

**ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**25<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

1. **REPORT TITLE** Car Parking Strategy
- Submitted by:** Cllr Sweeney
- Portfolio:** Finance and Efficiency
- Ward(s) affected:** Town Centre

**Purpose of the Report**

To outline the draft Car Parking Strategy and to seek Scrutiny Committee views.

**Recommendations**

**That Members give views on the draft Car Parking Strategy.**

**Reasons**

Car parking is a key asset and it is vital that the Council balances the management of the car parks with the economic development of Newcastle town centre. As part of the development of the draft strategy views of car park users and local businesses have been sought. The Strategy seeks to look forward for the next 10 years, with a proposed action plan to bring key improvements early within the strategy. It is appropriate that the Council seeks views on the proposals prior to the strategy being adopted.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Council has a wide range of car parks in Newcastle town centre which are recognised to play an important role in the operation of the town centre for visitors and for businesses. It is important that the Council takes into account a wide range of views alongside the financial aspects of managing these resources. The Council has made a commitment to have a parking strategy to set out the best ways forward for the car parks.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 Officers have considered a wide range of issues in the development of the strategy:

- Customer views and stakeholder perception
- the usage of car and capacity of the car parks,
- financial appraisal of car parks as assets
- links to the wider strategic transport needs including on street parking and road congestion,
- longer term national and technologic developments

- 2.2 The strategy seeks to review the current car parking provision and to set out the future options to ensure that the most effective provision is made. The Strategy highlights the key objectives as:

- To provide car parking which meets the current and future needs of the town centre for visitors, businesses and residents that will live in the town centre.
- Optimise the cost-efficiency of the car park assets
- Minimise congestion and improve air quality

In order to deliver these objectives the strategy sets out a range of issues and an action plan.

**Objective 1 -To provide good quality car parks**

Short Term Actions

- Implement regular inspections of all car parks to enable prompt reporting of defects;
- Commit to a responsive maintenance programme funded through the revenue budget;
- Establish provision in the Capital Programme for larger investments with initial priorities being resurfacing of Hassall Street car park, rear of High Street car park and Frog Hall access road; and
- To minimise the costs of the operation of the car parks the Council will seek to undertake a review of the business rates and take any appropriate action.

Medium Term Actions

- Establish a strategy for the Midway Car Park – our largest and the most significant town centre car park, which requires significant renovation including cathodic protection for the long term structure of the building, new drainage, internal decoration, lighting and improved cleanliness; and
- Review development options for the least used and least economically viable car parks.

Long Term Actions

- Deliver rolling programme of refurbishment.

**Objective 2 - To improve the customer experience of parking in Newcastle**

Short Term Actions

- Commence programme of Pay&Display machine replacement, with chip and pin and / or contactless options (consultation highlighted that in terms of card payment businesses preferred contactless payment whereas customers preferred chip and pin);
- Procure modern pay by phone service with App technology;
- Actively promote cashless payment methods;
- Continue to offer free parking to Blue Badge holders;
- Ensure proportionate and effective parking enforcement, to balance the need to enforce with appropriate flexibility;
- Invest in a modern CCTV in the Midway which is able to meet the expected monitoring and surveillance requirements; and
- Support the County Council's implementation of the new street signing as part of the Wayfinding Strategy.

Medium Term Actions

- As the ticket machine upgrade programme rolls out over the next 5 years the Council will review take up of the two card payment mechanisms and future years will focus on the most popular payment methods;
- In response to the business and customer consultation review the provision of Disabled and parent parking.

Long Term Actions

- Over the next 10 years there is also likely to be further enhancements in payment methods and the Council will need to review developments as they arise.

