

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

10

Report of Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

To
Cabinet
on
18th September 2018

Report prepared by:
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Access, Parking & Transport Strategy for Southend

Place Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member: Councillor Moring
A Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on progress and to seek Members' views on the recently produced Borough-wide parking and access strategy and subsequent strategy.
- 1.2 Included in **Appendix 1** is an Executive Summary of the Strategy.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Members note the content of this report, the Borough-wide Parking and Access Strategy and agree the following recommendations:
 - 2.1.1 **The strategy be broadened to include range of transportation related issues and be known as the Access, Parking and Transport Strategy for Southend (APT).**
 - 2.1.2 **Establish a new Access, Parking and Transport Working Party chaired by the cabinet member for Infrastructure to replace the Public Transport and Buses Working Party (including new terms of reference).**
 - 2.1.3 **A complementary adjustment to the terms of reference of the Traffic and Parking Working Party which will be known as the Traffic Regulations Working Party**
 - 2.1.4 **The implementation plan identified in the strategy be progressed as a package of pilot projects. The new Access, Parking and Transport Working Party to receive reports, previews and updates on these pilots.**
 - 2.1.5 **To undertake consultation on the Borough-wide Parking and Access Strategy as discussed in paragraph 6.6.**

2.1.6 To implement the strategy and to maintain the impetus a dedicated resource is required. This would consist of a project manager and a transport or suitably qualified highways engineer. The funding estimated to be £125,000 which is to be funded from the Business Transformation Reserve.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Borough-wide Parking and Access Strategy was commissioned following on from a Car Parking Study for the Central Area of Southend produced in November 2016. This work was undertaken to support the preparation of the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) adopted by the Council on 22 February 2018.
- 3.2 The Borough-wide Parking and Access Strategy for Southend builds on the actions and recommendations identified in the earlier Car Parking Study. It provides more detail and an implementation plan for the outline recommendations contained in that report. Importantly, the strategy looks at the needs of the whole Borough in terms of parking demand and supply, accessibility to parking, technology and tariffs, especially at peak visitor times and events.
- 3.3 As recommended above it is proposed to wrap both the car parking study and the Borough-wide Parking and Access Strategy into an Access, Parking and Transport Strategy for Southend (APT) and to harness the outputs from Southend 2050 and the emerging Local Plan to take an overall strategic approach to the future growth of the borough.
- 3.4 The transport and planning context for this strategy is set out in the following documents:

Southend Core Strategy (adopted December 2007) provides the vision, objectives and broad strategy for the spatial development of Southend to 2021. The Southend Core Strategy has as one of its key strategic objectives the need to focus on securing a 'step change' in the provision of transport infrastructure as an essential accompaniment to new development (SO9) and to maximise the effectiveness and integration of key transport corridors and interchanges as a principal focus for development in the urban area (SO10). Policy CP3 (Transport and Accessibility) seeks to secure a step change in transport provision and improvements necessary to achieve a modern integrated transport system and unlock the development and economic potential of the town.

Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD) adopted in July 2015 sets out the Council's policies for positively managing development in Southend and is used to assess and determine planning applications. It reflects the spatial vision and objectives of the Core Strategy and includes more detailed local policies for the management of development. Policy DM15: Sustainable Transport Management recognises the key role sustainable transport plays in Southend in supporting economic growth, reducing carbon emissions, promoting equality of opportunity and improving quality of life and health.

The **Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP)** adopted in 2018, contains Policy DS5 (Transport, Access and Public Realm). This policy advises that the level of regeneration and growth proposed for Southend Central Area will have an effect on the strategic transport network. The Policy seeks to improve transport, access and connectivity, building on the approach set out within the Core Strategy and the Local Transport Plan (LTP). It advises that infrastructure will be required to support and, in some cases, enable the scale and location of growth set out in the Core Strategy. This includes the delivery of a significant number of new dwellings and jobs in the Central Area, which is expected to result in a notable increase in population.

The **Southend Local Transport Plan (LTP3)** 2015, seeks to promote a thriving sustainable local economy, minimise environmental impact, create a safer borough and reduce inequalities in health and well-being in the borough.

3.5 The Borough-wide Parking and Access Strategy aims to support growth sectors such as tourism, retail and leisure as well as supporting business needs. Sustainability and better mobility, carbon reduction and improving air quality also informed the strategy development. It takes into account four key principles broadly established in the Local Transport Plan and the recent SCAAP Parking Report:

1. A smart, modern parking management system is essential for a sustainable urban mobility system, which should manage supply and demand without detrimental effects, supporting air quality improvements and reducing carbon emissions. An agile, iterative approach to delivery of smart solutions across the Borough, and that flexibility and interoperability are adopted as fundamental principles.

2. Pricing of parking should be competitive, flexible and dynamic to achieve best value, better usage and contribute to a prosperous Borough.

3. Traffic “cruising” in search of parking spaces is detrimental to business in the Borough, especially in the Town Centre and Seafront and must be reduced; it also creates congestion, pollution and road safety problems.

