

REPORT: Environment and Urban Renewal
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 12th September 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Policy & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Off Street Parking Places Order 2012
Runcorn Town Centre

WARDS: Mersey

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report on objections that have been received following public consultation on a proposed traffic regulation Order to name, and set the operating conditions on, the central car parks in Runcorn Town Centre. The original proposals with a location plan are set out in Appendix 'A' to this report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that this PPB supports the revised proposal to make a Traffic Regulation Order, the main effects of which would be to:

- **name the central Runcorn Town Centre car parks adjacent to the Co-Op, Lloyds Pharmacy and Cooltrader stores (basically the former Princess Street car park) as High Street Car Park;**
- **impose standard operating conditions generally as within Appendix 'A', though with a revised maximum stay period of three hours and no return within an hour Monday to Saturday 8.00 am to 5.00 pm., on both the High Street car park and the Penketh Court car park; and**
- **introduce a charge of £50.00 for drivers exceeding the maximum stay period, but reduced to £25.00 if paid within 14 days.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Using delegated powers and after consultation with the ward councillors, adjacent store managers and Cheshire Police, the Operational Director (Policy, Planning and Transportation) accepted the report attached as Appendix 'A', and issued approval to advertise a proposal to name the central Runcorn Town Centre car parks adjacent to the Co-Op, Lloyds Pharmacy and Cooltrader stores (basically the former Princess Street car park) as High Street Car Park and impose new operating conditions on this car park and the Penketh Court car park. These operating conditions are the General Provisions contained within Appendix 'A' and are standard across all Council operated car parks, with the exception in this case of a maximum stay period of two hours with no return within an hour, Monday to Saturday 8.00 am to 6.00 pm initially being put forward.

3.2 Redevelopment work in the area had created the need to formalise the naming of the central car park areas, as the previous names are no longer applicable and the background to the requirement for regulation of these areas is set out in Appendix

'A'. In essence this is because of the need to provide a turnover in the use of these parking areas to improve the availability of immediate parking for shoppers using the adjacent Co-Op, Lloyds Pharmacy and Cooltrader stores.

3.3 During the consultation period, six objections were received'. Three of the objections are from individuals, three from businesses and the various issues raised can be summarised to the following points:

- [a] A maximum stay duration limit of two hours is insufficient for some visitors, especially those using hairdressers and similar services. Response: This seems a valid point and the stay duration limit is recommended to be increased to three hours.
- [b] The 8am to 6pm restriction period is excessive. Response: This seems a valid point and the end time is now recommended as 5pm. With the three hour stay period, this means that a driver parking at 2pm can then stay the rest of the day and on into the evening yet commuters, shop and office workers cannot arrive before 9am and proceed to stay until lunchtime or longer.
- [c] The proposals have had inadequate consultation. Response: The Council's policies and practices on consultation in relation to Traffic Regulation Orders have been followed with notices posted on site, in the local press and hand delivered to adjacent properties.
- [d] Are the restrictions justified, especially in Runcorn? Response: The issues were covered by a comprehensive report to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on 16th September 2009. Additionally, in December 2009 consultants RTA Associates Ltd. (RTA) undertook a feasibility study for the adoption of civil parking enforcement within Halton. A central finding of the reports is that although the overall parking provision in Runcorn Town Centre may be satisfactory, issues exist over the management of these facilities, and 'blocking' of those prime parking areas closest to retail outlets by all-day parkers in all the main car parks. There is strong anecdotal and observational evidence that in the case of Runcorn, the drivers involved work in adjacent offices and shops, or use the nearby mainline railway station or bus station as commuters to Liverpool and is mentioned in the letters from Curiosity Bookshop and Lloyds Pharmacy.
- [e] Disabled workers in the Town Centre will need to park elsewhere due to the stay duration limit, they will need to walk further to work and there are few disabled parking spaces. Response: The maximum stay duration is now recommended as three hours. Consideration can be given to the marking of extra disabled person bays in the other Town Centre car parks, but those bays at the Penketh Court and new High Street car parks are in prime locations for disabled visitors to the adjacent shops and should be subject to stay duration limits to improve the accessibility to the shops for the disabled generally, rather than having these bays permanently 'taken' throughout the day.
- [f] Town centre workers and other long-stay visitors will be inconvenienced. Response: Town centre workers and long-stay visitors are part of the problem and will need to make use of alternative car parks in the town centre and immediate area, which are indicated on the plan and will continue without maximum stay duration limits as now and which surveys have shown to have spare capacity. The proposed restrictions are precisely aimed at removing long stay parking in the Penketh Court and new High Street car parks yet any driver arriving at or after 2pm can stay on to the evening. Alternative car parks are available within the town centre; they are well lit and mostly covered by the Council's CCTV security system. There is also on-street parking available on Mersey Road.

- 3.4 It is intended that the maximum stay duration and time limits be displayed prominently on site. For this restriction to be effective it will be necessary to consider the options available for enforcement. The options for enforcement are as follows:
- Arrange for a private company to enforce the restriction. Depending on the penalty and the number of motorists not complying with the order, this could be at no cost to the Council or at a cost to be determined by a tendering exercise.
 - Authorise Council officers to carry out enforcement, although there would be a high initial set up cost and resources would be difficult to allocate on a regular basis
 - Authorise a neighbouring Authority to enforce the restriction, although there would a cost to the Council

Depending on which option may be deployed, there could be costs for the Council and funding for this purpose would have to be identified. The area is not part of the public highway; therefore the police could not carry out enforcement.

- 3.5 It is proposed that an overstay charge of £50.00 be introduced, which would be reduced to £25.00 if paid within 14 days. There are similar restrictions on car parks within neighbouring Town Centres but not within Halton.

4.0 FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The total cost of implementing the proposed Traffic Regulation Order is approximately £2,500 including signs for the car parks to notify users. This will be charged to Traffic Management revenue budgets.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES.

5.1 Children & Young People in Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Children and Young People in Halton' priority.

5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Construction and efficient operation of a successful retail centre will create and protect jobs in Halton.

5.3 A Healthy Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'A Healthy Halton' priority.

5.4 A Safer Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'A Safer Halton' priority.

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The provision of short stay parking will help with the regeneration of Runcorn Town Centre by providing parking for shoppers close to the shops.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 Failure to implement these restrictions could damage the viability of adjacent retail outlets and the wider Runcorn Town Centre.

7.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES.

- 7.1 The central issue that has prompted the proposed time limits has been that the prime parking slots in the Runcorn Town Centre car parks are being occupied by vehicles that are parked all day without moving and there is no regular turnover in parking space availability. This results in shoppers having to park further away from the retail outlets and this extra distance is a particular problem for disabled drivers. The limit of three hours provides sufficient time for all shoppers, including disabled drivers, to access the Runcorn Town Centre facilities and it is not believed necessary to provide an exception for any vehicles which on a practical level would be difficult to enforce. Existing disabled person parking bays are shown on Drg. No. 9064 within Appendix 'A'.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 There are no background papers under section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

REPORT: M. Noone, Operational Director
Policy, Planning & Transportation

DATE: 16th. May 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: S. Johnson - Lead Officer, Traffic & Road Safety

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Off Street Parking Places Order 2012,
Runcorn Town Centre

WARDS: Mersey

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the introduction of an Off Street Parking Places Order to cover the three central car parks in Runcorn Town Centre, in order to formalise use of these areas with standard operating conditions and to restrict the maximum duration of stay to two hours.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that:

