

Covent Garden Car Park Displacement Plan

WYG/Counter Context High Level Review

15/11/18

Executive Summary

Background to the Study:

In late January 2019, Warwick District Council (WDC) is proposing to close the Covent Garden Car Park for an estimated 18 months to redevelop the site with a mixed-use scheme. Local businesses and residents have raised significant concerns about the impact closing Covent Garden Car Park for redevelopment will have on the town centre, both in terms of the impact on shoppers and visitors but also local staff and residents.

WYG and Counter Context have been appointed jointly by WDC and Leamington BID to carry out an independent high-level review of the WDC Covent Garden Car Park Displacement Plan (dated July 2018).

The intention of this review is to provide advice on whether the Displacement Plan will be effective in terms of accommodating the displaced users of the Covent Garden Car Park, parking elsewhere in the town and to recommend any additional measures that should be implemented.

Review Assumptions:

- In terms of this high-level review, the key issue for the Displacement Plan is to mitigate the loss of the 468 Covent Garden Car Park spaces rather than addressing any wider shortfalls in the town centre. Based on this, the baseline numbers for replacement car park spaces that need to be found, has been assessed within the bounds of current supply (i.e. 468 spaces).
- This does not account for times when it has been observed that demand exceeds supply.
- In the high-level assessment of alternative car park supply we have used both a 100% and 85% sensitivity test. At 100% it assumes every car park space is used, however IHT guidance suggests 85% is a more appropriate target to limit search time for spaces.
- Priority has been given first to the identification of 'short stay parking spaces' within an 'acceptable walking distance' of the town centre to support local businesses. This is followed by identifying new 'long stay' options for workers.
- Short stay is defined as under 4 hours. Permit holders have been defined as 'long stay'.

- Based on current guidance an 'acceptable walking distance' to the town for 'short stay' users has been defined as 800m.
- The data sets are based on the average peak demand of 1300 on a weekday and at 1300 on Saturday. Typically demand outside of these peak times will be lower than this and likewise seasonal fluctuations (e.g. Christmas, special events) will result in higher demand. Ticket sales data was analysed from April 2016 to December 2017 and site surveys were carried out in September 2018 so any future growth in demand is not reflected.

Impact of Covent Garden Closure – Analysis

Both the current supply of spaces at Covent Garden Car Park as well as the current usage has been assessed. Looking at ticket sales, permits and user surveys it is considered the following spaces are required with the closure of Covent Garden Car Park at any one time:

- 236 short stay spaces
 - 232 total long stay spaces (i.e. 182 long stay spaces and 50 permit / season ticket holder spaces*)
- * there are a total of 132 permits issued for Covent Garden however these are not all in use at any one time.*

Supplied ticket sales data indicates that the peak demand is typically 1300 Monday to Saturday and that typically there are circa 809 users of the car park per average day (with a maximum of 947) generating average footfall of circa 25,000 per month (29,000 peak month) in this part of the town centre.

Ticket sales data and a close to peak month site surveys and stakeholder interviews was used to determine how much spare capacity there is in other off-street and on-street parking locations on a weekday and weekend, to absorb some of the demand when Covent Garden Car Park closes.

Based on this, it was determined that on a weekday at 1300 there are circa 289 available existing short stay spaces and 44 long stay spaces in Leamington Spa. Using the IHT 85% sensitivity test, would result in 246 available short stay spaces and 37 long stay spaces being available.

On a weekend, at 1300 on a Saturday there are circa 88 available short stay spaces and 33 long stay spaces. Using the IHT 85% sensitivity test, would result in 75 available short stay spaces and 28 long stay spaces being available.

The impact of having no Displacement Plan and relying on any existing capacity clearly shows that there would be an insufficient number of both short and long stay spaces, particularly at key trading times.

This is particularly acute for long stay users and those short stay users parking for longer than 1-2 hours (and therefore using on-street availability). The table below shows the impact at both the 85% and 100% sensitivity test.

Day @ 13.00	Demand from CG	Existing Supply (85%)	Existing Supply (100%)	Impact on spaces available based on 85% threshold
Weekday				
Short Stay	236	246	289	10 available
Long Stay	232	37	44	195 shortfall
Total Spaces	468	283	333	185 shortfall
Saturday				
Short Stay	236	75	88	161 shortfall
Long Stay	232	28	33	204 shortfall
Total Spaces	468	103	121	365 shortfall

As demonstrated above there is insufficient existing capacity in the town centre to accommodate the displaced parking from Covent Garden Car Park. This demonstrates the critical importance of implementing a Displacement Plan during the closure period.

The WDC Displacement Plan

The table below shows WYG analysis of the impact of the WDC Displacement Plan at both the 85% and 100% sensitivity test **pre-opening of the Station Approach car park** in December 2019:

Day @ 13.00 (before Station Approach car park opened)	Demand from CG	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan (85%)	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan (100%)	Impact on spaces based on 85% threshold
Weekday				
Short Stay	236	393	462	157 available
Long Stay	232	113	133	119 shortfall
Total Spaces	468	506	595	38 available
Saturday				
Short Stay	236	222	261	14 shortfall
Long Stay	232	325	382	93 available
Total Spaces	468	547	643	79 available

The table below shows WYG analysis of the impact of the WDC Displacement Plan at both the 85% and 100% sensitivity test **post-opening of the Station Approach car park** in December 2019:

Day @ 13.00 (after Station Approach car park opened)	Demand from CG	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan (85%)	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan (100%)	Impact on spaces based on 85% threshold
Weekday				
Short Stay	236	393	462	157 available
Long Stay	232	198	233	34 shortfall
Total Spaces	468	591	695	123 available
Saturday				
Short Stay	236	222	261	14 shortfall
Long Stay	232	410	482	178 available
Total Spaces	468	632	743	164 available

Analysis of the WDC Displacement Plan indicates that:

- Overall, the total lost number of spaces at Covent Garden will be replaced by new and existing availability at the 85% threshold sensitivity test – the issue though is that there is an imbalance of **long stay spaces on a weekday and short stay spaces at a weekend**.
- The lost number of long stay spaces at Covent Garden will be replaced by new and existing availability **on a Saturday** at the 85% threshold sensitivity test.

However, the analysis indicates the following problems:

- The review indicates that there would be a **shortfall of 119 long stay weekday spaces** (at the 85% sensitivity test) until December 2019 when the Station Approach car park becomes available. When this is available then there will be a **shortfall of 34 spaces** at the 85% sensitivity test. It should be borne in mind that the analysis does not take into account any impacts arising from modal shift measures discussed in the Displacement Plan.
- The WDC Displacement Plan provides additional parking to the south of the town whilst the loss of parking is to the north of the town. Workers (and to lesser extent shoppers) who currently park at Covent Garden arriving from the north of the town may not drive through the town centre to these new car parks and will use existing residential roads to the north of the town centre where there are no on street parking restrictions. This could cause issues for residents on these streets.

- The review indicates a shortfall of 14 short stay Saturday spaces at the 85% test both pre and post Dec 2019. However, other than encouraging greater use of the Royal Priors car park during weekdays, the short stay shoppers will be parking away from the north side of the town which will impact on footfall here and the economies of local businesses.

A key challenge will be moving the users of the single Covent Garden Car Park to many new locations, depending on user needs. This is complicated by the fact that new parking options, particularly those in the south, are typically in smaller car parks and are in areas that have existing access constraints due to congestion or the road layout. If users cannot find a space easily or if the spaces are already full it could cause frustration and increased congestion. This will be more critical in peak trading periods and during events. For this reason, the Displacement Plan includes a robust communications strategy which is reviewed in Section 7 of this report. As detailed in this review it is considered that there is limited scope for technology solutions to help customers navigate to 'free spaces' in the off-street car parks.

There is an existing heavy reliance on on-street parking provision in Leamington town centre. Given this and the future reliance in terms of the Displacement Plan, a close working partnership to implement and monitor changes with Warwickshire County Council is important.

WYG Recommendations

Upon reviewing WDC's draft Displacement Plan, WYG's study has identified a total of 29 recommendations for Warwick District Council to consider when refining its Displacement Plan, with these recommendations ranked in terms of priority as High, Medium and Low.

The recommendations identify options and opportunities to create additional parking capacity to mitigate the impact of the lost spaces at Covent Garden, ways in which the user experience can be enhanced and considerations for managing the delivery of the Displacement Plan.

Analysis of WDC Displacement Plan plus WYG recommendations, including Recommendation 17

The following table shows the WYG analysis of the impact of the WDC Displacement Plan with the additional WYG Recommendations (**including Recommendation 17 adopted**) at both the 85% and 100% sensitivity test **pre-opening of the Station Approach car park** in December 2019:

Day @ 13.00 (before Station Approach car park opened)	Demand from CG	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan plus WYG recommendations (85%)	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan plus WYG recommendations (100%)	Impact on spaces based on 85% threshold
Weekday				
Short Stay	236	333	392	97 available
Long Stay	232	241	284	9 available
Total Spaces	468	574	676	106 available
Saturday				
Short Stay	236	235	276	1 shortfall
Long Stay	232	381	448	149 available
Total Spaces	468	616	724	148 available

The following table shows the WYG analysis of the impact of the WDC Displacement Plan with the WYG Recommendations adopted (including Recommendation 17) at both the 85% and 100% sensitivity test **post-opening of the Station Approach car park** in December 2019:

Day @ 13.00 (after Station Approach car park opened)	Demand from CG	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan plus WYG recommendations (85%)	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan plus WYG recommendations (85%)	Impact on spaces based on 85% threshold
Weekday				
Short Stay	236	333	392	97 available
Long Stay	232	326	384	94 available
Total Spaces	468	659	776	191 available
Saturday				
Short Stay	236	235	276	1 shortfall
Long Stay	232	466	548	234 available
Total Spaces	468	700	824	233 available

Our analysis indicates that with if all additional WYG recommendations are adopted, including Recommendation 17, in the scenario both pre and post--opening of the Station Approach car park, then there will be sufficient car parking to accommodate the closure of the Covent Garden Car Park. However as per the tables above, provision for long stay users during the week and short stay users on Saturday is close to the 85% capacity threshold, particularly prior to Station Approach car park opening. This also assumes full adoption of identified new spaces, by specific users, for example long stay users fully utilising 94 spaces in Princes Drive and mitigating against train commuters using it.

Also, as detailed in the 'delivery risks' below, there remains some uncertainty about the deliverability and timing of additional WYG recommendations at the time of writing. This is due to the fact they will require planning permission and/or the agreement of Warwickshire County Council which controls on-street parking. This will need to be assessed going forwards.

Summary of Recommendations

The table below summarises the endorsements and recommendations contained within the report (noting that all other elements of the Displacement Plan not listed below are supported) and provides an implementation rating as follows:

- **High** = implement before closure of Covent Garden car park (ie before January 2019).
- **Medium** = implement prior to opening of Station Approach car park (before Dec 2019).
- **Low** = Post Dec 2019 consideration.

No	Recommendation	Rating	Description
1	Archery Rd car park	High	Endorsement of WDC's proposal to create more parking spaces for long-stay users with comments. +66 Long Stay spaces (existing + new incl. in analysis).
2	Princes Drive car park	High	Endorsement of WDC's proposal to create more parking spaces for long-stay users with comments. +94 Long Stay spaces (existing + new incl. in analysis).
3	Court St car park additional improvements	High	Endorsement of WDC's proposal to create more parking spaces for long-stay users with comments. +42 new Long Stay spaces incl. in analysis.
4	Court St car park - pricing	Med	Recommendation to consider a lower all-day charge after 8am for workers and an increased pre-8am charge to deter rail commuters.
5	Station Approach car park	Med	+100 Spaces. Recommendation to designate mix of short and long stay parking (see also Recommendation 5). Due to be completed by Dec 2019.

6	Riverside House weekend only	High	Recommendation and guidance regarding promotion and signage to raise awareness of availability as a long stay car park.
7	Riverside House shuttle bus	Low	Recommendation to consider shuttle service to make car park more attractive to shoppers.
8	St. Peters Car Park	High	Endorsement of WDC's proposal to designate mix of short and long stay parking (see also Recommendation 17).
9	Additional permit holder parking during the week at Riverside House	High	Recommendation to increase the number of permits to be made available at Riverside House during the week.
10	Newbold Terrace (east of junction with Newbold St up to Willes Rd)	Med	Recommendation to replace unrestricted long stay with short stay parking on-street. +85 Short Stay spaces / -85 Short Stay spaces. See also Recommendation 17.
11	Leam Terrace (east of Willes Road)	High	Recommendation to create additional long stay parking on-street. +10 Long Stay spaces.
12	Portland Street (additional short stay parking on-street)	High	Endorsement of WDC's proposal to create additional short stay parking on-street. +50 Short Stay spaces.
13	Bedford Street car park	High	Recommendation to reconfigure car park to create additional parking capacity. +15 Short Stay spaces.
14	A452 Clarendon Place and Clarendon Square	High	Recommendation to introduce parking restrictions to create additional short stay parking. Estimated +50 Short Stay / -50 Long Stay spaces. (see also Recommendation 17).
15	Private car park off Upper Grove Street	High	Recommendation to improve highway signage.
16	Bath Place car park	High	Recommendation to improve highway signage and communications.
17	Predicted weekday long stay parking shortfall	High	Alternative considerations to managing parking shortfall including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Newbold Terrace East Recommendation 20. Estimated + 66 Long Stay spaces.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement changes to on street restrictions on Clarendon Place/Square at weekends only. Estimated +50 Short Stay / -50 Long Stay spaces • WDC Displacement Plan proposed levels 1 to 5 (177 spaces) as short stay parking in St Peters car park on a weekday (levels 6 to 10 long stay 199 spaces) and at the weekend levels 1 to 6 (212 spaces) short stay and levels 7 to 10 (164 spaces) long stay (noting this will need clear car park signage). • Station Approach car park long stay only. • Do not make changes at Newbold Terrace.
18	Possible displaced parking on residential streets to the north of the town	High	Recommendation for monitoring and managing the impact of the car park closure on residential streets.
19	Promotional activities in Covent Garden	High	Recommendation for promotion of Covent Garden area to manage impact of closure on footfall.
20	Newbold Terrace East	Med	Review of WDC option to create additional long stay parking on-street (see Recommendation 17). +66 Long Stay Spaces.
21	Portland Place East	Med	Recommendation to create additional short stay parking on-street. +50 Short Stay spaces.
22	Majestic Wine (accessed off Bath Place)	Low	Recommendation to investigate if private car park can be made available for short-stay parking.
23	Events/Christmas peak demand car park provision	Low	Considerations for managing additional parking demand at peak periods.
24	Use of individual business car parking at weekends	Low	A partnership approach involving the support of BID Leamington and the Chamber of Trade will be required to implement this given the constraints on the District Council to promote third party businesses.
25	Cycle Parking	Med	Endorsement of WDC's proposal to increase cycle parking provision and promote existing facilities.

26	Signage/Communications Strategy	High	Endorsement of WDC's proposals and suggestions for signage changes, VMS changes and key communications messages.
27	Modal Shift	Med	Endorsement of WDC's proposals to promote alternative modes of travel with comments.
28	Impact of other planned developments/highway works	High	Recommendation to work with WCC to manage and communicate impact of planned maintenance works during redevelopment period.
29	Monitoring	High	Considerations and recommendations for monitoring and managing the impact of the redevelopment.

New Parking Spaces – Delivery Risks

In terms of risks for delivery of these schemes these are summarised below:

Location	Risk	Risk rating
Archery Road (+66 spaces)	WDC understood to have planning and design ongoing. The proposal is to formalise the existing gravel car park.	Medium – Planning consent not yet obtained. WDC indicate that subject to planning approval in November, then should be open by January/February 2019. If all 66 spaces are promoted and used for Long Stay parking, there will be some displacement of existing assumed park / bowls club users.
Princes Drive (+94 spaces)	WDC understood to have planning and design ongoing. The proposal is to add 30 to the existing 64 – total 94	Medium – Planning consent not yet obtained. WDC indicate that subject to planning approval in November, then should be open by January/February 2019. If all 94 spaces are promoted and used for Long Stay parking, there will be some displacement of existing assumed park users.
Court Street (+42 spaces)	WDC understood to have planning and design ongoing.	Medium – Planning consent not yet obtained. WDC indicate that subject to planning approval in November, then should be open by January/February 2019.
St Peters car park	Within WDC control	Low – achievable by January 2019
Newbold Terrace – No change	No Changes	None
Leam Terrace (+10 spaces)	WCC have indicated that this scheme needs to be agreed with the Local Member and residents - WDC to action asap	Medium - Unlikely to be open by January 2019 but should be open by December 2019

