park. Experience at other sites has shown that whilst there is some fall in use, especially in the early days of the implementation, once it has become established most users do pay the charge.

Charges at other countryside sites will increase from 1 April 2016. The proposed charges at Willington will therefore be:

	Period	Current charge (all sites)	2016-18 charge (all sites)
Cars and Light Vehicles	1st hour		Free
	up to 2 hours	£1.30	£1.40
	up to 4 hours	£2.60	£2.90
	All day	£4	£4.40
	Season Ticket	£66	£260.00
	Subsidised rate		£72.60

(3) **Financial Considerations** The financial costs of implementing the scheme were set out in the report of 26 May 2015.

Implementation of the scheme was costed at £16,916. This has now been revised to allow for the widening of the access road to allow easier access to the site, whilst retaining parking spaces. The current estimate is £24,940 and the work will be funded from the departmental earmarked Premises Reserve.

The operating costs for the scheme were costed at £7,500 per year at April 2015 prices. As implementation is not likely to occur before April 2016, this would have to be increased by inflation.

Estimates of income in the original report were calculated on current charging scales with the option of a higher season ticket rate.

There is no information as to the level of car park usage for very short periods. The proposal to have free parking for the first hour cannot therefore be calculated, but is not thought to be significant in overall terms. Income is still expected to be in the range of £23,000 and £28,000 per annum. If this level of income is achieved, it will make a significant contribution towards the cost of providing countryside services which might otherwise be reduced due to budget pressures.

Charges for parking at countryside car parks for 2016-18 were approved by the Cabinet Member on 10 November 2015 (Minute No. 150/15 refers). These charges will come into force from 1 April 2016.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The procedure for making off-street parking orders is laid down by sections 32 and 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Local Authority Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

The Council is obliged to consider all objections duly made and not withdrawn. The Council may modify the proposed Order in light of objections. If the Council considers that the objections are substantial, the Council must re-consult on the Order. Alternatively, parts of the Order may be made whilst a decision on the remainder is deferred.

If the Council decides to make the proposed Order, details must be published in the local press within 14 days of the decision, a copy of the Order made available for inspection and other publicity measures taken. In addition, all objectors must be sent a copy of the new Order and reasons given where the Council has not fully acceded to their objection.

Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(5) **Key Decision** No.

(6) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(7) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Chris Coombs, extension 39821.

(8) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That Cabinet approves:

8.1 The principle of introducing charging for parking at Willington Picnic Sites Car Park, subject to further consultation on the specific issue in the Recommendation 8.2 below.

8.2 In view of the comments received during the consultation process, consultation and other procedures for modifying the proposed Off-Street Parking Places Amendment Order under sections 32 and 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, covering the first hour free parking and non-return period, be commenced and the results brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

8.3 The addition of the work to the 2015-16 Capital Programme.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment