

**Committee:** Executive  
**Date:** Tuesday 26 July 2011  
**Time:** 5.30 pm  
**Venue:** Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

**Membership**

<b>Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)</b>	<b>Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman)</b>
<b>Councillor Ken Atack</b>	<b>Councillor Norman Bolster</b>
<b>Councillor John Donaldson</b>	<b>Councillor Michael Gibbard</b>
<b>Councillor James Macnamara</b>	<b>Councillor Nigel Morris</b>
<b>Councillor D M Pickford</b>	<b>Councillor Nicholas Turner</b>

**AGENDA**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest that they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

**3. Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

The Chairman to report on any requests to submit petitions or to address the meeting.

**Strategy and Policy**

**4. Car Park Provision and Charges (Pages 1 - 20) 5.35 pm**

Report of Strategic Director Environment and Community

## **Summary**

To consider the recommendations of the joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board regarding car park provision and charges.

## **Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To consider the recommendations of the joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board regarding car park provision and charges.
- (2) To determine how it wishes to proceed.

## **Service Delivery and Innovation**

### **5. ICT Service Development (Pages 21 - 26)**

**5.50 pm**

Report of Strategic Director Environment and Community

## **Summary**

To consider the principles of a shared ICT service with South Northamptonshire Council.

## **Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Agree in principle with a shared ICT service with South Northamptonshire Council.
- (2) Receive a full business case for such a proposal to include estimated costs, benefits and risks prior to final commitment.
- (3) Support external validation and assurance of the technical and service proposals assuming a clear conclusion in the Business Case to progress to a shared service in some form.
- (4) Approve funding from the Council's Change Reserve of up to £20,000 for this external validation and assurance.

**(Meeting scheduled to close at 6.00 pm)**

## **Information about this Agenda**

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence should be notified to [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) or (01295)

221587 prior to the start of the meeting.

## **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item. The definition of personal and prejudicial interests is set out in Part 5 Section A of the constitution. The Democratic Support Officer will have a copy available for inspection at all meetings.

**Personal Interest:** Members must declare the interest but may stay in the room, debate and vote on the issue.

**Prejudicial Interest:** Member must withdraw from the meeting room and should inform the Chairman accordingly.

With the exception of the some very specific circumstances, a Member with a personal interest also has a prejudicial interest if it is one which a Member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

## **Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates**

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

## **Queries Regarding this Agenda**

Please contact James Doble, Legal and Democratic Services james.doble@cherwell-dc.gov.uk (01295) 221587

## **Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds you must evacuate the building by the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the car park as directed by Democratic Services staff and await further instructions.

## **Access to Meetings**

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

## **Mobile Phones**

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

**Sue Smith**  
**Chief Executive**

Published on Monday 18 July 2011



## Executive

### Car Park Provision and Charges

26 July 2011

#### Report of Strategic Director Environment & Community

##### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the recommendations of the joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board regarding car park provision and charges.

This report is public
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##### Recommendations

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The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To consider the recommendations of the joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board regarding car park provision and charges.
- (2) To determine how it wishes to proceed.

##### Executive Summary

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###### Introduction

- 1.1 In considering various car parking issues carried forward from the 2010/11 scrutiny programme, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 10 June recognised the concerns expressed by members and the public to the car park charging changes introduced from 4 April 2011. As a consequence, it agreed to hold a joint meeting with the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board to consider these matters in more detail.
- 1.2 This report outlines the outcomes of that joint meeting which was held on 12 July 2011 and recommendations for further change to car park charges.

## **Proposals**

1.3 The recommendations for change from the joint scrutiny meeting include the following:

- That the current charges for evening parking be changed to charging to 1900 hrs only on current hourly tariffs and free thereafter;
- That there should be free parking for blue badge holders in designated disabled spaces but blue badge holders should be charged in all general parking spaces;
- That there should be a 10 minute maximum period of grace for parking period expiry and non purchase of tickets;
- That the discount for early payment of excess charge notices within 14 days be increased to 50% for all contraventions; and
- That the effects of the redevelopment of Bicester Town Centre warrant an adjustment to the current charging regime until the new development is complete (anticipated summer 2013 by reducing the current charges by 10p per hour.

## **Conclusion**

1.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board have recognised the need to make some adjustments to the new car parking charges and policies in light of the concerns expressed by members and the public to the car parking charging changes introduced in April. This does acknowledge that any adjustments must balance real benefit to car park users and town traders with the accepted effects on the Council's limited and reducing finances.

## Background Information

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- 2.1 This report follows a joint meeting of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board on 12 July 2011 into car parking and in particular, the effect of the new charges introduced from 4 April 2011. A copy of the cover report for that meeting is attached at Annex 1.
- 2.2 The meeting also considered a range of options primarily around evening charges, charging Blue Badge Holders, specific Bicester measures and excess charge notices. These are attached at Annex 2.
- 2.3 Arising out of the meeting was a number of recommendations to the Executive which are reproduced here in full. They are:
- That there is a need to make some adjustments to the new car parking charges and policies in recognition of concerns raised by Councillors and the public;
  - That any adjustments must try to balance real benefit to car park users and town traders with the accepted effects on the Council's limited and reducing finances;
  - That the current charges for evening parking be changed to charging to 1900hrs only on current hourly tariffs and free thereafter;
  - That there should be free parking for blue badge holders in designated disabled spaces but blue badge holders should be charged in all general parking spaces;
  - That there should be a 10 minute maximum period of grace for parking period expiry and non purchase of tickets;
  - That the discount for early payment of excess charge notices within 14 days be increased to 50% for all contraventions;
  - To note the withdrawal of the current £16 administration charge for appeals which are upheld but where the ECN was issued correctly;
  - That the effects of the redevelopment of Bicester Town Centre warrant an adjustment to the current charging regime until the new development is complete (anticipated summer 2013) by reducing the current charges by 10p per hour;
  - That officers determine the earliest implementation of the changes agreed by the Executive according to the appropriate legal processes;
  - That a detailed communications plan be compiled to signify these changes which takes into account the lessons learnt from the April changes; and

- That the Executive consider funding the loss of income of the above (estimated to be £93,000 per annum) from the additional income and lower cost arising from the transfer of some treasury management functions in house; and the fixed term Bicester loss of income (estimated to be £80,000 per annum over two years) from the additional interest secured from the later £10m investment of the Council's contribution to the Bicester Town Centre Redevelopment Scheme due to the delay in its start.

### **Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options**

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- 3.1 There is no doubt that the joint scrutiny meeting believes that changes are required to the current car park charging arrangements. The question is what, and where these create financial implications, how will this be funded.
- 3.2 The joint scrutiny meeting also considered the very latest car park usage and income figures to end of June 2011 and were made aware that any changes to the current arrangements which adversely affect overall income levels, will need a corresponding budget adjustment.
- 3.3 A key issue to consider in this matter is the ongoing uncertainty with car park income patterns. Not only are there wider economic aspects which affect car park use and income levels, but the Council does not benefit from a reasonable (minimum 12 months) trading period from which it can assess trends arising from the April changes and develop budget accuracy. There is therefore a degree of potential ongoing volatility with these budgets. Consideration should therefore be given to a risk reserve.
- 3.4 Should the Executive decide to support in whole or part the recommendations made to it, a detailed project plan to implement supported by a detailed communications plan will be required.
- 3.5 Due to the statutory legal process required for significant changes to the car parking charges, it is likely that up to three months will be required from the date of a decision to implement in full.
- 3.6 Further service comments regarding the benefits to car park users of the joint scrutiny recommendations include;
  - Evening parking be changed to 1900 hrs only on current hourly tariffs and free thereafter - this will benefit the evening economy and help to overcome the complaints from some traders that the evening charges have dissuaded people from coming into town.
  - Free parking for blue badge holders in designated disabled spaces but blue badge holders should be charged in all general parking spaces - this will help to overcome the significant adverse reaction from the introduction of blue badge charges. There are currently 35 designated spaces in Banbury and 39 in Bicester (although the closure of Crown and Crown Walk car parks will see the loss of 20 of these spaces).
  - A 10 minute maximum period of grace for parking period expiry and non purchase of tickets - this will help by providing flexibility when motorists are



unavoidably delayed in returning to their vehicles. ECN's will however be issued for any vehicle without a valid ticket beyond this 10 minute period. This is not anticipated to have any significant financial effects.

- Discount for early payment of excess charge notices within 14 days be increased to 50% for all contraventions. This brings the discount regime in line with civil parking and will hopefully be an incentive for prompt payment helping to reduce some of the burden of processing appeals. The effects of this measure are a potential reduction in income of £43,000/an. but there is some uncertainty about how many ECNs will be paid in this way.
- Bicester reduction 10p per hour. Traders have identified to the Council that the April 10p increase was the 'tipping point' that persuaded shoppers to stay away. This change shows the Council's commitment to support the town through the significant disruption of the town centre redevelopment. The effects of this measure are a reduction of income of up to £80,000.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Option One</b>   | Agree the recommendations of the joint scrutiny meeting.  |
| <b>Option Two</b>   | Not accept the recommendations of the joint scrutiny meeting and to retain the current charging arrangements.     |
| <b>Option Three</b> | Agree in part the recommendation of the joint scrutiny meeting or other changes to current charging arrangements. |

### **Consultations**

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None.

### **Implications**

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**Financial:** As indicated in the final bullet point of 2.3 above, the Council does currently have the ability to fund the estimated costs of the recommended change without having to review other services and approved budgets. There is also a balance of £40,000 remaining in the approved capital scheme to fund the cost of implementing the changes. The process of preparing the draft budget for 2012/13 will need to incorporate a further review of the precise financial effects of the scrutiny recommendations and the possible allocation of a risk reserve given the future uncertainty of income levels arising from some of these changes.

Comments checked by Karen Muir, Corporate System Accountant 01295 221559

**Legal:** There is a formal and statutory legal process to undertake to change the parking order which will require the consent of Oxfordshire County Council as Highway the Authority...

Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Team Leader, Planning and Litigation and Interim Monitoring Officer, 01295 221687

**Risk Management:**

There is the risk that further change relatively soon after the April 4 2011 changes could lead to some confusion but this could be mitigated in part by effective communication and the fact that if the Council is minded, the changes would be favourable to the majority of car park users. Changes could also lead to additional appeals and challenges from members of public whom have had their appeals rejected and have paid their ECN.

Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Community Planning, Performance and Partnerships Manager, 01295 221563

**Wards Affected**

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All.

**Corporate Plan Themes**

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District of Opportunity  
An Accessible, Value for Money Council

**Executive Portfolio**

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Councillor George Reynolds  
Deputy Leader

**Document Information**

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<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
Annex 1	Report to the joint meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board on 12 July 2011.
Annex 2	Supplementary Information and Options on Parking Policy and Charging.
Annex 3	Summary Facts and Figures
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None.	
<b>Report Author</b>	Ian Davies, Strategic Director Environment & Community
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221698 Ian.Davies@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

# Joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board

## Car Parking Provisions and Charges

12 July 2011

### Report of Strategic Director Environment and Community

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider range of parking issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 June 2011 and parking charges

This report is public

#### Recommendations

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The meeting is recommended to consider:

- (1) The further information provided on the range of issues identified; and
- (2) The range of alternative car park charging options for recommendation to the Executive.

#### Details

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##### Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 14 June 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the following
  - (i) The balance and location of long stay/short stay parking in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington.
  - (ii) The cost benefit analysis of alternative management arrangements for the car parks, including 'Pay on Exit'.

- (iii) An initial review of the impact of the new Parking Order and plans for further evaluation.
- (iv) The findings of the Bicester Chamber of Commerce and Bicester Vision traffic survey.

A copy of the briefing pack is attached at Appendix 1.

- 1.2 Arising from the meeting, the Committee agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Resources and Performance Panel should engage on joint scrutiny on 12 July in relation to parking charges, to explore the issues discussed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3 In the course of the debate on 14 June; the following areas for further investigation were highlighted by members:
  - The use of Bicester town centre rental income to replace lost parking fees if the charges were stopped
  - Ticket machines, the availability of change and pay on exit
  - Motorcycle parking
  - Future of Shopmobility scheme
  - Lessons learnt regarding advertising and signage for parking charge changes
  - The suggestion of possible trial sites for different parking systems
  - The issues of parking fines for low income families and repayment options
  - The need to look at first quarter data
  - The future of Multi-storey car park at Bolton Road, Banbury
  - The consideration of escalating rates to prevent all day commuter parking
- 1.4 This report contains information gathered since the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on all the points raised. It provides a basis on which the joint meeting can consider a range of proposals in relation to parking provisions and charging.

### **Proposals**

- 2.1 A range of issues were raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 14 June 2011. These are itemised and commented on below.

### **The use of Bicester town centre rental income to replace lost parking**

### **fees if the charges were stopped.**

- 2.2 The loss of car parking revenue from the closure of Crown and Crown Walk and the balancing new income stream from rental from retail units have already been taken into account in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, as has the additional income from new parking measures introduced in April. Any change to these measures will need to be funded from elsewhere or further savings /reductions in services made.

### **Ticket machines, the availability of change and pay on exit**

- 2.3 The Councils pay and display machines do not offer this functionality. Alternative machines can offer a range of additional options but require investment in new machines. The Council currently operate 46 pay and display machines across its car parks. Individual machines cost approximately £3,000 depending on the functionality required, plus installation costs.
- 2.4 New machines could offer the additional opportunities in delivering a car park service:
- Solar powered
  - Chip and Pin
  - Waive and Pay
  - 'Top-Up' payment from any machine in the district (as an alternative to pay on exit)
  - Free session with ticket display
  - Payment by notes
  - Linear pricing structure e.g. 1p per minute
  - Improved machine design enabling access for able and less able users.
- 2.5 Machines that give change have not been recommended previously as they will need to be larger and will add to costs of the service due to the need to continually check and stock with change. However, as the current machines will require replacements in the next 3 years at a cost of up to £200k, there could be an opportunity to consider a range of other payment and technical options to overcome the public frustration about machines not giving change.

### **Motorcycle parking**

- 2.6 Information was included in the report to 14 June Scrutiny Committee. Parking Services receive only very occasional enquiries/queries about motorcycle parking in the District (1 or 2 a year). It is not considered to be an issue and sufficient parking is available although provision in Bicester will need to be kept under review as the 6 spaces are in Franklins Yard car park which is scheduled to close at some point in future. There are 4 bays in Banbury and 2 in Kidlington.

## **Future of Shopmobility scheme in Bicester**

- 2.7 The planning agreement with Sainsbury's is for the provision of replacement facilities for the Shopmobility Scheme. Disabled parking will be provided in the new Sainsbury's multi storey car park with lift access. This parking will be chargeable and pay on exit.
- 2.8 The current operator is Banbury Community Transport Association and the Council funds this by grant of £26,000 per year. In Banbury the shopmobility scheme is operated by Castle Quay with no subsidy from the Council.
- 2.9 In negotiating leases for the new Bicester units the service charge will include a proportion of the Council's costs and thereby help to subsidise the service. Members should be aware that there is concern from shopmobility users around the interim plans for the location of the service during the redevelopment works.

## **Lessons learnt regarding advertising and signage for parking charge changes**

- 2.10 The legal requirements when changing Parking Orders are set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and require publication of Notice of Order proposals and consultation with statutory agencies. Any objections have to be considered and once dealt with a public notice publicising the new Order made.
- 2.11 The Council went much further than this statutory minimum in undertaking the following;
- Scrutiny and Executive reports
  - Draft Order Notice in Public Notices section of local papers
  - Consultation with Disability Groups and interested parties (including Age Concern) as part of the formal Order process
  - Presentation to Cherwell Disability Forum-17 November and set up access to online consultation and feedback on queries.
  - Presentation to Seniors Forum- 10 December 2010
  - Updated Website information
  - Various press releases through Jan-March 2011 covered in all local printed press and on local radio
  - Produced and published on web FAQ's for blue badge holders
  - Item in spring edition of Cherwell Link-Distributed March 2011
  - A4 poster notices on all car park information boards on 5 week run up to 4 April and in libraries and one stop shops.
  - Advisory notices on blue badge holder cars for the week of 28 March
  - Warning Notices on blue badge holder cars for the first week of implementation
  - Presentations to Kidlington Village Centre Management Board
  - Presentations to Banbury Town Centre Partnership
  - Presentation to Banbury Chamber of Commerce

- Presentations to Bicester Chamber of Commerce
- Standing item on Bicester Town Centre Project Team
- Letter to the 7000 blue badge holders in Cherwell-arranged to go out early/mid April via OCC database-delayed to mid April due to OCC limited ability to action and lack of accuracy over numbers.
- Additional 'A' board signage on entrance to all car parks where possible from mid April
- Vehicle Park wardens providing increased customer information
- Additional temporary signage where possible adjacent to designated disabled parking bays-from late April
- All car parks have permanent signage stating that they are Pay and Display.

2.12 The main criticism of the Council's approach is that there were not notices on entrance to car parks (this was rectified with large yellow signage in place the week after implementation), and that the letter to 7,000 blue badge holders did not go out until late April. As the blue badge scheme is administered by Oxfordshire County Council, their permission had to be secured and they were unable to do this until mid April.

2.13 A key point arises from the fact that Banbury and Bicester town centre users attract a large number of people from beyond the District. Whilst some advertising and communication initiatives did extend beyond the District boundaries, most were targeted at local residents and therefore there have been many car park users from outside the District who have claimed they did not know of the changes.

2.14 Lessons have been learned and these have been recorded in the Project file for future use. In summary, they are

1. Signage: Where there is a major change in information it might be more cost effective for the whole board to be replaced.
2. Checking of the ticket machine tariffs in advance worked, but also need to ensure they have been cleared of the old tariffs.
3. Significant advance publicity and awareness raising undertaken but main criticism was that not enough done with temporary signage on entrances and by disabled spaces. Ensure in place before implementation and for a lengthy period past implementation.
4. Complaints that honey moon period was not long enough. We ran this only for blue badger holders a week before with info under windscreens then first week of implementation with warning notices. This should have been extended to evening users and for a longer period past implementation.
5. Database of blue badge holders from OCC. This was initially thought to be 1,000 then revised upwards to 7,000 by OCC and letters should have been issued prior to the changes being implemented.
6. Website updating. Ensure links on electronic applications are also

- updated.
7. Ringgo website was not correct - need to double check all external body information

### **The suggestion of possible trial sites for different parking systems**

- 2.15 Opportunities for some of the items presented in the options paper could be considered here, as could placing on trial new pay and display machine/s in order to monitor and assess customer feedback to alternative payment arrangements.

