

Cherwell District Council

Executive

2 November 2020

Car Parking Strategy

Report of Assistant Director Environmental Services

This report is public

Purpose of report

To present the revised car parking strategy with an action plan following Public Consultation and the impact of Coronavirus

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the results of the Public Consultation
- 1.2 To consider and approve the revised Car Parking Strategy and Car Parking Action Plan following feedback from public consultation and the impact of coronavirus

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee set up a Task and Finish Group to examine car parking. The car parking management contract with Apcoa had commenced in June 2017 and the performance of the new arrangements could be reviewed to help set the future strategy of car parking.
- 2.2 A number of Task and Finish meetings were held with the first meeting being 4 September 2018. Further meetings followed 9 October 2018 & 5 December 2018. A final meeting took place on 6 March 2019.
- 2.3 A wide range of issues were presented by officers including income, costs, the Apcoa contract, car parking usage, benchmarking charges against nearby towns and the issues which arise around civil parking enforcement.
- 2.4 From Member suggestions and following consultations meetings with Banbury BID, Bicester Vision and Kidlington Parish Clerk a draft Car Parking Strategy with Action Plan was produced. This has been further developed following the public

consultation. In addition the impacts of coronavirus have been considered both for the short term and the medium term.

- 2.5 The proposed latest Car Parking Strategy with Action Plan are in the Appendices 1 & 2.
- 2.6 A key part of this new strategy was to explore Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) with Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse Council. A joint project team with representatives from each authority was set up and a consultant with extensive experience of CPE was appointed to advise on the full range of implications, costs and risks. The report from the consultant has helped to formulate a proposal for Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) which will be considered by all partner authorities' Executive/Cabinet.
- 2.7 Since late March car parking has been severely impacted by changes in footfall in the three urban centres due to coronavirus. Income virtually disappeared in April as key workers were allowed to park for free. Since April usage as measured by income has increased each month but levels are still substantially lower than 2019 levels.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 This Council operates a large number of car parks in Banbury, Bicester and in Kidlington, these are identified in Appendix 3. They generate a substantial source of income, around £1.8 million per annum but there are also significant operating costs to ensure the car parks are operated safely and meet the needs of all the different users.
- 3.2 In June 2017 the operation of the car parks was outsourced to Apcoa for an initial five year period. The implementation of this new contract has meant some significant changes such as new car parking machines which not only allow card & contactless payment but also provide much more data on car parking usage.
- 3.3 These changes allowed elected members to review the successes of the new arrangements and to help set out a new car parking strategy for the future.
- 3.4 Following four meetings of the Task and Finish group consultations meeting were set up with Banbury BID and Bicester Vision.
- 3.5 The Car Parking Strategy was brought before members in September 2019 and a public consultation carried out. The consultation was delayed due to the purdah period prior to the general election in December, so didn't commence until January 2020.
- 3.6 The public consultation ran for six weeks from 6 January 2020 and produced 1104 responses which is an excellent response.
- 3.7 The key responses and actions that have resulted are as follows
 - 79% of users agree that our car parks are safe places to park

- 62% of users agree that our car parks are maintained to a high standard
- 71% of users agree our car parks are designed to support use by those with additional physical needs
- 55% of users believe we should offer electric charging points in our car parks
- 60% of users do not believe that on street parking and parking restrictions (e.g. double yellow lines) are managed effectively

3.8 These responses and others have been considered. Other questions asked include signage to car parks and how people pay for car parks.

3.9 There were 200 free text responses out of the 1100 responses requesting free or reduced pricing for car parking.

3.10 The feedback from the public consultation, from consultation from businesses through Banbury BID & Bicester Vision and feedback from the Overview & Strategy committee has helped shape the strategy & the action plan.

3.11 Key points in the action plan include improved signage to & from the car parks, the move towards increasing the number of pay on exit car parks, looking at changing the lighting to LEDs.

3.12 The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on car parking. From the start of the lockdown usage fell dramatically. Car Parking was free for key workers and income fell to a very low level in April. Usage & hence income has increased each month, but September 2020 is still over 20% below income levels in September 2019.

3.13 During April–July enforcement was largely ceased with enforcement officers regularly cleaning the ticket machines. The pandemic has highlighted the need to move more quickly away from cash to card payment either by contactless or card using a PIN and via phone payment through Apcoa Connect.