- [a] Notice be given of the Council's intention to implement a Traffic Regulation Order as Appendix '1', the main effects of which would be to name the central Runcorn Town Centre car parks adjacent to the Co-Op, Lloyds Pharmacy and Cooltrader stores (basically the former Princess Street car park) as High Street Car Park and impose standard operating conditions as Appendix '2' with a maximum stay period of two hours and no return within an hour Monday to Saturday 8.00 am to 6.00 pm., on this car park and the Penketh Court car park.**
- [b] Subject to no objections being sustained at the end of the public consultation period and to the approval of the Police and emergency services and satisfactory consultation, the Order be made.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Redevelopment of the central area of Runcorn Town Centre (RTC) has changed the layout of the former Princess Street car park with the construction of the Co-Op, Lloyds Pharmacy and Cooltrader stores, and the area can no longer be accessed from the north via Princess Street. A new smaller car parking area has also been constructed immediately adjacent to the main area, and it is recommended that the combined parking facility should now be known as High Street Car Park. Drg. No. 9064 as Appendix '3' shows the car park layout in the area including disabled person parking provision, and the Penketh Court car park.

- 3.2 Over recent years, studies have been undertaken into various aspects of parking in Halton. The issues were covered by a comprehensive report to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on 16th September 2009. In December 2009 consultants RTA Associates Ltd. (RTA) undertook a feasibility study for the adoption of civil parking enforcement within Halton, which would have required the Council to undertake parking enforcement. A central finding of the reports is that although the overall parking provision in RTC may be satisfactory, issues exist over the management of these facilities, and 'blocking' of those prime parking areas closest to retail outlets by all-day parkers in all the main car parks. There is strong anecdotal and observational evidence that in the case of Runcorn, the drivers involved work in adjacent offices and shops, or use the nearby mainline railway station or bus station as commuters to Liverpool.
- 3.3 Against this background, it is now recommended that in addition to the standard operating conditions that are used on other Council operated car parks throughout Halton; a two hour maximum stay limit should be introduced on the High Street and Penketh Court Car Parks. Such a limit would encourage a regular turnover of parking spaces in these most vital of car parks, and support adjacent businesses. In discussions with the managers of the Co-Op, Lloyds Pharmacy and Cooltrader stores, all supported such a measure as in their view business is being hampered by the inability of their customers to park near their stores.
- 3.4 Another finding of successive studies and meetings with store managers was the strong desire of traders to see free car parking provision retained as this is seen as vital to the viability of RTC.
- 3.5 Compliance with the proposed two hour stay limit would not be enforced by Cheshire Police and if future checks indicated a high level of disregard for the restriction, it would be necessary to consider the introduction of a fee for over-stayers. Such a proposal would be taken forward via the relevant Board.
- 3.6 If an over stay fee were to be agreed, this would in turn require the use of a contractor to enforce the time limit and issue the necessary notices as needed. Again, approval for this action would be sought through the relevant Board, with appointment of any contractor being made through the regular Procurement channels.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 During the formal advertising period to follow, in addition to the newspaper advertisements all directly affected residents, businesses and premises will be notified in writing of these proposals together with the emergency services and other regular consultees. Ward councillors and the Executive Board Member, Transportation have been consulted and support these proposals.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The total cost of implementing the proposed Traffic Regulation Order is approximately £2,500 including signs for the car parks to notify users. This will be charged to Traffic Management revenue budgets.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct policy, social inclusion, sustainability, best value, legal or crime and disorder implications resulting from this report.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES.

7.1 Children & Young People in Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Children and Young People in Halton' priority.

7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Construction and efficient operation of a successful retail centre will create and protect jobs in Halton.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'A Healthy Halton' priority.

7.4 A Safer Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'A Safer Halton' priority.

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The provision of short stay parking will help with the regeneration of Runcorn Town Centre by providing parking for shoppers close to the shops.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 Failure to implement these restrictions could damage the viability of adjacent retail outlets and the wider RTC.

9.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES.