### **Parking fines for low income families and repayment options**

- 2.16 Options for review of the Excess Charge Notice Regime are still being considered. The Council already offer payment plans for individuals that are suffering financial hardship and this can be tailored to specific circumstances.

### **The need to look at first quarter data**

- 2.17 Information on the first 3 months of operation is being reviewed and will be tabled at the meeting given that there was only one full working day available to assemble and publish between the end of June and the issue of this report. As an overview, based on first two months, it indicates that income in Banbury held up well against the expected income reflected in the approved budget, but Bicester is below budget. Further analysis of this data and from this, costed options for change will be prepared and tabled at the meeting.

### **The future of Multi-storey car park at Bolton Road, Banbury**

- 2.18 This is part of the Bolton Road redevelopment project and is included in the development brief.

### **Consideration of escalating rates to prevent all day commuter parking**

- 2.19 This proposal was raised at the meeting when the suggestion for lower cost parking was challenged by members who considered that this would only lead to car parks being log jammed by commuter parking. The counter suggestion was made that long stay parking should be at a considerable premium to the normal hourly rates.

At the moment all day parking (0800-1800hrs) is £3.50 in Banbury; £3.00 in Bicester; and Kidlington it remains free. The most costly parking in Banbury is NCP (Matalan) at £6.80 for 2 to 24 hours. Castle Quay is £6.50 for over 5 hours. Bolton Road is in line with Council charges. NCP (Marlborough Road) is £2.50 for up to 2 hours and £3.00 for up to 12 hours.

None of the options being considered have looked at increasing further



the costs of parking in light of the current negative press, but these more expensive car parks appear to be fairly well used so members may wish to consider this further.

## **Conclusion**

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have indicated that the concern expressed by the public regarding the Council's car parking Policy and in particular its charging regime, warrants review and in some cases change. This report provides the parking information requested which will be supplemented at the meeting with costed options for change based on the analysis of the first quarter data.

## **Implications**

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- Financial:** The car parking arrangements and charging structure incur costs and attract income which form part of the Council's approved budget. Any changes which increase costs or reduce income will need a corresponding change to other parts of the budget. Therefore, if this was to be the case, the joint meeting is asked to advise the Executive of how these are to be funded.
- Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance, 01295 221551
- Legal:** There is a formal and statutory legal process to undertake to change the parking order. Depending on the changes agreed, temporary suspension of parts of it may be possible for early implementation but this would depend on the changes proposed.
- Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Team Leader, Planning and Litigation and Interim Monitoring Officer, 01295 221687
- Risk Management:** There is the risk that further change relatively soon after the April 4 2011 changes could lead to some confusion but this could be mitigated in part by effective communication and the fact that if the Council is minded, the changes would be favourable to the majority of car park users.
- Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Community Planning, Performance and Partnerships Manager, 01295 221563

## **Wards Affected**

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All wards

### **Corporate Plan Themes**

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A District of Opportunity

### **Executive Portfolio**

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Councillor George Reynolds  
Deputy Leader

### **Document Information**

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<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	Briefing pack for Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 14 June 2011
Appendix 2	April to June Data – to follow
Appendix 3	Draft Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 14 June 2011
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Ian Davies, Strategic Director Environment and Community
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221573 ian.davies@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

### Joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board 12 July 2011

## Supplementary Information and Options on Parking Policy and Charging

The following represents summary information on a range of options to change current car parking charges. They have been grouped according to the subjects which reflect the main customer feedback and complaint. Each subject shows the 2011/12 budget adjustment that was made for the measure being introduced.

For each option, an attempt has been made to estimate both the cost to implement and the potential loss of income. Income loss is based on a projection of the actual experience from the first 10 weeks of implementation. Scrutiny should take into account the financial effects of any recommendations for change to the Executive. In all areas there is also the option not to change.

The key risks are around: revenue consequences; information and publicity about any changes agreed; reliance on third party contractors where pay and display and pay by phone software has to be reprogrammed; and formal Order changes that require legal process taking approximately 3 months.

