

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

To

Cabinet

5th November 2019

Report prepared by:
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Parking Review - Scope

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee(s): Place Scrutiny
Cabinet Member: Councillor Ron Woodley
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)**

1. Purpose of Report

This report sets out an approach and timeline to develop a suite of parking policies using service design principles which once completed will form a comprehensive parking strategy for the Borough.

The report seeks approval from Cabinet to progress with the strategy and policy review.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members endorse the approach to develop a parking strategy

2.2 Members agree the proposed policy objectives, priorities and timetable for introducing policy measures.

3. Background

3.1 Councillors will be very aware that issues around the availability of and access to car parking, particularly in the town centre and residential areas across the town, has become not only a significant issue but also a highly contentious one too.

3.2 To an extent, this was also reflected in the 2018 residents perception survey where three of the top five issues raised about living in the local area were highways and parking related:

- Poor quality roads / pavements – 36%
- Lack of parking 31%
- Traffic congestion 31%

3.3 The Southend 2050 ambition, Connected & Smart theme, reflects these issues and sets a number of outcomes for delivery in the five year period to 2023 that seeks to address them.

3.4 The joint administration since June 2019, have implemented the following:

- Re-introduction of the 1 hour price band on Western esplanade;
- Re-introduction of the 1 hour price band in the town centre;
- Removal of off-street car park restrictions on blue badge holders whose permit was not issued by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- 22 new parking spaces have also been created since June 2019
 - 12 – Pitmans Close Car Park
 - 5 Western Road / Clarence Street
 - 5 Lucy Road

3.5 Although there is understandably a focus on the availability of parking spaces for vehicles, a parking strategy also needs to focus on a number of key themes, some of which are set out below:

- Parking charges in car parks and on the street;
- Permit charges for residents and businesses including virtual permits;
- Car park zoning, access and signage;
- Pavement parking;
- Parking enforcement ;
- Payment methods including cashless;
- Parking and waiting restrictions including junction protection to ensure the safety of both vehicle users and pedestrians.

3.6 Reflecting the issues set out above it is proposed to develop a suite of parking policies for each of these themes that combine to form a comprehensive approach to parking across Southend – this work will form an important part of an overarching Transport Strategy that the Council will need to develop to update / replace the existing Local Transport Plan 3.

3.7 It is further proposed that the approach to parking will seek to secure the following strategic outcomes:

- Reduce congestion;
- Improve road safety;
- Make best use of the parking space available;
- Pricing policy and tariff inconsistency;
- Managing peak periods of visitor demand;
- Enforce parking regulations fairly and efficiently;
- Provide appropriate parking where needed;
- Optimise income;

- Ensure that the low emissions and air quality strategy for Southend-on-Sea is at the heart of our decision making.
 - Encourage modal shift
 - Support for residents to travel across the borough
 - Air quality around schools
 - Footway parking enforcement
 - New technology and innovation
- 3.8** It will be based around the four key principles of a safe, fair, consistent and transparent parking service.
- 3.9** It is proposed to use service design principles to develop the policy suite and parking approach and project management approaches that will ensure their effective and timely delivery.
- 3.10** Given the significant number of stakeholders that are affected by parking policies it is proposed to undertake a short and intensive initial 'discovery' exercise to obtain a deep understanding of the issues and challenges as they are experienced by users in practice.
- 3.11** The delivery of the approach and priorities can only be achieved by recognising that there are groups and stakeholders for whom access to parking is vitally important to their daily lives.
- 3.12** This will involve working with Councillors, local community groups, residents and residents associations, businesses, Business Improvement District, seafront traders, voluntary sector bus operators, taxi drivers, train operators, emergency services and other key stakeholders and partners.
- 3.13** The initial phase will also include the opportunity to have focused and considered discussion with users supported by analysis of financial data including activity data from the Mobon App, car park usage and payment data, customer complaints and parking enforcement data.
- 3.14** Following the initial phase, work will be undertaken to analyse the information, and use this to develop a series of policy responses, which will be subject to further detailed discussion with Councillors, stakeholders and partners before being formally presented to Cabinet and Council for adoption and implementation.
- 3.15** In undertaking the parking review and developing a suite of parking policies, there are a number of complex issues that will need to be acknowledged: ones that are not easy to resolve nor easily reconciled with national government transport policy guidance.
- 3.16** The Council's current approach to parking has been subject to significant criticism from particular business sectors who consistently reference them as being 'anti-car'. In developing its policy framework, the Council will need to balance the need for appropriate levels of parking with nationally set transport policy objectives that seek to encourage sustainable modes of

travel, with congestion reduction, air quality improvement and climate change mitigation measures. This will be particularly important as the Council undertakes work to update and replace the current statutory Local Transport Plan (LTP3) production of a new transport strategy which will become LTP4 – effective sign-off from the Department for Transport (DfT) is a pre-requisite of being eligible for DfT LTP funding allocations and capital grants.

3.17 As referenced earlier in the report, the issues associated with parking are complex, therefore it is proposed to prioritise work on developing a new approach to the provision of permits and charging policy in the first instance.

