

PARKING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2030

REPORT OF: Assistant Chief Executive
Contact Officer: Claire Onslow – Business Unit Leader Parking Services
Wards Affected All
Key Decision: Yes
Report to: Council
Date of meeting: 9 December 2020

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Council approval of the Mid Sussex District Council Parking Strategy and Action Plan 2020 – 2030.

Summary

2. The Parking Strategy & Action Plan 2020 – 2030 was considered at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning & Economic Growth on 22 October 2020.

Recommendations

3. **That Council approves the Parking Strategy and Action Plan 2020 – 2030.**

Background

4. The current MSDC Parking Strategy expired in 2020. A key priority in the 2019/ 2020 Corporate Plan was to refresh the strategy.
5. The Parking Strategy 2020 – 2030 provides a high-level strategic direction for the management of the Council's car parks to support future sustainable and economic growth across Mid Sussex.
6. The MSDC Parking Strategy focuses on how the Council will manage Council owned car parks for the next 10 years. The strategy will take account of West Sussex County Council's approach to on street parking provision.

Development of the Strategy

7. The development of the Parking Strategy was led by consultants Parking Matters Ltd, bringing industry expertise, best practice and benchmarking principles to the project.
8. A Member Working Group was set up with geographical and political balance from members of the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth, with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth attending as an observer. A total of six Working Group meetings were held to advise on and guide the development of the Strategy and Action Plan.

9. Their work was supported by an Officer Working Group consisting of representatives from across the Council including Planning, Economic Development, Estates and Parking.
10. The initial development of the Parking Strategy was carried out over a six-month period in three phases:
 - a. **Discovery:** Reviewing current policies, the existing service and benchmarking with other services
 - b. **Challenge:** Challenge policies and operations to establish future service delivery and customer needs supported by policy and delivering value for money.
 - c. **Design:** Develop a strategy and action plan to guide strategic development of the service and future delivery.
11. Throughout the 'Discovery' and 'Challenge' phases the Consultants took account of previously commissioned work for each of the three town centres, carried out an extensive review of the current Council parking operation and compared their findings with neighbouring and similar Councils. Additional evidence was also commissioned on car park occupancy in both the towns and the rural car parks.
12. This evidence was used by the Working Groups to inform the development of a draft Parking Strategy and Action Plan, meeting the overall aim of supporting economic growth within the District.

Parking Strategy & Action Plan 2020 – 2030

13. The Parking Strategy presented, appended to this report, is the outcome of this work. It provides a high level ten-year strategic framework for the management of the Council's car parks from 2020 – 2030. This timeline is aligned with the District Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.
14. The delivery of the Parking Strategy is supported by a five-year rolling Action Plan, providing an agile approach to respond to changes in the economic landscape.
15. The overarching vision for the Parking Strategy and Action Plan is to ensure:

The Council's car parks will support sustainable growth and provide a positive parking experience.

16. The vision will be achieved in the first five years through an Action Plan as follows:
 - a. **Investment in car parks** - An Investment Plan will be developed to set a medium-term strategic direction for managing car parks including retention, disposal, expansion and repurposing of sites.
 - b. **Sustainable Growth** – We will work with WSCC to reduce congestion and improve air quality and townscapes by ensuring car parks are working alongside sustainable transport objectives.
 - c. **Supporting Vitality** – We will explore differential tariff and management regimes to influence customer behaviour and provide financial support for investment and improvement.

- d. **Customer Experience** – We will utilise technological innovation to improve and inform the customer experience and how the Council manages and enforces its car parks.

17. The strategy will deliver the following benefits:

- a. A planned investment strategy to improve and modernise the car park estate
- b. Use of new technologies to modernise and improve the customer experience
- c. Differential tariffs and management regimes that are based on local vitality and economic growth, which will in turn fund the investment into the estate modernisation.

18. An annual review of the Parking Strategy and Action Plan will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning & Economic Growth.

Covid 19 Review

19. The draft Parking Strategy and Action Plan was due to be presented to Council in early summer 2020.

20. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly changed the short, medium- and long-term economic outlook at both a national and local level. As a result, to the Council commissioned further work to ensure that the Parking Strategy and Action Plan was appropriate and relevant in a post Covid world.