### 1. The introduction of Evening Charges

The new charges from 4 April involved the introduction of evening charges from 6.00pm to 12.00 midnight @ 80p per stay in Banbury and 70p per stay in Bicester. Whilst it appears from usage and income levels that this change has now become accepted, town centre traders in particular feel that this is one of the factors which have influenced their recent downturn in evening trade.

Potential options for change include:

	Description	Difficulty to Implement 1 Difficult – 4 Easy	Cost to Implement (Estimate)	Income Effect (Estimate)
1a	Return to free evening parking	3	£10,000	£144,000 income loss from pay and display
1b	Free 10 minute period drop off/collection	3	Likely to be negligible	No data to calculate but likely to be low
1c	Charging to 1900hrs only on current hourly tariffs and free thereafter	2	£10,000	Difficult to calculate but likely to be near cost neutral
1d	Charging to 2000hrs only on current hourly tariffs and free thereafter	2	£10,000	Difficult to calculate but likely to be near cost neutral

## 2. The introduction of charging to Blue Badge Holders

Prior to 4 April, all Blue Badge holders were given free parking. Since 4 April, all have been charged at the standard tariffs appropriate for each location, but with concession of one additional hour free of charge after the paid for period. Concern has been expressed by some blue badge holders not being able to afford these charges plus confusion over free on street parking (responsibility of County Council) close to chargeable off street parking, particularly in Banbury.

Potential options for change include;

	Description	Difficulty to Implement 1 Difficult – 4 Easy	Cost to Implement (Estimate)	Income Effect (Estimate)
2a	Return to free blue badge charging	2	£6,000	Likely to be up to £100,000 loss of income
2b	Reduce charges for blue badge holders – flat rate of 70/80p	2/3	£6,000	Loss of £40,000 income
2c	Free parking in designated disabled spaces, chargeable in general spaces	2	£10,000	Difficult to calculate but could be £50,000 loss of income
2d	Refine policy in line with vehicle tax exemption to offer free parking for the most disabled *	2/3	£10,000	Not possible to estimate but likely to be low

\* Note: To claim exemption from vehicle tax you must be receiving at least one of either the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement.

## 3. Parking charges in Bicester given the forthcoming redevelopment works and impact these will have on residents and businesses.

All 4 April changes have been introduced in both Banbury and Bicester. However, it is recognised that the town centre redevelopment work are likely to have an adverse effect on the town's trading position and as such, some consideration could be given to support the town centre during the period up to Summer 2013

Potential options for change include;

	Description	Difficulty to Implement 1 Difficult – 4 Easy	Cost to Implement (Estimate)	Income Effect (Estimate)
3a	Return to Free evening parking in Bicester	3	£5,500	Likely to be an estimated £44,000 income loss
3b	Reduce cost of evening parking to £0.50/stay in	2	£5,500	Likely to be a minimum of £4,500

	Bicester			income loss
3c	Reduce charges during redevelopment by £0.10/hr	3	£5,500	Depends on ongoing patterns of use but could be up to £80,000 loss of income
3d	Designate the Market Square as free parking for up to 1 hour *	3	£1,500	Likely to be loss of income in excess of £100,000
3e	Return to free Sundays and Bank Holidays	3	£10,000	Loss of £7,000 income

\* Note: It is proposed that Market Square is the main car park for use by Shopmobility during the redevelopment works.

#### 4. Excess Charge Notice Levels and Early Payment Incentives

Concern has been expressed about the level of penalty at £60 or £80 in relation to the nature of the offence and the cost of a parking ticket. Also, that there is little incentive (£10) to pay early. This latter issue has resulted in a higher number of appeals of late to correctly issued excess charge notices (ECNs).

Potential options for change include;

	Description	Difficulty to Implement 1 Difficult – 4 Easy	Cost to Implement (Estimate)	Income Effect (Estimate)
4a	Increase early payment discounts to 50% on all contraventions	2	£10,000	Likely loss of £43,000 income
4b	Increase discount to 25%	2	£10,000	Likely loss of £25,000 income
4c	Reduce the level of ECN fines to CPE levels of £70/£50	2	£10,000	Potential of up to £80,000 loss of income
4d	Cease the current £16 Admin Charge (already implemented)	3	Nil	None anticipated

#### 5. Transferable Tickets

Consideration can be given to transferable tickets generally but this needs to be controlled to preserve the benefits of short and ultra short stay car parks ie it will have to be from short to short and long to long stay car parks only and no transfer to ultra short stay car parks, only from ultra short stay car parks. Whilst this option is estimated to incur negligible loss of income and will benefit an anticipated small number of users, it is highly likely to cause confusion with some car park users as it will rely heavily on those car park users knowing which car parks are short or long stay.