9.1 The central issue that has prompted the proposed time limit has been that the prime parking slots in the Runcorn Town Centre car parks are being occupied by vehicles that are parked all day without moving and there is no regular turnover in parking space availability. This results in shoppers having to park further away from the retail outlets and this extra distance is a particular problem for disabled drivers. The limit of two hours provides sufficient time for all shoppers, including disabled drivers, to access the Runcorn Town Centre facilities and it is not believed necessary to provide an exception, which on a practical level would be difficult to enforce. Existing disabled person parking bays are shown on Drg. No. 9064 as Appendix '3'.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Report on parking to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on 16th September 2009.

Details of Proposed Order

[a] Type: Off Street Parking Places Order

[b] Details:

Location: The two car parks north of and immediately adjacent to High Street, Runcorn (essentially the former Princess Street car park) henceforth to be known as High Street Car Park, plus Penketh Court Car Park.

Conditions: Standard conditions as regards limits on use as Appendix '2', with the added limitation of a maximum two hour stay and no return within an hour - Monday – Saturday 8.00 am to 6.00 pm.

[c] Associated revocations: Those sections of the Halton Borough Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 1984 that relate to Princess Street car park.

[d] Exemptions: Standard

[e] Statement of Reasons: To define car park name and location and operation following redevelopment work and to ensure a regular turnover of parking spaces.

[f] Plan: Drg. no. 9064 as Appendix '3', for deposit only.

[g] Date to be advertised: ASAP

[h] Date to be effected: ASAP

[i] Advertising code: 2050 1625 W041

Off Street Parking Places Orders – General Provisions

[1] Each parking place specified in the Schedule may be used, subject to the following provisions of this Order, as a parking place for such classes of vehicles, in such positions and on such days and during such hours as are specified in relation to that area in the Schedule.

[2] Where in the Schedule a parking place is described as available for vehicles of a specific class or in a specified position, the driver of a vehicle shall not permit it to wait in that parking place unless it is of the class and in the position so specified.

[3] Where, within a parking place, there is a surface marking or sign in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 which indicates that a parking bay is available only for a disabled person's vehicle, the driver of a vehicle shall not cause or permit it to wait in that parking bay unless it is a disabled person's vehicle and that person is present.

[4] The driver of a vehicle shall not cause or permit it to wait in a parking place for longer than two hours.

[5] The driver of a vehicle shall not cause or permit that vehicle to wait in a parking place unless the vehicle is licensed in pursuance of the provisions of the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 and unless there is in relation to the use of the vehicle by the driver such a policy of insurance as complies with the requirements of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

[6] The driver of a vehicle using a parking place shall stop the engine as soon as the vehicle is in position in the parking place and shall not start the engine except when about to change the position of the vehicle in or to depart from the parking place.

[7] No person shall use a vehicle while it is in a parking place in connection with the sale of any article to persons in or near the parking place or in connection with the selling or offering for hire of his skill or services.

[8] No person shall use any part of a parking place or any vehicle left in a parking place –

- for sleeping or camping or cooking; or
- for the purpose of servicing or washing any vehicle or part thereof other than is reasonably necessary to enable that vehicle to depart from the parking place

[9] The Driver of a vehicle using a parking place shall not sound any horn or other similar instrument except when about to change the position of the vehicle in or to depart from the parking place.

[10] If a vehicle is left in a parking place in a position other than in accordance with these provisions a person authorised by the Council in that behalf may alter or cause to be altered the position of the vehicle so that its position is in accordance with the said provisions.

[11] If a vehicle is left in a parking place in contravention of any foregoing provisions of this Order a person authorised by the Council in that behalf may remove the vehicle from that parking place or arrange for such removal.

[12] For the purpose of meeting the requirements of an emergency a person authorised in that behalf by the Council or a Police Constable in uniform may alter or cause to be altered the position of a vehicle in a parking place, or remove or arrange for the removal of a vehicle from a parking place.