3.14 Contactless payment on some machines is taking too long for authorisation of payment and work is taking place to substantially improve times. This delay is a barrier to increasing the use of contactless payments and reducing the need for coin collection from the car parking machines. The improvements in the time for authorisation of payments should be in place before December 2020.

3.15 The table below sets out the impact of coronavirus on car parking as measured by income levels in 2020 compared to 2019

	2019	2020	Change	% reduction
April	£159,968	£21,090	£138,878	-87%
May	£170,791	£27,809	£142,982	-84%
June	£145,976	£54,472	£91,504	-63%
July	£169,120	£112,560	£56,560	-33%

August	£152,439	£125,064	£27,375	-18%
September	£172,264	£126,680	£45,584	-26%
Total	£970,558	£ 467,675	£502,883	-52%

- 3.16 The overall usage in the first six months is considerably down. Although usage has recovered in August & September usage is still significantly down on the same period in 2019.
- 3.17 A number of issues are being pursued which are included in the revised action plan, These include increasing the number of pay on exit car parks, hopefully to total three before March 2021. Other areas of change include increasing capacity with a new long stay car park with approximately 35 spaces in Compton Road
- 3.18 An equalities & climate impact assessment has been carried out. There are no negative impacts from the implementation of this strategy. Some elements of the strategy will have a positive impact including installing car parking charging (climate change), ensuring car parks have sufficient disabled spaces (disability) and ensuring our car parks remain safe for all in the community.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Car Parking Strategy and the associated action plan has been developed with the input of elected members and other key stakeholders.
- 4.2 The proposed strategy has now been brought back to Executive following public consultation. An equalities impact assessment has also been carried out which has not identified any areas of concern. In addition, the impact of coronavirus has been considered. The Action Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis and as a minimum updated on an annual basis as part of the business planning process

5.0 Consultation

Banbury BID
 Bicester Vision
 Overview & Scrutiny Committee
 Public Consultation

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To adopt the Car Parking Strategy & Action Plan as the strategy & action plan provides a framework for the development of car parking.

Option 2: To reject the Strategy and ask officers to reconsider

7.0 Implications

7.1 Financial and Resource Implications

Car Parking is a significant source of income to the Council. The proposed strategy has no immediate impact on this income but any changes will be considered in future business planning cycles.

Comments checked by Karen Dickson, Strategic Business Partner 01295 221900
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Legal Implications

- 7.2 With outsourcing of the council's parking management service outsourced to Apcoa, officers have rightly liaised with that company in formulating the parking strategy it wishes to present to the Executive, which is the appropriate forum for approval.

Officers will also need to be conscious of the need to calibrate the council's parking orders with this strategy.

Comments checked by: Richard Hawtin, Team Leader: Non-contentious,
richard.hawtin@cherwell-dc.gov.uk,

Risk Implications

- 7.3 Car Parking can be an area of significant comment from users and businesses. It is important a balance exists between the different stakeholders and this strategy gives more visibility to the medium term car parking goals. These risks are managed as part of the services operational risk register and escalated to the leadership risk register as and when necessary.

Comments checked by: Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes, Louise.Tustian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Equalities Implications

- 7.4 An equalities and climate impact assessment has been carried out on the new strategy. The assessment identifies no negative impact of the strategy but positively supports car parking for those with mobility challenges or a particular need to drive. This will help to ensure that those with several protected characteristics are able to access local facilities the strategy intends to prioritise safety for all those in the community. We know that several of the protected characteristics are disproportionality affected by crime and anti-social behaviour and prioritising safety therefore has the potential to ensure that places in Cherwell are more accessible for all.

Comments checked by:
Robin Rogers, Head of Strategy, robin.rogers@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Climate Implications

- 7.5 Through the introduction of charging facilities it will help in the move from the Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) to electric vehicles, and provide facilities to local residents who could otherwise be locked out of low carbon vehicle future.

The Equalities and Climate Impact Assessment is in Appendix 4.

Comments checked by: Sam Thomas, Sustainability Project Officer,
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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

An enterprising economy with strong & vibrant local centres

Lead Councillor

Councillor Dan Sames Lead Member for Clean & Green

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1 Car Parking Strategy
- Appendix 2 Car Parking Action Plan
- Appendix 3 District Car Park Locations and Number of Bays
- Appendix 4 Equalities and Climate Impact Assessment

Background papers

None

Report Author and contact details

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