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Car Parking April – June 2011: Facts and Figures

Table 1	INCOME FROM PAY AND DISPLAY					
	2010			2011		
	April	May	June	April	May	June (prov)
Banbury	£47,942	£66,356	£66,962	£56,995	£95,195	£90,718
Bicester	£47,573	£60,615	£57,227	£39,991	£70,076	£70,896

Table 2	INCOME FROM EXCESS CHARGE NOTICES					
	2010			2011		
	April	May	June	April	May	June (prov)
ECN income	£28,511	£29,659	£34,413	£44,545	£64,423	£57,621

Table 3	INCOME FROM SEASON TICKETS					
	2010			2011		
	April	May	June	April	May	June
Season Tickets	£11,682	-£556	£8,605	£11,931	£2,530	£8,393

Table 4	EVENING PARKING SESSIONS PURCHASED PER WEEK			
	w/c 20 June	w/c 27 June	w/c 4 July	
Banbury	2609	2305	2580	
Bicester	1282	1219	1097	

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## Executive

### ICT Service Development

26 July 2011

### Report of Strategic Director Environment & Community

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the principles of a shared ICT service with South Northamptonshire Council.

This report is public

#### Recommendations

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The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Agree in principle with a shared ICT service with South Northamptonshire Council;
- (2) Receive a full business case for such a proposal to include estimated costs, benefits and risks prior to final commitment;
- (3) Support external validation and assurance of the technical and service proposals assuming a clear conclusion in the Business Case to progress to a shared service in some form; and
- (4) Approve funding from the Council's Change Reserve of up to £20,000 for this external validation and assurance.

#### Executive Summary

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##### Introduction

- 1.1 The joint activity between this Council and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) has involved, amongst other things, ICT. This initially involved two workstreams. The first is to have common systems to enable the efficient working from more than one location for the shared senior management team. The second was to identify opportunities for harmonisation of ICT systems and infrastructure across the two organisations.
- 1.2 A further and more advanced opportunity has arisen as a consequence of SNC's contract with an external ICT supplier ending in April 2012. As a

consequence, SNC commissioned SOCITM Consulting to advise on its options, two of which were entering into some form of joint working with this Council.

### **Proposals**

- 1.3 SOCITM Consulting concluded that, of the various options available, the two which offer the greatest overall benefit are to establish a shared service serving the two councils or to commission CDC to take over the running of the ICT service on SNC's behalf.
- 1.4 The report favours the shared approach on the basis that this is more in line with the shared service aspirations of the two councils. It also notes that the preferred option for SNC will depend on the allocation of costs and benefits between
- 1.5 This position has been considered by the Joint ICT Working Group, the Joint Arrangements Steering Group and the SNC Cabinet. All have endorsed the need for each Council to consider 'in principle' support followed by the development of a full business case with clear benefits, estimated costs and risks prior to any formal commitment.

### **Conclusion**

- 1.6 A shared ICT service has the potential to offer significant benefits, both financial and through service support, to both councils. However, this needs a clear business case with risk factors evaluated and external validation.

### **Background Information**

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- 2.1 South Northamptonshire Council's ICT is currently provided by an external supplier in a partnership arrangement that ends in April 2012. The Council needs to identify suitable arrangements for the supply of ICT beyond this point and work on this is in progress.
- 2.2 The options for SNC when the contract ends are to re-tender the service, bring the service back in-house or develop some form of collaborative or shared working arrangement with another authority. Extending the current contract is not viable under current procurement legislation as a long term solution because the contract has already been extended once.
- 2.3 The Council commissioned SOCITM Consulting to advise on these options and, specifically, to advise on the feasibility of entering into some form of joint working with this Council. SOCITM Consulting concluded that, of the various options available, the two which offer the greatest overall benefit are to establish a shared service serving the two councils or to commission CDC to take over the running of the ICT service on SNC's behalf.
- 2.4 The report favours the shared approach on the basis that this is more in line with the shared service aspirations of the two councils. It also notes that the preferred option for SNC will depend on the allocation of costs and benefits between the two councils.