4. New initiatives, smart technology and new thinking should be encouraged to deliver better access to and maximum utilisation of parking spaces (both private and public) with the greatest benefit at the most economical and advantageous price.

3.6 The Borough-wide Parking and Access Strategy has an overall vision to provide the best experience for residents and visitors to Southend-on-Sea, by providing comprehensive information on travel and parking options enabling visitors to choose the most convenient travel option, location, choice and competitive price when visiting Southend.

3.7 The strategy will complement and support the work being undertaken on the Council’s Housing Strategy, Skills and Labour Market Strategy and the recently published Tourism Strategy. It should also support and assist the delivery of Council’s Local Air Quality Action Plan.

3.8 It will help give effect to and be informed by the work being undertaken by the Council on Southend 2050 and South Essex 2050. It will form the basis for improving the borough's competitiveness and enhancing its role as a sub-regional urban centre. Although the work on Southend 2050 is on-going some of the feedback and views already received provides some insight into residents' perception of living in Southend and their aspirations for the future. For example, parking and parking costs have been raised as has transport and making Southend a place that's easy to get around and to get in and out of. Also, wider 'liveability' issues such as safer and cleaner, more cultural amenities, attractive public space. Whilst it is still early in the Southend 2050 process any APT Strategy should achieve the following outcomes:

- Better range of transport options
- A transport network that supports economic growth and activity
- Better use of road space
- Efficient and effective information and guidance systems
- Improved environmental conditions
- Improved health and well-being
- Assets and systems that are generating income for the Council
- Quality places (development) supported by necessary infrastructure
- A safer Borough

3.9 The Borough-wide Parking and Access Strategy identifies technological and management approaches to the specific parking issues in Southend-on-Sea Borough, including difficulties in accommodating peak season demand for parking, co-ordination of peak season traffic and provision of information to visitors. The Strategy sets out a series of deliverables as follows:

Smart City Technology Plan

- Identifies current pain points of queuing to access Southend, finding car parks and finding a space to park.
- Considers how the current car park infrastructure, technology and management could be better integrated.
- Considers how the operational aspects could be centralised together with the Council's traffic control systems, public safety and other aspects to be developed as part of the Data Platform – to be developed further as part of Intelligence Hub.

Visitor Access and Parking Management Plan

This plan is for times of peak demand and congestion on the highway network in Southend-on-Sea Borough, for example Public Holidays and during the school summer holidays. The plan includes a range of communications with visitors arriving in Southend to help them better plan journeys and find parking, improvements to existing travel information resources, signage and wayfinding and provision of a designated traffic management response crew on busy visitor days to manage the circulation of vehicles, divert traffic away from full car parks and prevent the obstruction of key junctions within Southend Central Area.

Signage Strategy

To improve signage to the principal car parks across the Borough, using a combination of static and dynamic, permanent and temporary signage to respond to the changing needs of the visitors, commuters and shoppers who visit Southend-on-Sea. The plan considers how improved signage could encourage use of car parks away from the central area where traffic flows are

lighter and there is more opportunity to park. It also identifies the key decision points for drivers arriving in the Borough and appropriate signage to fully inform them of appropriate routes to key attractions, including a strategy for signing alternative routes to the seafront at periods of peak visitor demand. It also includes proposals for how the Council can maximise potential benefits of improvements in signage technology.

Tariffs and Season Tickets

This includes tariffs and season tickets to take a more responsive approach to charging for car parking, taking into account the varying levels of demand on different days and at different times of the year. Encourage wider use of the Moben app and at periods of high demand and encourage residents to visit the seafront and town centre before the visitor peak period.

Stakeholder Engagement and Management Plan

This engagement plan identifies key sectors, stakeholders and suppliers and sets out a plan for ensuring that there is the opportunity to contribute and engage with the emerging proposals and wherever possible achieve buy-in from the various sectors.

Implementation plan

This plan sets out each of the strategy actions, funding type (revenue or capital), estimated funding required, timescale for delivery and key partners involved. The Implementation Plan has a series of themes with short term, medium term and long term actions.

- 3.10 Some of the measures identified in the Borough-wide strategy have already been implemented or are the process of being implemented and it is intended to continue with these. This includes changes to road layouts to provide easier, direct and more intuitive access to car parks as part of the Town-centre Redevelopment Improvement Project (TRIP). The improvements will enable car park users to access parking from Queensway, reducing access traffic on roads within the core of the town centre which will in turn improve the pedestrian experience within Southend Central Area.
- 3.11 The Borough-wide Parking and Access Strategy be broadened out to include a range of transport related issues to be known as the Access, Parking & Transportation Strategy for Southend (APT).
- 3.12 It is proposed that a series of pilot projects be undertaken to trial different options. There are a number of matters such as branding of car parking, improving data and information on car parking and travel options, and possible physical interventions that can be undertaken as part of a wider APT strategy and these should be commenced forthwith. It is recommended that an Access, Parking and Transport Working Party be established to supersede the Public Transport and Buses Working Party and this group is chaired by the cabinet member. This will require new terms of reference and complementary adjustments to Traffic and Parking Working Party which will be known as the Traffic Regulations Working Party (see appendices).
- 3.13 A package of pilot projects can be put together under the terms of the APT Strategy, including a resourcing plan and timetable. The progress on the implementation of the Strategy would be report through the new Working Party.

