

## **DRAFT REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON TRAFFIC ISSUES**

### **Introduction**

- 1.1 In July 2008, the Environmental and Planning Review Committee agreed to establish a cross party Task and Finish Group to examine a range of the parking issues facing the city at the present time. Councillor Colin Wakefield, Councillor Elizabeth Gibson and Councillor Alan Wright were appointed to the Group. The Group was chaired by Councillor Colin Wakefield.
- 1.2 The Group's brief was to look in detail at some of the major parking issues within the city and produce a report analysing the difficulties being faced, the steps being taken to resolve any problems and suggest some potential solutions of our own.
- 1.3 At its initial meeting, the Group agreed to focus its remit on the parking problems being experienced at Doxford International Business Park and the area around the Royal Hospital.
- 1.4 However, during the year the Group has also been consulted on a number of other related issues including:-
  - Parking Management Schemes;
  - the consultants report on the Council's Civil Parking Enforcement;
  - the future of off road parking in the city.
- 1.5 The Group's views on these issues have been subsequently fed into reports submitted to Cabinet.
- 1.6 From the outset, the Group has been conscious of the complexity of the parking issues being experienced at both Doxford International Business Park and the Royal Hospital. Both are relatively long standing issues that require the balancing of legitimate but sometimes competing interests.
- 1.7 However, the parking problems in both areas do have a serious and adverse affect on the quality of life of local residents. We therefore feel it is very important that local residents see some quick and tangible progress to promote their quality of life and to help promote local confidence.
- 1.8 As part of its work, the Group has received evidence from a range of sources. Discussions have been held senior officers of the Council and management from the City Hospital. The Group also visited both sites to see at first hand the problems being experienced by local residents. The Group has received updates on the progress being made on the

major consultation exercises being undertaken with residents in the Doxford International and the Royal Hospital areas.

- 1.9 The Group would like to thank all of those who contributed to our study. This includes Burney Johnson, Head of Transport, Allan Calvert and Ian Pearson from the Traffic Section.
- 1.10 Finally, we hope that the study will make a real and telling contribution to the improvement of parking at Doxford International Business Park and the Royal Hospital.

## 2 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 In relation to the parking situation at Doxford International Business Park, we would make the following recommendations:-

- that the waiting restrictions in the Business Park area be reviewed as a priority and, where appropriate, reduced in order to free up available parking space;
- A clearway is proposed to ensure the free-flow of traffic along City Way and part of Doxford Park Way;
- gaps be included in the proposed waiting restrictions at various locations on Moorside Road and introduced into the existing Prohibition of Waiting on: Monarch Way, Emperor Way, Admiral Way, Victory Way, Glanville Road, Azure Court and Camberwell Way
- that the restrictions be fully enforced and the situation monitored to ensure that any problems are not exported to other adjacent areas;
- that businesses in the area be encouraged to work in partnership in order to make best use of the parking spaces available;
- that the Council's Travel Plan Officer continues to work with local businesses to encourage the development of Travel to Work Plans and further car sharing schemes.

2.2 With regard to parking situation in the area of the Royal Hospital, we would make the following recommendations:-

- that the Council work with the City Hospital to investigate the potential of developing additional park and ride schemes in the city and that measures be taken to better advertise the existing service;
- that the possibility of constructing a multi story car park on the Hospital site be investigated further;
- that the Hospital investigate further the potential relocation of auxiliary facilities in order to help to free up space for additional parking;
- in the longer term consideration is given to the possibility and implications of relocating elements of the Hospital to another site within the city.

### **3 DOXFORD INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS PARK**

#### **Background**

- 3.1 Doxford International Business Park is a 125 acre business park located on the A19/A690 interchange.
- 3.2 The Park is now one of the main locations for corporate HQ's and contact centres serving the financial and customer services sector. The Park employs around 8,000 people.
- 3.3 In many ways, it is the success of the Business Park that has led to the parking problems currently being experienced. The rapid growth of the Business Park in recent years has led to shortages of parking spaces, increased congestion and inconsiderate or illegal parking in nearby residential areas. The Business Park's existing parking provision no longer meets the requirements of major businesses and there is a lack of capacity to accommodate staff.
- 3.4 Several years ago, parking problems were being experienced around Camberwell Road and Camberwell Way. In response, parking restrictions were introduced. While these were successful, they did lead to the effective displacement of the problem to other areas, particularly West Park, Broadmeadow and Moorside. As a result, the Council has received numerous complaints from residents about parking and obstructions in the area.

