

REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ECONOMY

Date of Meetings: 12 November 2015

Report of: Assistant Director Public Realm

Title: Interim Parking Review

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. To report the interim findings of the Parking Review undertaken by WSP UK Ltd and their initial recommendations for a Parking Strategy for Exeter.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1. That Scrutiny Committee – Economy supports the emerging strategic approach to parking, working with key partners:-
 - That demand for parking in the City Centre be managed in order to reduce congestion by encouraging drivers into other forms of transport and to change their parking behaviour in peak periods;
 - That the Council implements policies that discourage parking in central car parks which are at or near capacity and encourage drivers to use the less popular car parks outside the central retail area where capacity exists;
 - That a programme of works is identified so that the Council can invest in maintaining car parks, influencing parking demand and improving the customer experience; and
 - That the Parking Review Spotlight Group remain involved in considering policy options around the final strategy and action plan

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- 3.1. To agree the direction of the emerging strategic approach for the City Council's off-street parking offer and the development of an Action Plan to deliver it.

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

- 4.1. Any further investment in maintaining car parks, influencing parking demand and improving the customer experience will be fully covered from additional parking income, existing Public Realm budgets or with the resources of other stakeholders. There will be no overall increase in the Council's budget. The Action Plan, which will accompany the final report, will set out how the strategic objectives are to be achieved.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

- 5.1. The recommendation, if approved, to fund a programme of works from any additional income is noted. At present the Assistant Director is only able to approve additional expenditure of £20,000 funded by additional income under financial regulations. As the report contains no specific request for funds above this amount, then an additional

report to Council requesting approval will be required. This could be included in a future budget monitoring report. It would be expected that this funding would transfer to the Corporate Manager Property for investment in line with the forthcoming Asset Management Plan.

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1. None identified for consideration by the Public Realm team.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1. This report raises no issues for the Monitoring officer.

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 strategy at a cost of £66,435. This included qualitative, operational and capacity reviews of the car parks as well as workshops with key stakeholders and car park users.

8.3. The completed version of the consultant's report has been delayed due to a number of issues but WSP are confident of delivering the final report before the end of December 2015.

8.4. The strategy takes into account existing national and local parking policies, existing parking supply and current and predicted demand, the parking offer and tariffs and the condition of our car parks.

8.5. Two Member Spotlight Reviews have taken place to discuss the consultants' findings. The outcome of these reviews is reported throughout this report.

8.6. The recommended strategic approach is to influence demand for parking in the City Centre to reduce congestion by encouraging drivers into other forms of transport and otherwise to change their parking behaviour in peak periods in order to increase the number of people able to access the City Centre offer.

9. Parking Supply

9.1. The initial findings show that the popular City Centre car parks are at or very near capacity between 11:00 and 15:00 hours on a Saturday. Even at this peak time spaces are available in other City Council car parks although demand will exceed supply in future years.

9.2. The emerging recommendations are that the Council should take a strategic approach that discourages parking in car parks which are at or near capacity and encourages drivers to use the less popular car parks outside the central retail area where capacity exists, such as Cathedral and Quay and Princesshay 2. A number of factors can influence this including price, signage and the condition of the car parks. It also recommends that the Park and Ride offer, where capacity also exists, is factored into this strategic approach.

- 9.3. Once this is achieved, the initial findings recommend the redevelopment of Haven Road car-park, which is significantly under-utilised. Initial advice concludes specifically that parking supply will not be affected by the redevelopment of Bampfylde Street car-park because there is capacity in King William Street nearby.
- 9.4. If no new car parks are to be developed, modal shift will be required to meet future demand. The City Council can encourage this through planning policies and by working with key stakeholders such as the County Council.
- 9.5. Members involved in the Spotlight review supported the principle of encouraging drivers to use the car parks with peak time capacity. The redevelopment of Haven Road car park was not supported.

10. Car Park Condition

- 10.1. The initial findings recommend that a new pricing structure is developed to help finance on-going maintenance, refurbishment and equipment renewal programmes.
- 10.2. The consultants identify King William Street, Cathedral & Quay, Mary Arches Street and Harlequins as priority sites for refurbishment.
- 10.3. Members of the Spotlight review group believed that Princesshay 2 should be added to the list of sites for refurbishment.

