

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	7th February 2018	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3042
TITLE:	Adoption of a Parking Strategy and associated charges and the development of Odd Down Coach Park.	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1 - Proposed Parking Charges Feb18		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This report:

- (1) Outlines the development of a new Parking Strategy and steps taken to reach a final draft of the document. The Parking Strategy seeks to be in line with all other relevant Council policies and provides a strategic framework against which future decisions may be made.
- (2) Outlines the development of a new Coach Park at Odd Down Park & Ride to complement the Council's Placemaking Plan and to enable the regeneration of Avon St coach and car park into Bath Quays North.
- (3) Outlines the parking charge proposals, developed in line with the outcomes from the Parking Strategy, to be promoted through the necessary statutory process.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to:

- 2.1 Agree the proposed changes to parking charges set out in Appendix 1 to this Report which will be taken forward through the necessary statutory process, alongside the adoption of the Parking Strategy.
- 2.2 Approve the use of Odd Down Park & Ride for long stay coach parking.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 No additional resources are required to adopt the Parking Strategy. Adoption of the strategy commits the Council to the development of an action plan and additional resource requirements will be identified through this process and formal approval sought where required.
- 3.2 The funding required to implement the changes to parking charges is agreed to be taken from Council reserves. This is estimated at £150k.
- 3.3 Changes to parking charges, as proposed (see Appendix 1) and subject to the necessary statutory process to implement, are forecast to generate additional income of £662.7k in 2018/19 and a further £229.3k in 2019/20.
- 3.4 In accordance with section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 Local Authorities must keep a special account of income and operational expenditures relating to designated parking places. In essence parking charges must not be increased to generate income for the general fund. Additionally, it's recognised that the 1984 Act is not a fiscal measure and does not authorise the authority to use its powers to charge for parking in order to raise surplus revenue for other transport purposes funded by the General Fund. Parking charges are recognised within the Parking Strategy with the intention to achieve the Council's transport policy aims of reducing congestion and improving air quality and improved parking management. Any surplus must be applied for a purpose specified in section 55(4) of the 1984 Act and will be allocated to fund improvements to transport and transport related schemes, such as Safer Routes to Schools.
- 3.5 Development of the new coach park at Odd Down is underway following the receipt of £1.8M of funding through the European Development Fund and Local Growth Fund through West of England Combined Authority arrangements. Ongoing revenue costs for the maintenance of the new coach parking facilities will be funded from reallocating budget that is already in place for existing facilities.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The provision for Local Authorities to make and vary charges for parking places is set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The regulations prescribe how Local Authorities may undertake this provision; including the requirements for consultation. The 1984 Act imposes a duty on Local Authorities exercising any functions under the Act, including the setting of parking charges, to act so as to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway.
- 4.2 Local Authorities are subject to the general and specific duties set out in the Equality Act 2010. This report and its recommendations pay due regard to the Council's public sector equality duty. In addition, account has been taken of the Human Rights Act 1998 where a public body must not act in a way which is incompatible with one of the rights contained in the European Convention of Human Rights. The recommendations in this report are considered compatible with such convention rights.