#### **Problems**

- 3.5 In October 2008, the Group visited Doxford International Business Park and the surrounding area in order to view at first hand the parking issues affecting the area.
- 3.6 During the visit, the Group made the following observations:-
  - There are clearly serious parking and congestion problems in the Moorside area. Along Moorside Road, cars are parked on footpaths and verges and it is very difficult for people in wheelchairs or with young children to move safely around the area;
  - Moorside residents face problems with cars parked along both sides of the estate ring road near its link with Doxford Park;
  - Emergency services face severe difficulties accessing area;
  - Motorists are required to make dangerous manoeuvres to access and leave the area;

- ❑ Bus services have difficulty accessing the Moorside area and are frequently in conflict with other traffic;
- ❑ a number of the streets with double yellow lines are relatively clear of traffic suggesting that the parking situation could be relieved by removing double yellow lines from one side of the street;
- ❑ There also seems to be scope for allowing limited parking on verges and the sacrifice of parts of the local footway.
- ❑ There is evidence that private car parks owned by businesses in the Park are being underutilised

## **Conclusions**

- 3.7 The Doxford International Business Park area has suffered from congestion and parking problems for several years. The problems are complex and not easily resolvable given the location of the site and the number of people employed in local businesses. In many ways, it is the success of the Business Park that has led to many of the parking problems currently being experienced.
- 3.8 In resolving these problems, it is important that we try to balance the needs and wishes of local residents and businesses located at the Business Park. Doxford International Business Park is a major employer in the city and its continued success is an important factor in the long term prosperity of the city. However, we must recognise the legitimate concerns of local residents affected by the parking problems.
- 3.9 The Council needs to take a strategic, long term approach to the problem. It is important to try to think through the consequences of any possible action to ensure that parking problems are not merely displaced to other areas. However, it is equally as important that local residents see some quick and tangible progress that will promote their quality of life and help to promote local confidence in the parking management system.
- 3.10 The Group therefore suggests that the problems are best addressed through a number of complementary measures, including:-
- ❑ that the waiting restrictions in the Business Park area be reviewed as a priority and, where appropriate, reduced in order to free up available parking space;
  - ❑ A clearway is proposed to ensure the free-flow of traffic along City Way and part of Doxford Park Way

- gaps be included in the proposed waiting restrictions at various locations on Moorside Road and introduced into the existing Prohibition of Waiting on: Monarch Way, Emperor Way, Admiral Way, Victory Way, Glanville Road, Azure Court and Camberwell Way
  - It was important to ensure that restrictions are enforced and the situation monitored to ensure that any problems are not exported to other adjacent areas
- 3.11 There is evidence that some businesses on the Business Park have spare capacity and therefore available parking space is being underutilised. There are an estimated 4,500 parking spaces and we feel that it is important that businesses work in partnership and come to some kind of collective agreement on how best to make best use of the spaces available.
- 3.12 We feel that businesses on the Park should be encouraged to follow the example of EDF Energy which has recently introduced a Green Travel Scheme. By working with its employees and unions, EDF has managed to introduce an ambitious car sharing scheme. As a result, around 700 EDF staff, half of the total workforce, now car share, up from 200 a year ago. As the vast majority of staff can now park at work this has resulted in a fall in congestion and parking problems.
- 3.13 We hope that the example of EDF Energy can be used as a model for other businesses in Doxford International Business Park.
- 3.14 The Council's Travel Plan Officer also has an important role in working with local businesses to encourage the development of Travel to Work Plans and further car sharing schemes. The Travel Plan Officer attended the Review Committee earlier in the year and it is suggested that the Committee receive updates on her work with firms in Doxford and in the city generally.
- 3.15 We feel it is important to ensure that there is adequate public transport to and from Doxford International Business Park to provide a realistic alternative to car travel. We feel that that the Council should therefore continue to work with Nexus and the bus operators to improve bus services to Doxford International Park.
- 3.16 Since our visit to the Doxford area, the Council has undertaken a successful consultation exercise involving residents at Moorside.
- 3.17 The scheme that the Council is consulting on will accommodate 160 cars. Around 60 will be in Moorside and the remaining 100 in Doxford International Business Park itself.
- 3.18 We are very hopeful that the scheme has the potential to significantly improve the parking situation for residents in Moorside.

## Recommendations

3.19 In relation to the parking situation at Doxford Business Park, we would make the following recommendations:-

- ❑ that the waiting restrictions in the Business Park area be reviewed as a priority and, where appropriate, reduced in order to free up available parking space;
- ❑ A clearway is proposed to ensure the free-flow of traffic along City Way and part of Doxford Park Way
- ❑ gaps be included in the proposed waiting restrictions at various locations on Moorside Road and introduced into the existing Prohibition of Waiting on: Monarch Way, Emperor Way, Admiral Way, Victory Way, Glanville Road, Azure Court and Camberwell Way
- ❑ that the restrictions be fully enforced and the situation monitored to ensure that any problems are not exported to other adjacent areas;
- ❑ that businesses in the area be encouraged to work in partnership in order to make best use of the parking spaces available;
- ❑ that the Council's Travel Plan Officer continues to work with local businesses to encourage the development of Travel to Work Plans and further car sharing schemes.