## **Work to Date with SNC**

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- 2.5 In parallel with the SOCITM study, the Council has been working with SNC to explore and develop joint ICT solutions.
- 2.6 This work was carried out through the Joint IT Working Group with Terms of Reference as set out in the Final Business Case for Shared Working (18<sup>th</sup> November 2010) as follows:
- To identify the technology required to facilitate efficient working from more than one location / base for officers.
  - To identify opportunities for harmonisation of ICT systems and infrastructure across the two organisations.
- 2.7 With regard to the first task, the Joint IT Working Group has already delivered the following and this has been signed off by the Joint Arrangements Steering Group:
- a robust data connection between the two authorities,
  - technical changes to the underlying architecture to enable access to each other's systems in a robust and secure way,
  - a single e-mail and e-diary system with user names in the form [forename.surname@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:forename.surname@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)
  - linking of the two telephone systems to provide short code dialling and no-cost calls between the two authorities,
  - rationalisation of telephone maintenance to one supplier
- 2.8 Work is still in progress around opportunities for harmonisation of ICT systems and infrastructure. In particular both organisations are carrying out an audit of their existing ICT 'estates' using a common format which takes into account the business and information management requirements of each system as well as the potential for systems to support future shared service provision and contractual and technical considerations. This is expected to be complete in August.
- 2.9 The intention is that once this audit is complete, the two councils will evaluate the results, develop proposals for working together on the basis of the data collected and develop a business case for consideration by Members in each authority. It is also intended that the business case and the underlying architecture proposals will be subject to independent evaluation and due diligence to ensure that the proposals are robust and credible and do not expose either organisation to undue or unacceptable levels of risk.

## **External Validation**

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- 2.10 The purpose of the external validation will be to provide independent assurance to Members that whatever is proposed in the Business Case to be produced later this year is both technically and financially sound, that it supports the strategic direction of other shared services in due course if desired and that it does not expose either organisation to undue risk.
- 2.11 The joint working implementation contingency could be used to fund this work but was not established to cover ICT expenses. The respective Heads of

Finance have however advised that CDC could fund £20k of this from its Change Reserve and SNC could fund the same from its ICT Strategy Reserve.

- 2.12 It should be noted that SNC will need to continue to make arrangements to ensure a smooth and effective transfer from its current outsourced contract whilst a decision on the above recommendations is being determined. The presumption at the moment, and as endorsed by the SOCITM report, is that the best way forward on this is some form of shared service with CDC and in practice all of this is likely to come together in the business case in the autumn.

### **Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options**

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- 3.1 The end of the existing ICT outsourcing contract in April 2012 is timely in that it provides a good opportunity to consider the merits of collaborative and shared working between the two councils.
- 3.2 It also presents a risk in that SNC must be able to continue to operate effectively in the event that there are any difficulties or delays in implementing shared service solutions.
- 3.3 This risk is being mitigated by work in hand with the existing main supplier and with suppliers of other key systems to identify best options and alternative solutions. The timing of this work is aligned with that with CDC to ensure that SNC has viable solutions available in the event of problems with a shared service approach.
- 3.4 In practice, the way forward for SNC will be a mixed approach in the short term. This reflects the amount of work and time required in migrating to new arrangements of any sort and also reflects the need to take other factors (such as national changes to Benefits) into account. In addition, work to date has already identified that some SNC services would wish to switch to CDC systems and that some CDC services would wish to switch to SNC systems.
- 3.5 This leads to a complicated picture and the results of all this work will come together when the full business case is presented to Members in the autumn.
- 3.6 The route map and timescales will also be more clearly known at that stage. By way of a marker though, the regional Shared Services seminar attended by officers from both councils earlier this year indicated an average eighteen month period for this type of work and SNC will clearly need to make interim arrangements once the route map is clear.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward:

- Option One** To explore the benefits, estimated costs and risks of a shared ICT service.
- Option Two** To retain separate ICT services other than those already programmed in a shared way

## Consultations

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**Joint ICT Working Group** Support

**Joint Arrangements Steering Group** Support

## Implications

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**Financial:** Funding of up to £20,000 from the Corporate ICT Reserve can be earmarked for the external validation and assurance of the technical and service proposals underpinning the Business Case in the event of a clear conclusion to progress to a shared service in some form.  
Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance 01295 221551

**Legal:** The Council's usual procurement process will need to be followed to choose the contractor to carry out the external validation and assurance. The Shared ICT Service would be covered by existing S113 Agreement between CDC and SNC.  
Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Team Leader – Planning & Litigation / Interim Monitoring Officer, 01295 221687

**Risk Management:** Effective ICT systems are essential to both councils core business and this is reflected in CDC and SNC risk registers. The business case for a shared ICT service will include a full risk assessment and maintenance of a risk log for the project.  
Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager 01295 221563

## Wards Affected

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None specific.

## Corporate Plan Themes

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An Accessible, Value for Money Council.

## Executive Portfolio

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Councillor Nicholas Turner  
Lead Member for Customer Services

## Document Information

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Appendix No	Title
None	
<b>Background Papers</b>	
SOCITM Consulting Report	
<b>Report Author</b>	Ian Davies, Strategic Director Environment & Community
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