21. The outcome of this work is the appended Covid Addendum report. This report considered the economic, societal and practical variables that are likely to be affected by the pandemic and how they might impact the delivery of the Parking Strategy. The work applied learning from consumer behaviour in previous recessions and built on early emerging worldwide trends in response to the pandemic to enable early assumptions to be made; however, the exact long-term impacts of the pandemic are still very uncertain. The Addendum will be appended to the Parking Strategy and Action Plan.

22. The key findings of the Covid review have been assessed against the themes of the draft Parking Strategy and Action Plan. The consultants concluded that the original document remains sound and will continue to provide an appropriate and robust high level, flexible framework and direction of travel for the Council. An analysis of impact across the four original themes suggests that the key actions in the proposed Action Plan remain appropriate and relevant.

23. The Covid Addendum concludes that despite the inevitable short-term income impacts, the Council's car parks will be in a strong position to recover to the 'new normal' in the medium to long term and will support economic recovery as highlighted in the revised Corporate Plan. The Parking Strategy and Action Plan and its overarching aims of consolidating and modernising the car park estate and ensuring that tariffs continue to support economic vitality is considered robust in a post Covid environment.

24. The Parking Strategy and Action Plan have been amended to reflect the impacts of Covid-19, and to provide agility to the implementation of the Parking Strategy, responding to a changing landscape within our communities as a result of post covid-19 recovery.

Initiating the Parking Strategy Action Plan in 2020/21

25. As mentioned above, the long-term impacts of the pandemic on economic recovery and how they impact on parking demand are unclear, and it will be some months before the Council is able to make any informed decisions backed by evidence.
26. The four actions highlighted in the Action Plan for 2020/ 21 are highlighted below, along with recommendations for taking the work forward. Undertaking this work as planned will prepare the Council to make well informed strategic decisions about the parking estate, to support the future economic vitality of the towns and larger villages in the District.

2020 - 2021 Actions (Year One)	Recommended Delivery
Commission an Investment Strategy setting out medium term strategic objectives for each of the Council's car parks in terms of retention, disposal, expansion development / re-purposing to meet the economic needs of each settlement.	Commission the Investment Strategy as planned to provide a baseline to inform future strategic options for the car park estate to support economic growth and recovery plans.
Undertake annual tariff review	Complete annual tariff review to set baseline principles for future annual review of tariffs.
Commission feasibility work to explore opportunities for differential tariff regimes in town centres to support local vitality	Commission initial feasibility work based on high level principles whilst responding to Covid recovery.
Commission feasibility work to explore opportunities for alternative management regimes in the larger village car parks.	Commission initial feasibility work based on high level principles whilst responding to Covid recovery.
Continue to develop digital platforms to provide more convenient self-service systems e.g. virtual season tickets	Complete the migration of season tickets to a virtual platform in year, which will provide opportunities to change the season ticket approach.

Consideration by the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth at its meeting on 22 October 2020.

27. The Parking Strategy was considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth on 22 October 2020.
28. The Committee supported the Parking Strategy and Action Plan, with Members welcoming the strategic approach and emphasised the need to embrace digital technology to improve customer service.

Financial Implications

29. There is a budget of £60,000 to fund delivery of the Action Plan's year one objectives.
30. There will be further calls on reserves to deliver future actions which may come forward as part on the annual review and service planning process.

31. There may also be future bids to capital budgets for investment into the estate.

Risk Management

32. It is important that the Council considers all opportunities to support sustainable economic growth. An Equality Impact Assessment will be prepared as the Action Plan is delivered to ensure opportunities to promote equality and / or barriers to service are considered and addressed.

Other Material Implications

33. There are no other material implications.

Appendices

34. Parking Strategy & Action Plan

35. Covid Addendum

Background Papers

36. The supporting evidence pack can be found at :

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/parking-travel/parking-strategy/>

37. The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning & Economic Growth held on 22 October 2020 can be found at:

<http://midsussex.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g2510/Printed%20minutes%2022nd-Oct-2020%2017.00%20Scrutiny%20Committee%20for%20Housing%20Planning%20and%20Economic%20Growth.pdf?T=1>