## **4 SUNDERLAND ROYAL HOSPITAL**

### **Background**

- 4.1 Sunderland Royal Hospital is located on Kayll Road near the centre of the city. The hospital is one of the largest in the region employing around 900 staff and attracting thousands of patient visits per day.
- 4.2 The hospital is located in a built up area and when it was constructed the current level of parking demand was not envisaged. The traffic problems now experienced reflects both the increasing the increasing levels of car use among staff and increased number of visitors to the hospital.
- 4.3 The parking problems being experienced around the Hospital are acute. Surveys undertaken by the Council indicate that 1497 vehicles were parked on street peaked at around 11am (438 residents vehicles and 1083 non residents vehicles). At 3.00pm the figure was 1443 vehicles (360 resident's vehicles and 1083 non residents' vehicles) and at 6am the number of vehicles parked on street was found to be 1260.
- 4.4 Surveys also indicate that non-residents parking are almost entirely attributable to hospital visitors and, in particular, staff. Indeed the figures suggest that in order accommodate all of its parking needs within its own grounds, the hospital would need to significantly reduce demand or provide substantially more parking spaces than its current capacity of 1300 spaces. (This figure includes 80 parking spaces Clanny House which the hospital leases from the university).
- 4.5 The hospital has come to rely on spaces being available in the surrounding streets for parking by its staff and visitors. It is estimated that an additional 900-1,000 car parking spaces are needed to cope with the demand.
- 4.6 The City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust operates a Pay and Display car parking scheme for visitors. Car parking spaces are obviously limited and there is no guarantee of a space. The public are charged £1.10 per 0-2 hours and £3.60 per 2-24 hours. At the present time staff pay a small fee for parking at the Hospital but are not guaranteed a place.
- 4.7 An examination of accident records around the hospital has shown that in the five years up to the end of 2007, there were 23 personal injury accidents a significant proportion of which could be attributed to restricted visibility as a result of high levels of on street parking.
- 4.8 The Hospital is on a major bus route into the city and is relatively well served by public transport.

- 4.9 The Hospital has implemented a Park and Ride scheme from Sainsbury's at Silksworth. At present, the service is provided free of charge by Compass Travel and runs approximately every 50 minutes Monday to Friday (excl Bank Holidays).

### **Problems**

- 4.10 On 16 January 2009, the Group visited the Royal Hospital in order to view at first hand the parking situation in the area. We also met with George Hudd and Jim Robinson from the Hospitals Estate Section in order to discuss the parking situation.
- 4.11 This tour clearly demonstrated the volume of cars parked in the streets surrounding the hospital and the problems facing local residents.
- 4.12 These problems include :-
- ❑ Residents have difficulty in finding a parking space during the working day;
  - ❑ emergency services experiencing difficulty with general access;
  - ❑ Potential for increased accidents;
  - ❑ Difficult access caused by indiscriminate parking on narrow streets and at junctions;
  - ❑ Additional traffic movements associated with obstructed vehicles and those looking for parking space.
- 4.13 Complaints received by the Council are mostly from the area to the west of the hospital which relate to obstruction and access problems and from the area to the south which concern residents being unable to find a parking space close to their home.
- 4.14 During our discussions, Mr Robinson outlined the Hospital's proposal for a 120 bed extension. The hospital consider this essential to meet the growing demand for hospital beds in the city. Mr Robinson noted that recently, the hospital had experienced considerable problems caused by the shortage of beds and this needed to be alleviated as a matter of priority. The extension will also provide the opportunity to improve the standard and quality of health care offered by the hospital.
- 4.15 The proposed extension will also be accompanied by an additional 138 parking spaces being made available in addition to the existing 1,300 parking spaces.
- 4.16 The Hospital appreciate that the proposal will place an even greater demand for parking in the area but the extension was considered essential to ensuring the public health of residents in the city.

- 4.17 The Hospital is also working to make the existing on site parking spaces more clearly visible in order that their use was maximised.
- 4.18 The planning application for the proposed extension of the Hospital is expected to be considered by the Council's Planning and Highways Committee in July 2009.
- 4.19 The City Hospital is also engaging with NEXUS to make the most of bus services operating to and from the hospital and work is also planned to improve the bus stop on Chester Road.