- 3.14 It is proposed to implement a wider APT Strategy and pilot projects and to maintain the impetus a dedicated resource is required. This would consist of a project manager and a transport engineer or a professional with transport expertise. The funding for which is likely to be in the order of £125,000 which will come from the contingency budget.
- 3.15 Stakeholder engagement and consultation commenced in the summer and is intended to continue over the autumn using the borough wide strategy as a basis for dialogue. The relevant feedback from residents and groups involved with Southend 2050 is also being used for this purpose.
- 3.16 It will be necessary to evaluate on an on-going basis the resources necessary to implement the APT Strategy effectively and ensure that it aligns with the work being carried for Southend 2050 and other strategies and plans such as the work being undertaken for the South Essex Active Travel (SEAT) project and Local Air Quality Action Plan. This is discussed at 6.4 below.
- 3.17 Some of the measures identified in the Borough-wide strategy have already been implemented or are the process of being implemented and it is intended to continue with these. This includes changes to road layouts to provide easier, direct and more intuitive access to car parks as part of the Town-centre Redevelopment Improvement Project (TRIP). The improvements will enable car park users to access parking from Queensway, reducing access traffic on roads within the core of the town centre which will in turn improve the pedestrian experience within Southend Central Area.

4. Options

- 4.1 One option would be to do nothing at all. This clearly would lead to a reduction in the effectiveness and operation of the transport within the borough affecting its economic viability and quality of life for residents.
- 4.2 Another alternative would be to proceed with ad-hoc solutions as and when issues arise. This would lead to similar consequences as the do nothing option.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To address a key issue for the borough which is transport and travel and to improve resilience. The recommendations also complement the work being undertaken on Southend 2050 and South Essex 2050 and a number of other Council strategies either recently published or currently being prepared.

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

The implementation of the strategy relates to a number of key issues such as safety, air quality, economic competitiveness and quality of life. Its implementation is therefore, directly relevant to the Council's priorities of safe, clean, safe, healthy, prosperous and excellent.

6.2 Financial Implications

Some of the work identified in this report will be met from existing capital and revenue resources other aspects will require specific funding for example the use of consultants or specialist to undertake bespoke pieces of work i.e. branding of car parks and signage. There will also need to be a time limited resource for a project manager and engineer to take forward the implementation plan and oversee the pilot projects. This time limited resource over 2018/19 and 2019/20 is estimated to cost £125,000 and is proposed to be funded by the Business Transformation Reserve. The funding required for 2018/19 is £30,000 and £95,000 for 2019/20.

Although a separate but parallel and related work-stream, the approach to parking charges, will be informed by this work (APT) which will explore how residents of the borough might benefit from either tariffs, season tickets (see paragraph 6.4) or other forms of incentives.

6.3 Legal Implications

Any permissions or authorisations for pilots or projects will be obtained as and when required.

6.4 People Implications

To implement the strategy and to maintain the impetus a dedicated resource is required. This would consist of a project manager and a transport engineer or suitably qualified engineer.

There may be opportunities for synergy between the work of the 2050 Group and the APT Project including re-purposing or co-creation.

6.5 Property Implications

Some of the proposals will relate to works to the highway or car parks in the Council's ownership.

6.6 Consultation

One of the aspects of the implementation of the strategy is stakeholder consultation. The strategy includes a stakeholder engagement plan. There may be opportunities for synergy between the work of the Southend 2050 Group and the emerging Local Plan consultation.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

Improving access and transport in and around the borough will help support residents in improving their life chances. In addition the signage and branding will take account of equalities and diversity issues and in doing so improve the Council's approach in this area. Better accessibility and mobility will help improve inclusivity and equality.

6.8 Risk Assessment

6.8.1 Any appropriate risk assessments will be carried either as part of the pilot projects or the implantation of the strategy generally.

6.9 Value for Money

Improving the efficacy and efficient of movement in and around the borough and for those visiting and working in the borough will provide better value for money. It will also assist in budget setting and financial planning by supporting decision on price setting (i.e. car park charges).

6.10 Community Safety Implications

Improving information on travel options and providing more choice and making improvements to the highway network will enhance community safety within the borough.

6.11 Environmental Impact

Reducing dependency on the car, improving travel options and reducing congestion will all contribute to reducing the environmental impact and improving air quality.

7. Background Papers/Reference Documents

Referred to in the report

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Parking and Access of Strategy Executive Summary

Appendix 2: Terms of Reference of Access Parking & Transport Working Party

Appendix 3: Traffic Regulations Working Party