

REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ECONOMY AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Date of Meetings: 3 March and 15 March 2016

Report of: Assistant Director Public Realm

Title: Parking Strategy 2016 - 2026

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

To seek adoption of the new Parking Strategy.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1. That the Parking Strategy 2016 – 2026 is adopted and that work commences towards the delivery of the actions set out in the Strategy's Action Plan.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- 3.1. To adopt the Parking Strategy 2016 – 2026 as a new strategic approach to the parking services provided by the council, with a focus on four key objectives of economic growth, parking capacity, congestion and parking income.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources.

- 4.1. The Parking Strategy itself commits the Council only to an agreed strategic approach to the provision of parking services in the future. All proposed changes to current operational practice, such as tariff changes, signage and physical improvements, will be brought to members for a separate decision which will set out any financial implications.
- 4.2. In order to deliver the strategic objectives, particularly in terms of driving economic growth, it is essential that appropriate funding is available for on-going maintenance, refurbishment and renewal programmes. A Condition Survey will be undertaken from within existing budgets and the physical improvements identified in the survey will be prioritised into a long term programme of investment into the city's car parks. Where additional on-going or one-off funding is required, a bid will be made to ensure that funding is available to deliver the investment programme.

- 4.3. The Action Plan sets out the proposed interventions and a timetable for their delivery.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

- 5.1. There are no immediate financial implications contained within this report. When a programme of enhancements is presented to Members the financial implications will also be considered.

6. What are the legal aspects?

- 6.1. None identified for the adoption of this Strategy.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1. None identified.

8. Background to the Strategy

8.1. A new strategic approach to parking in the City Centre is required to continue to support a successful economy, given the rapidly changing shopping and leisure demand patterns, and to ensure that car parking capacity is enough to meet future demand.

8.2. Consultants were appointed in August 2014 following a tender process to review and produce a strategy for off-street parking. This included qualitative, operational and capacity reviews of the car parks as well as workshops with key stakeholders and car park users. The completed version of the consultants' report was received in October 2015.

8.3. Three Member Spotlight Reviews have taken place to discuss the consultants' findings and contribute to the final Strategy.

8.4. The Strategy seeks to deliver four Strategic Objectives:

- **Economic Growth:** Car parking is an important element of Exeter's growth story and it is essential to ensure that the City Council's car parks support economic growth by encouraging visitors to the city and to stay longer when they visit;
- **Maximising Capacity:** projections show that actual capacity in Exeter's city centre car parks will be reached on a Saturday by 2018 without strategic intervention;
- **Reducing Congestion:** Traffic congestion is seen as a key deterrent to accessing the City Centre;
- **Maintaining Income:** The City Council depends on the £6M income it receives from its car parks service every year to deliver a balanced budget and provide essential services.

8.5. Clearly, these Strategic Objectives will conflict from time to time and it will not always be possible to make interventions that meet all four Objectives. Decisions on the specific interventions set out in the Action Plan will need to take into account the impact on each and balance them in the best way possible.

8.6. The Strategy considers for Exeter and Topsham the current and projected future position on the demand for and supply of parking, parking operations and tariffs, the condition of the City Council's car parks and their potential for improvement and development, as well as signage and other infrastructure that influences parking behaviour. It considered the issues in the light of the Strategic Objectives and makes recommendations for interventions that are set out in the Action Plan.

9. Key Issues in the Strategy

9.1. Stakeholder issues

- Reducing congestion would increase demand from suppressed trips
- Strong support for enhanced and additional Park and Ride services
- Poor directional and live capacity information about car parks
- Limited payment options in some car parks

- Hard to find a space at peak times

9.2. Parking Supply and Demand issues

- Saturday City Centre car parking will run out of capacity in 2018
- Most city centre parking is short stay use
- Weekday capacity is around 60%
- Only 23% of weekday parking is commuter parking
- Demand for evening parking is predicted to increase

9.3. Parking Operations issues

- Exeter's long stay parking charges are significantly cheaper than comparable cities for shorter stays
- Exeter's parking charges do not discourage short stay users from using long stay car parks
- There are no short stay restrictions at long stay car parks or vice versa
- Unlike Exeter, most comparable cities charge for evening parking
- Parking demand is only marginally affected even with extreme increases in prices
- There is low demand for season tickets
- The current permit schemes do not maximise capacity in underused car parks

9.4. Car Park Condition and Development issues

- Not all Premium car parks score highly in terms of quality
- The maximum use of Cathedral and Quay lags behind other car parks, suggesting that it is used as a final choice car park.
- City centre congestion could be ameliorated by investment in King William Street, Cathedral and Quay, Mary Arches Street and Harlequins car parks
- Triangle car park offers a prime location for a high quality multi-storey.

9.5. Car Park Signage and influencing infrastructure issues

- Improved signage is needed to help visitors navigate to and around the City Centre car parks
- the current signage and information around Princesshay needs to be reviewed
- real-time information on parking space availability, Park and Ride and journey times into the city centre needs to be improved and developed

9.6. The Strategy analyses how interventions on pricing and tariffs, evening opening, season tickets and permits, physical improvements, signage, supply, alternatives to city centre parking and parking promotions could deliver the Strategic Objectives and sets out its recommendations in an Action Plan.

9.7. The Action Plan seeks to deliver a revised pricing and tariff structure for the City Council's car parks in September 2016, an Investment Strategy for the City Council's car parks in November 2016 and improved signage and payment options by September 2017, amongst other things. Key components of the Strategy will be brought forward for public consultation and Member consideration in due course.

10. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

10.1. A Corporate Plan priority in 2015/16 is to "*Adopt a new Parking Strategy and develop the Parking Action Plan*".

11. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

11.1. There is a risk of loss of income from multi-storey car parks if structural issues are found to exist, as is common with that form of construction. A structural survey, with an associated investment programme, will be undertaken as soon as possible to ensure this critical income stream is maintained.

12. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

12.1. The Equalities Impact Assessment reveals no anticipated negative impacts. There may be positive impacts for disabled drivers if accessibility to the city centre is improved through the aim to reduce congestion. There may also be positive impacts on female drivers if car parks become more welcoming and perceptions of safety are improved and provision of wider parent & child bays is reviewed.

13. Are there any other options?

13.1. Not applicable.

Sarah Ward
Assistant Director Public Realm

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:-

Exeter Parking Strategy Final Strategy Report, January 2016 WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff

Contact for enquires: Sharon Sissons
Democratic Services (Committees)
Room 2.3
01392 265275