**Objective 3 - To support the economic development of Newcastle Town Centre**

## **Supporting Visitors**

### Short term

- Trial a shoppers discount of £1.00 after 1pm for 8 months, this will be reviewed for the financial implications;
- Establish business engagement programme to promote discounted parking;
- Establish a mechanism to evaluate the BUSINESS impact of the “1 after 1” initiative;
- Work with businesses including the Business Improvement District to develop the town centre offer;
- Offer free parking for 5 event days per year where there is a clear business engagement plan to demonstrate economic impact;
- Support Christmas retail and town centre shoppers in the run up to Christmas with free parking from 5pm for Christmas late night shopping; and

### Medium Term

- Work with SCC to review charges for on-street and off street on Corporation Street and Merrial Street (SCC operated Bridge Street);
- Evaluate potential for a shoppers permit for residents;
- Explore with BID willingness for it to control charging in Goose Street as a dedicated “Shoppers Carpark”.

### Long Term

- Evaluate the impact of any Clean Air actions on car park charging; and
- Establish a mechanism for differential charging to reward the greenest vehicles.

## **Supporting Businesses**

### Short term

- To prioritise and market Fogg Street, High Street and Well Street as Business Permit car parks for adjacent businesses;
- To support business owners and workers in the town centre the Council will simplify the quarterly permit scheme based on £2.00 per day for all day parking. This equates to £130 (excl. VAT) per quarter. This one permit will replace all existing permits bands, with the only variation being a £20 discount for those businesses that purchase more than 20 permits (£110 / quarter). Based on the income currently generated by the existing permits, this simplified charging scheme will achieve the same level of income as the current scheme;
- A provision will be introduced for a Small Business Permit which allows businesses to purchase the £130 permit on a monthly scheme, at £43.50 / month. The aim of this payment option is to make the permit system more approachable to smaller business owners;
- To implement a marketing programme to increase the take-up of business permits;

### Medium Term

- Maintain ongoing dialogue with the business community to ensure understanding of their business parking needs remains current;
- Maintain a programme of specialist events on car parks to encourage visitors to the town and to maximise the utilisation of the asset; and

### Long Term

- Evaluate the opportunities for the car parks to support diversification and specialist events;
- Continue to work with the Business Improvement District to ensure that parking supports local trade; and

- Evaluate the take up of permits and technological developments to improve the purchase of permits.

**Objective 4 - To ensure that car parks meet the future demands of car users**

Short Term

- Implement Electric Charging points for taxi's as part of the Clean Air projects;

Medium Term

- Research demand for Electrical Charging Points and establish funding model;
- Review parking bay sizes to accommodate larger vehicles; and
- To review the technology developments for directed parking App's.

Long term

- Provide Electrical Charging Points in all council car parks;
- To review in car charging technology and the links to parking accounts;
- Introduce solar canopies in the car parks in line with the Council's carbon emission reduction commitments; and
- To review the implications of automated vehicles.

3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 The Council could decide to adopt the draft Car Parking Strategy based on the information outlined in the strategy and taking on board the views of the town centre users gained through the research. Alternatively the Council could openly consult on the draft strategy enabling the Council to take into account the opinions given, including views on the draft action plan.

4. **Proposal and Reason for Preferred Solution**

- 4.1 It is proposed that Scrutiny members consider the draft Strategy and give their views.
- 4.2 Scrutiny may also wish to consider if they feel it is appropriate for the Council to consult more widely including targeted consultation with members of the newly formed Town Centre Board and importantly the Business Improvement District. Members may wish to consider if car parking is such a key element of the town centre it may be crucial that the Business Improvement District has the opportunity to make meaningful contribution.

5. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 Providing car parking supports the Council's corporate priority of a Town Centre for All.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The Council delivers the car parking service in line with the Traffic Regulation Order for the town centre.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 The Council provides dedicated disabled parking spaces within a number of car parks throughout the town centre. Blue Badge holders can also park in a range of streets around the town centre.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 The Council will need to take into account reducing financial income from the car parks as part of the proposed initiatives.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 Without continued investment in the car parks, especially the Midway the usage will decline and customer satisfaction will decrease.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 The Car parking strategy identifies the need to consider electric charging points which will support sustainability objectives.

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 This is not a key decision however the strategy outlines an important strategic direction for the management of the car parks.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 In October 2018 Cabinet approved the decision to have a 10 year Car Parking Strategy.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Car Parking Strategy.

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 None