### **Conclusions**

- 4.20 The parking problems being experienced around the Royal Hospital are significantly influenced by the operation of the hospital. Non-residents parking in the area is almost entirely attributable to hospital visitors and, in particular, staff.
- 4.21 As with the problems at Doxford International Business Park, this reflects the growth of the hospital itself combined with increased levels of car ownership and greater car use among staff. The proposed expansion of the Hospital will inevitably worsen the parking problems already experienced by local residents.
- 4.22 Again, as with Doxford International, there is a need to balance the very important services provided by the Hospital against the problems caused to local residents by parking in the area. However, it is vital that we respond quickly to the help alleviate the problems being experienced by residents in the area.
- 4.23 The Group has considered some of the potential options, both long term and short term, and these are outlined below. However, we feel that if we are to make real and lasting progress it is essential for the Council and the City Hospital to work in partnership.

#### *Parking Management Scheme*

- 4.24 The Council is currently undertaking a major consultation exercise with residents on a Parking Management Scheme for the area. Seven options have been outlined and the findings of the consultation exercise will be reported to Cabinet in July 2009. We feel it would be wrong for the Committee to pre-empt the outcome of that consultation exercise however, it is important to recognise that any proposals which may be developed from the consultation will potentially have a significant impact on both residents and the Hospital operation.

#### *Park and Ride Schemes*

- 4.25 The Group referred to the considerable potential of park and ride schemes in reducing parking problems and the possibility of expanding and developing the park and ride system currently available from Sainsbury's off Silksworth Lane. While the scheme had so far been only a limited success it is felt that more could be done to advertise the service to staff and hospital users. In particular we feel that more use could be made of leaflets and posters in health centres, GP's and other public places as well as articles placed in the local press and Sunrise magazine.
- 4.26 It is also hoped that in some time in the near future the service could be expanded to cover other parts of the city.

#### *Use of Alternative Car Parking Space*

- 4.27 We should seek to identify any available sites or land adjacent to the Hospital that could provide additional car parking spaces and any sites suitable for parking as part of a potential park and ride scheme.
- 4.28 The Group discussed the potential of using existing under utilised car parking spaces. If these could be freed up for staff then it could have a significant impact on the space available for users of the hospital with the hospital employing around 900 staff.

#### *Improving Public Transport*

- 4.29 We feel that the Council and the Hospital should continue to work with Nexus and the bus operators to improve the bus services operating to and from the Hospital. While the Hospital is generally well located, there are parts of the city where access to the hospital is very problematic. It is hoped that the Bus Network review being conducted by Nexus will result in an improvement to services from outlying parts of the city.
- 4.30 The Group are pleased that plans are underway to improve the bus stop adjacent to the hospital. The development of a bus lane could also help improve access by public transport though it was acknowledged that such a measure was not necessarily popular with local residents. The Group also welcomes proposals for buses to be given access to the hospital grounds.

#### *Work Travel Plans*

- 4.31 As in the case with Doxford International, we feel that there is great potential in further developing work based travel plans for staff.
- 4.32 The Council's Travel Plan Officer has an important role in working with the hospital in order to develop tailored travel plans for staff.

### *Relocation of Hospital Auxiliary Facilities*

- 4.33 We feel that relocating more of the hospital auxiliary services off site could help to free up space for car parking.
- 4.34 During our discussions, the Hospital noted that the potential relocation of auxiliary facilities had been considered and had indeed taken place where it was felt to be a practicable alternative.
- 4.35 We would ask the Hospital to look again at this issue in view of the significant impact that parking problems have on the quality of life of local residents.

### *Multi Storey Car Park*

- 4.36 The Group feel that there is merit in the Hospital considering alternative parking provision in the form of an economical multi story car park installation on the site of the Hospital. Such structures have been used with some success in other areas and are relatively economical to construct.
- 4.37 It is recognised that there would be still be a resource implications in terms of construction and maintenance and could result in light nuisance for people living in the area. However, we do feel that this option requires further consideration.

### *Location of the Hospital*

- 4.38 We are very aware that many of the parking problems being experienced around the hospital are in fact inherent in the location of the hospital and that only the transfer of elements of the Hospital itself to a new location will eradicate the long term problem.
- 4.39 It may well be that a point will soon be reached whereby further growth of the Hospital will be unsustainable. The streets around the hospital were never designed or intended to accommodate parking on the scale now being experienced. In the longer term it may be necessary to start to think about the possibility and implications of relocating elements of the Hospital to another site.

### **Recommendations**

- 4.40 That the Council work with the City Hospital to investigate the potential of developing additional park and ride schemes in the city and that measures be taken to better advertise the existing service;
- 4.41 That the possibility of constructing a multi story car park on the Hospital site be investigated further;

- 4.42 That the Hospital investigate further the potential relocation of auxiliary facilities in order to help to free up space for additional parking;
- 4.43 In the longer term consideration be given to the possibility and implications of relocating elements of the Hospital to another site within the city.