5 THE REPORT

Parking Strategy

- 5.1 Whilst there is no statutory requirement to have a formal Parking Strategy it is seen as good practice to do so due to the impacts that public parking can have on the Authority as a whole. Therefore it was deemed appropriate to develop a full and comprehensive strategy for adoption at this time.
- 5.2 The Parking Strategy has been developed to provide a link with the Placemaking Plan, the Core Strategy and to complement the existing and developing transport strategies and the Coach Parking Strategy This ensures that all relevant Council policies are harmonised and considered when making decisions or changes to the parking impacts across many different documents.
- 5.3 The Parking Strategy also provides links through to the emerging work on air quality and recognises that parking charges, restrictions and other policy changes are important tools to help to contribute to reductions in air quality issues.
- 5.4 The need for the strategy is reflected in the significant demand on the network from the numbers of commuter, business and resident vehicles coming into the Authority on a daily basis. Currently there is no strategy to guide decisions when requests for change are received.
- 5.5 Furthermore, the development of the Enterprise Area including Bath Quays will result in significant changes to parking provision within the city centre area and reflects the need for longer term plans. The Parking Strategy addresses the above points by setting out standards for the numbers of parking spaces for new developments and assessment criteria to be used by developers; and provides an agreed matrix for use. This approach has been agreed with the planning service but still ensures each development is considered on its own merit.
- 5.6 The Parking Strategy sets out a hierarchy for use of limited kerb space in the city, prioritising disabled users, public transport, residents and business needs. This approach allows reviews of parking areas to be considered fairly and proportionately under an agreed framework, prioritising residents' needs and air quality over long stay parking provision, predominantly used by commuters and tourists who would be better placed at the Park & Ride sites. The Parking Strategy also looks wider than just Bath and sets out opportunities and options for the rural areas across B&NES.
- 5.7 The Parking Strategy recommends a charging strategy that uses charges to discourage long stay parking, limits on street parking to 2 hours and increases charges in Bath but retains free parking in rural community car parks due to the different nature of the challenges outside of the city. This is developed around transport needs and options within the different locations and the impacts that the choices made have on air quality, congestion, economic vitality and public realm aspirations.
- 5.8 The Parking Strategy supports the use of Park & Ride to reduce long stay parking in the city as well as other more sustainable modes of transport such as car clubs, electric vehicles, motorcycles and cycling. These changes will then help to address air quality issues.

- 5.9 The Parking Strategy is in accordance with the adopted Core Strategy (section 2.45) and the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy whilst recognising economic concerns.
- 5.10 Encouraging the use of the Park & Ride's and alternative modes of transport will help in improving air quality and reduce congestion during the peak hours caused by slow vehicle speeds and queueing. This approach also promotes the policies that help to manage demand to encourage behaviour change towards the use of public transport, cycling and walking (where appropriate). It will also increase space availability for trips that support the economic vitality and vibrancy of the city centre
- 5.11 The Parking Strategy also sets out technology options for future development of parking management in the City. This ensures that the services delivered are of the required quality and develops payment and space booking solutions within the new developments within the Bath Quays and wider Enterprise Area.
- 5.12 The Parking Strategy also recommends reviews of the use of parking permits within the City and residents parking zones, both of which were raised during the public consultation process. Adoption of the Parking Strategy will allow further work to be undertaken to resolve the issues highlighted by residents within these areas.

Parking Charges

- 5.13 The UK has in place legislation passed down from the European Union, to ensure that certain standards of air quality are met. In common with many EU member states, the EU limit value for annual mean nitrogen dioxide emissions is breached in the UK and there are on-going breaches of the nitrogen dioxide limit value in Bath. The UK government is taking steps to remedy this breach in as short a time as possible and has produced a UK Air Quality Plan and a Clean Air Zone Framework, setting out actions required to tackle the exceedances.
- 5.14 Due to forecast air quality exceedances in central Bath, Bath and North East Somerset Council has been directed by the Minister to produce a Clean Air Plan to achieve air quality improvements in the shortest possible time. In line with Government guidance, as part of the Plan Bath and North East Somerset Council is considering a range of options to bring air quality back in line with EU limit values in the shortest possible time.
- 5.15 The Parking Strategy sets out a number of actions and objectives to influence behaviours and travel choices in line with these requirements. This includes changes to parking charges which is one of the main tools that Local Authorities have to change wider travel behaviour.
- 5.16 Work has been undertaken to consider the impact of changes to charging on user groups by developing impact assessments and engagement through focus groups to test early stage options before the necessary statutory process is engaged to permit implementation of the proposed changes. It should also be

noted that off street parking charges have not increased in the car parks operated by the Council since 2010.