3.18 The following is a timetable for the development of specific tasks:

| Policy | Generation of Options and Proposals for Consideration Date | Target Cabinet Date | Target Implementation Date |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Resident permit scheme | January 2020 | February 2020 | April 2020 |
| Approach to charging and zoning for parking in car parks | January 2020 | February 2020 | April 2020 |
| Policy on pavement parking | March 2020 | June 2020 | August 2020 |
| Policy on parking enforcement and to tackling persistent parking fine evaders | March 2020 | June 2020 | August 2020 |
| Policy on Electric Vehicle (EV) car clubs and charging points | June 2020 | September 2020 | September 2020 |
| Introduce policy relating to how people pay for parking | July 2020 | September 2020 (depending on Government consultation) | September 2020 |

6. Other Options

Given that the Council's current approach to parking has been subject to significant criticism doing nothing is not an option – the Council could choose to develop the strategy as a single piece of work but this would delay work which could be progressed at a quicker pace and therefore this is not considered to be an option.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 In line with the Council's Vision and Aspirations, this approach ensures that the views and needs of our customers, residents and businesses are at the heart of the new service design and parking approach.

7.2 Furthermore, the new strategy will align not only with their needs and views but enable a future proof for service innovation, climate change and efficiency.

8. Corporate Implications

8.1 Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map.

8.2 Opportunity & Prosperity:

- To make parking in Southend more accessible for residents;
- To make parking in Southend more accessible for neighbouring boroughs i.e.: Castle Point and Rochford;
- To support the businesses of Southend

8.3 Safe & Well:

For all car parks to receive/maintain ParkMark accreditation

- To ensure all junctions feature waiting restrictions to maintain visibility and access
- To regularly review parking restrictions to ensure safety and suitability to the ever-changing road environment

8.4 Connected & Smart:

- Virtual permits/vouchers
- Car parks to be area based with relevant charging
- Map based directional information to access car parks better
- Better use of online resources to identify available spaces
- Increase pay by phone and cashless parking

8.5 Financial Implications

8.5.1 The Council's parking services generates significant levels of income principally from parking charges, permits and parking enforcement. These

funds are used to support the maintenance of parking assets and to associated highways infrastructure.

8.5.2 Parking income can also be subject to significant volatility and can be effected both positively and negatively by seasonal weather changes. It will be important to ensure that income opportunities are optimised whilst at the same time providing fair, equitable and appropriate parking charges to local residents, businesses and visitors.

8.5.3 It is likely that the suite of policies that form the Council's parking approach will require both capital investment and revenue funds to support their delivery – resource requirements will be considered as part of the annual budget process which will also include the setting of parking charges.

8.6 Legal Implications

8.6.1 The parking service is required to work within an established legal framework which any new policy proposals will of necessity have to comply with.

8.7 People Implications

8.7.1 To support the timely preparation and delivery of this approach additional support has been engaged on a temporary basis to provide both additional capacity as well as technical expertise.

8.7.2 The service design process will also be supported by the Council's corporate design and policy teams.

8.8 Property Implications

8.8.1 Although the Council operates a significant number of car parks with associated parking infrastructure, as well as off street parking bays across the Town, there are none that immediately arise as a consequence of this report. Should implications arise as a result of the emerging policy proposals they will need to be considered as part of the annual budget cycle referred to in paragraph 8.5.3 above.

8.9 Consultation

8.9.1 Parking policy proposals will be developed through significant engagement and deliberative discourse and discussion with key stakeholders and partners as reflected in paragraph 3.12 above

8.10 Equalities and Diversity Implications

8.10.1 It will be important as the Council's Parking Policy approach is developed, that proposals are subject to appropriate equalities and diversity impact assessments to ensure that the key principles of a safe, fair, consistent and transparent parking service are adhered to.

8.10.2 The decision taken by the Joint Administration to allow Blue Badge Holders whose permit has been issued by authorities other than the Council from using off street car parks, will enable permit holders to park without charge for using these facilities.

8.10.2 Impact assessments will be undertaken for each task associated with the parking review

8.11 Risk Assessment

8.11.1 Parking income will be subject to the volatility set out in the financial implications – it will be important as the suite of parking policies are developed that appropriate risk assessment and sensitivity analysis are undertaken to ensure the Policy objectives referred to in the substantive report are delivered – seemingly small changes to parking fee structure can have potentially significant unintended consequences.

8.12 Value for Money

8.12.1 The provision of car parks, parking schemes and associated parking infrastructure is a significant cost as well as source of income to the Council. The Council provides parking facilities for a number of reasons and in differing contexts: this includes supporting the town centre, secondary retail centres, seafront tourism, congestion reduction and residential parking stress. It's important in doing so, that it is clear what its policy objectives are and that the funds it expends represent value to the public purse. As such, each of the policies will be subject to a value for money assessment to ensure that this is the case.

8.13 Community Safety Implications

8.13.1 One of the key strategic policy outcomes expected from this approach is to support improved road safety by actively encouraging considerate and appropriate parking across the Borough and ensuring that parking restrictions and enforcement activity are focused on priority areas like the Town Centre and residential areas.

8.14 Environmental Impact

8.14.1 The Council has recently declared a Climate Change Emergency and the proposed mitigation measures are detailed in a separate report on this cycle's Cabinet agenda. It is important to note that 29% of emissions in the Borough result from vehicles. As such, it is important that parking policies support the delivery of Connected & Smart and Safe & Well outcomes as well as supporting congestion reduction and improved air quality outcomes.

9. Background Papers

N/A

10. Appendices

N/A