

REPORT TO EVENTS AND TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
COACH PARKING

Report Reference E-22-04
Meeting Date 13th June 2022
Agenda Item 10
Prepared by Town Clerk



1.0 BACKGROUND

The current parking provision for coaches visiting Knutsford is within Tatton Street car park, approximately as shown in figure one overleaf. There are two problems with this location. Firstly, access to this car park is restricted by a height barrier which means all coaches must make prior arrangements to have the barrier opened, this has previously been facilitated by a volunteer at Knutsford Heritage Centre for parties visiting the centre. Secondly, the entrance to the car park is narrow which makes access/egress by large vehicles extremely challenging if not impossible.

The Town Clerk and previous Town Centre Manager had evaluated a number of alternative options for coach parking in Knutsford and concluded that the only practical site would be to utilise space within the bus station, where two coaches could be parked. This would allow the coach parking spaces at Tatton Street to be converted to car parking spaces, further increasing provision within the town.

In February 2020 the Head of Strategic Transport and Parking at Cheshire East Council undertook to discuss this with colleagues. Despite repeated chasing, no response was received by the Town Council until June 2021 when it was advised that a review of the role of the bus station would be included as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan which was being prepared. This was not included.

The committee has previously approved the idea as set out in its response to the Cheshire East Parking Strategy Consultation in January 2021:

The Town Council urges Cheshire East Council to remove the coach parking bays at Tatton Street car park which are inaccessible and would be better used as car parking spaces. In its place, the parking spaces at the Bus Station on Bexton Road should be reserved for coach parking to enable the Town Council to promote Knutsford as a Coach Friendly Town and promote greater tourism by this means.

Coach parking is important to towns with a tourist offer. Each coach party brings 50+ people to the town centre contributing strongly to the success of local businesses. Once coach parking is properly provided, the Town Council can re-start efforts to designate Knutsford a 'coach friendly town' which would encourage coach operators to bring tours to Knutsford.

In April 2022, Knutsford Heritage Centre re-raised the problem with the council. They highlighted that they can no longer arrange coach visits due to the problems with the existing coach parking arrangements and as a result are losing visitors (on average Knutsford Heritage Centre received one coach party a month). The Town Clerk wrote to the Head of Strategic Transport and Parking in April and May to chase the matter and has received no reply.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

- 1) The committee reaffirms its aspiration to see coach parking provided at Knutsford Bus Station
- 2) The Town Clerk write to the Chief Executive of Cheshire East Council and the Executive Director for Place requesting they direct officers to facilitate the necessary orders to effect the change.

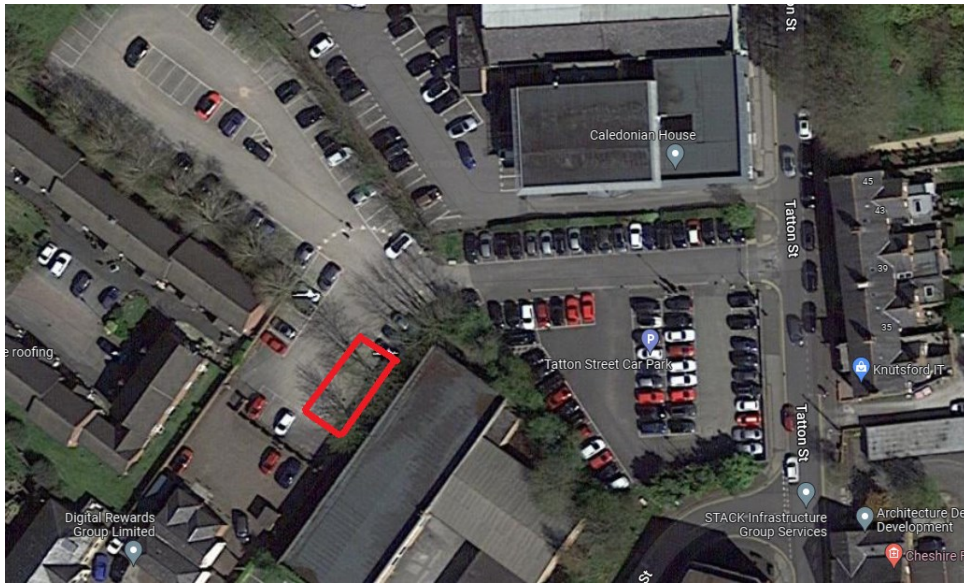


Figure One: Location of existing coach parking



Figure Two: Location of proposed coach parking