[13] Any person altering, or causing the alteration of, the position of a vehicle, or removing, or causing the removal of, a vehicle by virtue of these provisions may do so by towing or driving the vehicle or in such other manner as he may think reasonably necessary to enable the position of the vehicle to be altered or the vehicle to be removed.

[14] Any person removing or arranging for the removal of a vehicle by virtue of these provisions shall make such arrangements as he considers to be reasonably necessary for the safety of the vehicle in the place to which it is removed.

[15] No person shall in a parking place wantonly shout or otherwise make any loud noise to the disturbance or annoyance of users of a parking place or residents or premises in the neighbourhood.

[16] No person shall in a parking place use any threatening, abusive or insulting language, gesture or conduct with intent to put any person in fear or so as to occasion a breach of the peace or whereby a breach of the peace is likely to be occasioned.

[17] In a parking place no person shall erect or cause or permit to be erected any tent, booth, stand, building or other structure without the written consent of the Council; or light or cause or permit to be lit any fire.

[18] The parking places set out in the Schedule to this Order shall be used for no other purpose than the parking of the prescribed vehicles, unless the prior written consent of the Council has been obtained.

[19] The driver of a motor vehicle using a parking place shall ensure that the motor vehicle is parked securely to ensure that the motor vehicle remains stationary.

[20] The driver of a motor vehicle shall not cause or permit that vehicle to wait in a parking place if the vehicle contains obnoxious or injurious substances which, if lost from the vehicle, may damage the surface of a parking place or cause any other kind of damage or injury whatsoever.

[21] Where in a parking place signs are erected or surface markings are laid for the purpose of indicating the entrance to or exit from the parking place, or indicating that a vehicle using the parking place shall proceed in a specified direction within the parking place, then no person shall drive or cause or permit to be driven any vehicle so that it enters the parking place otherwise than by an entrance, or leaves the parking place otherwise than by an exit, so indicated, or in a direction other than so specified.

[22] No person shall, except with the permission of a person authorised by the Council in that behalf, drive or cause or permit to be driven any vehicle in a parking place for any purpose other than of leaving that vehicle in the parking place in accordance with the provisions of this Order or for the purpose of departing from the parking place.

[23] In this Order any reference to any enactment includes a reference to the enactment as may from time to time be amended or substituted.

Schedule

Name of Parking Place(s):

High Street Car Park & Penketh Court Car Park

Position in Which Vehicles May Wait:

Wholly within a parking bay.

Classes of Vehicle:

[1] Motor cars within the provisions of Section 136(2)(a) of the Road Traffic Act 1984.

[2] Motor cycles as defined in Section 136(4) of the Act of 1984.

[3] Motor vehicles constructed or adapted for use for the conveyance of goods or burden the unladen weight of which does not exceed 1525kg except in relation to vehicles delivering to adjacent shops for loading and unloading purposes only.

[4] Invalid carriages.

[5] Disabled person's vehicles.

Days of Operation of Parking Place(s):

All days.

Hours of Operation of Parking Place(s):