Portland Street (+50 spaces)	WCC have confirmed this can be delivered by Jan 2019 (subject to road safety audit)	Low – should be open by January 2019
Riverside House	Planning application submitted.	Low – achievable by January 2019
Station Approach	Within WDC control	Low – achievable by December 2019
50 Permit parking spaces at Riverside House (weekday)	Within WDC control	Low – achievable by January 2019
Newbold Terrace East (+66 spaces)	Requires planning approval and possible high-risk environmental issues	High – unlikely to be achievable by December 2019. WCC agreement needed and requires planning permission.
Bedford St Car Park (+15 spaces)	Within WDC control	Low – achievable by January 2019
Clarendon Sq./Place (+/-50 spaces)	Needs to be discussed with WCC, residents & stakeholders	Medium - Unlikely to be open by January 2019 but could be available by December

Conclusion

The study concludes that the delivery of a Displacement Plan during the planned car park closure period is of critical importance. Review of the WDC Displacement Plan showed that if all the proposed changes are implemented, the total lost number of spaces at Covent Garden will be replaced by new and existing availability (at the 85% sensitivity test), however there is an issue with the supply of spaces during the week compared to the weekend. This means there will shortfall of long stay (worker/long-stay leisure visitors 4hr+) spaces during the week and short stay (shopper spaces) on the weekend. The shortfall in long-stay provision will be accentuated until the Station Approach car park opens in late 2019.

The analysis identified that many of the WDC Displacement Plan parking options are in the south of the town, while the Covent Garden car park is in the north. This may impact residential areas in the north, if users are not willing to drive through town and choose to park on street. Equally footfall and the economies of local businesses in the north may be impacted, as shoppers are parking away from this area. Furthermore, users will be moving from one large car park into many smaller ones which presents both a behavioural change and communication challenge. A heavy reliance on on-street parking was also observed which is significant because it is managed by a separate Authority (Warwickshire County Council).

To help mitigate the impacts of this, 29 recommendations have been proposed and guidance is provided with regards to the prioritising the review and implementation of these recommendations. They identify

options to create additional parking and other measures such as signage, communication, marketing and partnership working.

On balance, if all WYG recommendations are adopted there will be enough car parking spaces to accommodate the closure in peak times, however the locational and associated behavioural change challenges previously highlighted remain. Demand outside of these peak times is expected to be lower than this and likewise seasonal fluctuations (e.g. Christmas trading during November and December, special events and festivals) will result in higher than average demand where further measures should be considered, for example, temporary Park and Ride services.

Given that there remains uncertainty as to the deliverability of some recommendations, the risks were also investigated. This is contained in Appendix F and will require ongoing assessment, as proposals are developed.

Accordingly, any non-delivery or delays in delivering the required long stay spaces (e.g. Newbold Terrace East, Leam Terrace, Court Street, etc.) will mean the Displacement Plan will not provide sufficient long stay spaces during the week. The impact is accentuated during the week, when Riverside House is not available (as is the case on weekends) and in year 1 while the Station Approach car park is not open. This also applies to short stay (shopper) spaces whereby any non-delivery or delay in delivery (e.g. Clarendon Sq., Portland St. etc.) will result in a shortfall and potential frustration and congestion if spaces are difficult to locate. This will be accentuated on Saturdays at peak times.

To help mitigate the impacts of these medium/high risk parking supply options and support the Displacement Plan generally, delivery of Recommendations 22-29 should be considered. This includes a signage, communications and marketing strategy which is particularly important and covered in Section 7 of this report. Actions identified by WDC to attract footfall in the north of the town are also supported. Partnership working, both with Warwickshire County Council and the wider business community is also recommended as are some areas of further user related research prior to the closure and monitoring throughout the closure period.