- 5.17 The new tariff proposals (see Appendix 1) set a base hourly charge which is then charged for all subsequent hours and is capped at £15 per day. This change to the current tariff structures removes the historic discount applied to the hourly rate for longer stays, reinforcing the strategic outcomes from the Parking Strategy which recommends the reduction of the benefits offered to long stay users and promotes a modal shift to more sustainable solutions such as park and ride.
- 5.18 In line with the commitment in the Parking Strategy to put residents first it is proposed that a discount of 10% (see Appendix 1) against the advertised pay and display parking charges will be available to all BANES residents when purchasing through the Council cashless provider.
- 5.19 Each of the Parking Charge options put forward were considered and assessed in line with the Council's Equalities Impact Assessments, to assist in the selection of the preferred options to be implemented. The main points to note are :
- a) Parking charges do have significant impacts on those who are already in the lower socio economical groups. This can be further compounded as they are more likely to own older vehicles that may have higher levels of emissions, further raising charges if differential charges based on emissions are considered.
 - b) Parking charges can also have a higher impact on those with less travel options, particularly those with disabilities who may well not have the ability to use alternative transport modes, although this is mitigated by the option of the blue badge parking concession that permits free parking on street for up to 3 hours on double and single yellow lines and all day in residents bays and time limited parking bays.
- 5.20 A series of Focus groups were convened to consider the options available and help develop the preferred approach. The groups (1 in Midsomer Norton, 1 in Keynsham and 2 in Bath) were given the opportunity to consider parking charges in the round and give opinion on the early stage proposals. These groups were used to gain specific feedback from residents and obtain a wider understanding of the impacts and issues that would be experienced as a consequence.
- 5.21 The research approach was qualitative rather than quantitative. Qualitative research enables in-depth exploration of issues and is a means to understanding why and how people think and behave in a particular way. In this respect a qualitative research approach was ideally suited to investigating residents' likely reaction to possible parking charges proposals. However, unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not generate numerical data and or quantify issues.
- 5.22 Each group was selected to include a range of ages, genders, political affiliation and employment but all came from the BANES area. Additionally, attendees were also chosen where they had personal experience of the issues affecting Blue Badge holders. Key points summarised from this are:

- a) there was widespread support for preferential charges for residents and this was recognised as putting residents first;
- b) there was a strong degree of consensus that emissions based differential charging would help meet the strategy's aims of improving air quality; however, overall opinion was polarised as many felt this would penalise poor residents who are more likely to have older vehicles with higher emissions; and
- c) the focus group felt that introducing parking charges on Sundays would change the character of the day in Bath from being relaxed family and local's day to being more like a stressful Saturday.

5.23 It was noted within the groups that short stay price increases could lead to a modal shift; however, many felt that local people 'popping into' Bath are the prime customers of any short stay parking and residents would be significantly affected by an increase.

5.24 There was widespread support for increases to long stay charges to deter commuters; however it was noted that this could displace pressures to less central areas.

5.25 There was a general view that an increase to charges in Keynsham was acceptable due to the low current prices.

5.26 It is proposed that charges for existing season tickets will increase by 10% (see Appendix 1). Further work will be undertaken to develop season tickets in line with Parking Strategy Action 3 which states "The Council will undertake a review of the available permit types and remove those that do not comply with the objectives and policies of this strategy".

5.27 On street charges will be harmonised into three charge bands (Appendix 1) to simplify the charges and improve consistency across all locations. Charges in Royal Victoria Park will remain unchanged.

5.28 The introduction of a nominal £1 daily charge at the new Odd Down Coach Park (see Appendix 1) encourages longer stay coach parking out of the central areas and reduces the impact that coaches have on the lives of residents and the impact on air quality. The coach parking charge will be subject to review once the facility is open and usage is developed.

Odd Down Coach Park

5.29 To support the Council's Economic Strategy, Placemaking Plan and facilitate the regeneration of Bath Quays North, the Council needs to develop a sustainable coach park within the City of Bath. There is a need to relocate the Riverside Coach Park to Odd Down P&R to enable redevelopment of the site and a formal decision to do this is now required to enable the works to proceed. This decision will also allow officers to start marketing the Odd Down site with coach operators.