11. Parking in Topsham

- 11.1. Initial advice indicates off-street parking capacity within Topsham but recognises the central area car park (Matthews Hall) is regularly at over-capacity. It includes the recommendation to alter the current short stay tariff at Topsham Quay to encourage longer stays for recreational pursuits.

12. A Parking Strategy for Exeter

- 12.1. Key elements of the initial Strategy for the supply, operation and management of Council car parks:-
 - That demand for parking in the City Centre be managed in order to reduce congestion by encouraging drivers into other forms of transport and to change their parking behaviour in peak periods
 - That the Council implements policies that discourage parking in central car parks which are at or near capacity and encourage drivers to use the less popular car parks outside the central retail area where capacity exists
 - That a programme of works is identified so that the council can invest in maintaining car parks, influencing parking demand and improving the customer experience

13. Interim Recommendations and Response

<p>The use of 'Park and Ride' (P&R) sites should be encouraged both to reduce central area congestion, and make better use of available parking capacity at weekends.</p>	<p>Supported by Spotlight Group.</p>
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<p>To improve the use of 'Park and Ride' as well as reduce congestion through better routing, a strategic review of signage on the City outskirts and within the central area car parks is recommended.</p>	<p>Supported by Spotlight Group.</p>
<p>Reducing parking availability in the central area and/or sizeable increases in parking tariffs could encourage a modal shift to other modes, or alter end destinations, or suppress journeys being made.</p>	<p>Only recommended if capacity is available and promotion is made of 'Park and Ride' sites and public transport.</p>
<p>To maintain and improve operation and customer experience it is essential that appropriate funding is made available for on-going maintenance, refurbishment and renewal programmes.</p>	<p>Supported by Spotlight Group.</p>
<p>Pay on Foot or Pay on Exit would be the preferred method of operation by the majority of users as it offers flexibility of time spent without pressure of returning to your car, as well as the choice of cash and card payment options at the machine. Promotion of pay by mobile at traditional pay and display car parks allows a marginally lesser level of convenience to pay on foot to the user but allows operational costs to be kept low.</p>	<p>Supported by Spotlight Group and key in feedback from Parking User Focus Group.</p>
<p>The designation and tariff relating to Long Stay parking should apply to car parks where the majority of users park for longer stays. Where there is an abundance of shorter stay parking within a car park then the designation and tariff should be reconsidered.</p>	<p>To be addressed within upcoming Tariff Report.</p>
<p>Increasing Tariff charges will increase revenue as research across UK and Europe suggests demand to be relatively in-elastic.</p>	<p>To be addressed within upcoming Tariff Report.</p>
<p>The Authority should be open to appropriate opportunities on a case-by-case basis for example advertising on ticket machines, hoardings and back of tickets; use of car parks for events; appropriate commercial activities</p>	<p>Agreed and work already on-going in this area.</p>
<p>Residential parking space within a City Centre needs to be considered carefully, with the aim to address the needs of residents without any detrimental impact on the main purpose of the car park.</p>	<p>Consultation required with city centre residents over their parking requirements and realistic pricing of permits.</p>
<p>The Authority should consider charging for Blue Badge Holders within off-street car parks whilst ensuring parking provision is made</p>	<p>To be addressed within upcoming Tariff Report.</p>

closest to the pedestrian desire line exits to reduce walk distance.	
The costs of offering off-street evening parking should be recovered from those using the facility, including staffing, lighting and enforcement.	To be addressed within upcoming Tariff Report.
To review the potential for merging some parking management and operational functions with other departments.	Imminent upgrade of Pay on Foot equipment will include links to ECC Control Centre to enable remote control of barriers 24/7.
Significantly under-utilised car parks during the weekday should be considered as potential re-development / re-generation sites irrespective of their Saturday utilisations.	Spotlight Group supported the general principal but not the proposal of Haven Road. Parr Street was suggested as a more suitable option to investigate.
The overall off street parking provision around Topsham has spare capacity for future growth, though the central area car park is over capacity and regularly over-parked.	To be addressed within upcoming Tariff Report

14. Next steps

14.1. The final report is expected within a few weeks and an action plan will be prepared to deliver the strategic recommendations with input from the Parking Review Spotlight Group.

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

15.1. Not applicable at this stage.

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

16.1. None at this stage.

17. 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?

17.1. None at this stage.

18. Are there any other options?

18.1. None at this stage

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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