

## PARKING STRATEGY

REPORT OF: Assistant Chief Executive  
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Wards Affected: All  
Key Decision: No  
Report to: Scrutiny for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth  
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### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the work of the Parking Strategy Member Working Group.

### Recommendations

2. That the Scrutiny Committee notes the progress made by the Parking Strategy Working Group.
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### Background

3. The current Mid Sussex District Council Parking Strategy expires in 2020 and a key objective in the 2019/20 Corporate Plan is to refresh this strategic document.
4. Working alongside the District Plan and the Economic Development Strategy, the key objective of the Parking Strategy will be to provide strategic direction to support sustainable and economic growth across Mid Sussex.
5. It is intended that the Parking Strategy refresh will be delivered by April 2020.
6. Consultants Parking Matters Ltd have been engaged to work with the Council to progress the Parking Strategy review.
7. Officer and Member Working Groups have been created to support the development of the Parking Strategy. The Members Working Group comprises eight Members from this Scrutiny Committee. The Officer group comprises key representatives from Council Services including Parking Services, Planning, Economic Development and Estates.

### Progress Report

8. To date three Member Working Group meetings have been held to progress the Parking Strategy work plan.
9. The work of the working group consists of three specific phases of work:
  - **Discovery:** Reviewing policies, the existing service and benchmarking with other services
  - **Challenge:** Challenge policies and operations to establish future service delivery and customer needs supported by policy and delivering value for money.

- **Design:** Develop strategy and action plans to guide strategic development of the service and future delivery.
10. In the Discovery phase the Consultants reviewed all aspects of the existing service and carried out benchmarking against other services. The consultants reported to the first Member Working Group the key findings of this phase which are summarised below:
- The MSDC car park estate is well maintained with consistent presentation compared to some other local authority providers but would benefit from future investment to modernise the service / offer.
  - Significant investment has taken place into digital technology to improve service provision and customer experience, such as the digital enforcement package – front and back office with self serve platforms, new pay and display machines with card payment technology and pay by phone platforms.
  - The pay and display and season ticket tariff structures have not been increased in 8 years, and the blanket offer of one tariff structure to fit all is out of step with comparable authorities. By not keeping pace with inflation, income has not offset the increasing costs of running the service or providing capacity for growth and investment into the estate.
  - MSDC has a relatively large enforcement team due to the size of the on-street contract across the District – which is subject to review by West Sussex County Council in March 2020. There is a clear operational staffing structure with low staff turnover and clear contractual arrangements for external services (e.g. cash collection).
11. In the Challenge phase the Consultants built on the findings of the Discovery work to start challenging current policy and operations and developing a future strategy and action plan. The findings of this phase were reported and discussed in the two Member Working Groups and the key findings were:
- A summary of current car park usage in the three towns highlighting which parts of the estate were performing well to support the economic priorities of each area and where potential could lie for future growth, consolidation, and enhancement.
  - To develop the above, occupancy surveys of the town and larger village estate were undertaken to further inform usage patterns in the larger villages as no data was available, and to verify the pay and display transaction behaviour in town car parks.
  - Challenging pay and display and season ticket tariff structures to maximise the effectiveness of the off-street estate. Discussion included consideration of differential tariffs at settlement and car park level to manage churn to support economic vitality whilst generating an income to offset costs and fund future investment into modernising the estate.

- Considering opportunities for increasing capacity via investment, development, consolidation or disposal of the off-street estate whilst maintaining provision levels to serve the economic needs of specific towns and larger villages
- Gaining an understanding of the future target audiences and how the estate and associated tariffs should prioritise their needs in the future e.g. town centre visitors, local business workers whilst delivering the objective of supporting economic growth.
- Considering how further investment into digital technology can continue to modernise the customer experience and the functionality and enforcement of the off-street estate to serve economic objectives

### **Next Steps**

10. Between January and March, the Design phase of the work will be undertaken with the consultants based on the findings from the Design and Challenge phases of the work programme.
11. It is anticipated that two further Member Working groups will be held in January and February 2020 to agree the development of the strategy and action plan, of course more will be convened if considered to be necessary.
12. It is intended that the final draft Strategy and action plan will be presented to this Scrutiny Committee in March 2020 for recommendation to Council in April 2020.

### **Financial Implications**

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report

### **Risk Management Implications**

14. The Council has committed to the preparation of a Parking Strategy in the Economic Development Strategy. If the Parking Strategy is not developed, there is a risk that the Council will not have a Plan-led strategic policy for the future management of off-street parking to support sustainable and economic growth.