5.30 Members on the CTE Scrutiny Panel were united on the need for long stay coaches to park out of the city centre and for their customers to come into the centre via the Park & Ride service at Odd Down.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 The Parking Strategy and the development of Odd Down Coach Park support the Councils previously adopted relevant policies and strategies and provide a policy framework for future decision making and development of the Parking Service.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 To abandon the Parking Strategy – this option is rejected because the proposed strategy is a potential key document setting down a parking framework in the district and has been arrived at from a comprehensive consultative and professional process.
- 7.2 To not implement the parking charge recommendations within the Parking Strategy – this option was rejected as the Parking Strategy is designed to achieve the modal shift and air quality improvement sought, and help promote sustainable transport options.
- 7.3 To not implement ODD Down Coach Park – This option was rejected as it would have a fundamental impact on the delivery of the Bath Enterprise Zone.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The draft Parking Strategy has been developed with public consultation to identify the key themes for respondents. This was then supplemented with key outcomes from Members and Officers.
- 8.2 As part of the development of the Parking Strategy and to ensure that all sections of the community had an opportunity to make representations on the proposals, the draft Parking Strategy was publicised on the 18th September 2017. To assist accessibility to the proposals full technical documents were publicised, a high level summary document made available together with an easy to read 'plain English' leaflet style publication. An infographic was also used to raise public awareness of the Parking Strategy.
- 8.3 During the period of the engagement process, Officers also held three drop in sessions (Midsomer Norton, Bath and Keynsham) to allow members of the public who had specific questions or views to engage with Officers and discuss concerns to ensure that they were as informed as possible when submitting their feedback.
- 8.4 The Parking Strategy webpage had a combined total of 4,630 views and the engagement website had 754 individual visits. At the end of the engagement period, a total of 255 survey responses had been received. The distinction between these numbers highlights that a very large proportion of visitors to the Parking Strategy documents may have had no desire to adversely comment on the draft Parking Strategy.
- 8.5 The majority of respondents lived in Bath and North East Somerset area, only 6 respondents declared that they were residing outside of the authority. In terms of distribution between organisations and individuals, a notable majority (90%) of the responses came from individuals.

- 8.6 The survey results showed that the majority read the summary document of the Parking Strategy and agreed in full or in part with the overall outcomes of the Strategy.
- 8.7 On the question of whether something had been missed, a majority answered yes and provided comments to highlight what had been overlooked. These comments were considered and where appropriate fed into the revised Parking Strategy document as presented and recommended for adoption. However, a large number of the comments referred to elements that were outside of the remit of the Parking Strategy.
- 8.8 The responses provided addressed a range of issues, with comments related to on street parking being the most common, followed by general comments, comments referring to multi modal travel including cycling and public transport and then parking capacity and charges. A smaller number of comments were received regarding enforcement, the parking standards, aims and principles of the strategy and major events.
- 8.9 All feedback has been collated into the Engagement Report, matching the report provided after the initial public consultation. This shows how the public feedback is considered and the resultant changes to the policies.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

Contact person	<i>Chris Major – 01225 394231</i>
Background papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Draft Parking Strategy including (www.bathnes.gov.uk/parkingstrategy);</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Consultation Report 14.09.2017</i> ○ <i>Parking Strategy Engagement Document</i> ○ <i>Public Engagement Report 08.01.2018</i> ○ <i>Parking Strategy 05.01.2018 Technical Report</i> ○ <i>Parking Strategy 05.01.2018 Summary</i> ○ <i>Parking Management for Major Events;</i> ○ <i>Benchmarking and UK Parking Best Practice;</i> ○ <i>Parking Technology</i> ○ <i>Market Research Report – Parking Charges in B&NES</i> • <i>Draft Coach Parking Strategy, including(www.bathnes.gov.uk/coachstrategy);</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Coach Parking Strategy Final Report 170824</i> ○ <i>Coach Parking Strategy Exec Summary</i> ○ <i>Coach Parking Engagement Report</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	