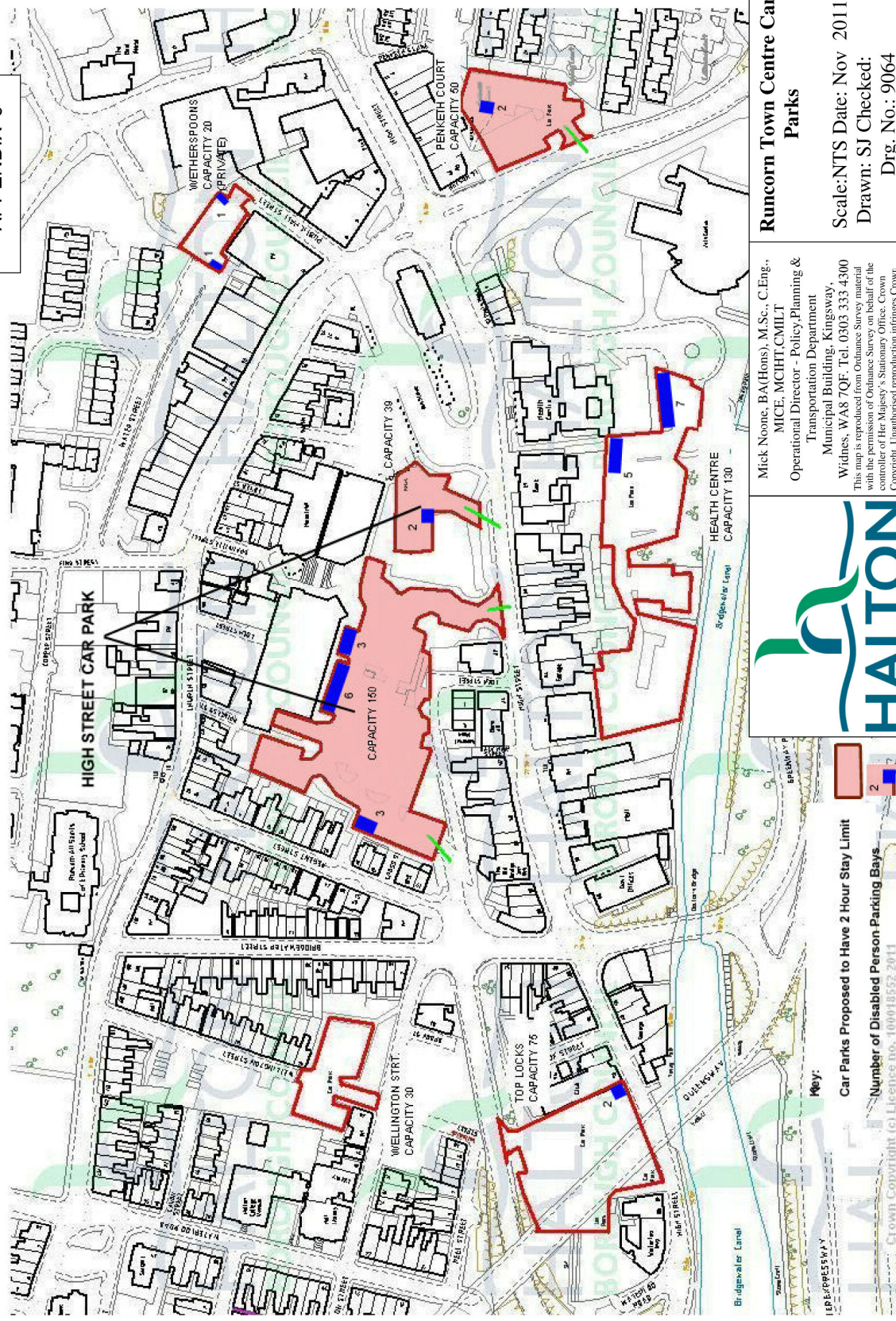
All hours.

Maximum Period for Which Vehicles May Wait:

Maximum two hour stay and no return within an hour - Monday – Saturday 8.00 am to 6.00 pm. At times other than these, unlimited.

May 2012

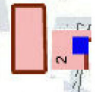
APPENDIX '3'



Runcorn Town Centre Car Parks

Scale: NTS Date: Nov 2011
 Drawn: SJ Checked:
 Drg. No.: 9064

Mick Noone, BA(Hons), M.Sc., C.Eng.,
 MICE, MCIHT, CMILT
 Operational Director - Policy, Planning &
 Transportation Department
 Municipal Building, Kingsway,
 Widnes, WA8 7QF. Tel: 0303 333 4300
 This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material
 with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the
 controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Crown
 Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown
 Copyright & may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
 H.B.C. O.S. License LA 078123.



Car Parks Proposed to Have 2 Hour Stay Limit
 Number of Disabled Person Parking Bays

Crown Copyright (6) Licence no. 1000140532 2011