

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

Author: Cabinet Member for the Economy and Skills
Cabinet Member for Regeneration
Corporate Director Resources and Growth

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report sets out the recommended draft Town Centre Car Parking Strategy for consideration by Cabinet and to seek to commence a consultation on the Strategy, including on the level of parking charges. The report also recommends some immediate measures aimed at addressing anti-social behaviour affecting the usage of town centre car parks.
- 1.2 The Town Centre Car Parking Strategy was last reviewed in 2011 and, with regeneration projects within the town centre progressing, it is timely that it be updated.
- 1.3 The recommendations, if approved, would help support the following adopted plans and objectives:
 - 1.3.1 Pledge 10 of The Council's Vision, which seeks to promote the regeneration of the town.
 - 1.3.2 The Central Area Action Plan and the Town Centre Masterplan both identify a number of projects that will affect the provision of, and need for, town centre car parking, including the developments proposed at Kimmerfields, North Star, the Carriage Works, and Aspen House.
 - 1.3.3 The Local Transport Plan for 2011-26 identifies parking strategy objectives that seek to support the retail facilities within the town centre by encouraging car parking use for shoppers rather than commuters and by promoting the use of information technology to enable users to find and access car parking spaces more easily.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve for consultation purposes the draft Town Centre Car Parking Strategy, as summarised in section 3.5 and set out in full at Appendix One;
 - 2.2 To authorise the Corporate Director Resources and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Skills, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, and the Head of StreetSmart, to implement the following measures;
-

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from John Seddon, 01793 465279, jseddon@swindon.gov.uk.

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

- 2.2.1 Commence a consultation on increasing the parking charges;
- 2.2.2 Dependent on the outcome of that consultation, to adopt a new schedule of charges for 2018/19.
- 2.2.3 Make provision within the Council's budget for 2017/18 for up to £160,000 to immediately implement the measures outlined in paragraph 3.7.3 and Action Plan measure S1 with the aim of enhancing the quality of the Council's town centre parking stock including the provision of extra cleaning staff.
- 2.2.4 Allocate a budget of £160,000 per annum for 2018/19, funded from increased parking charges, to support the enhanced quality of the Council's town centre parking stock as outlined in paragraph 3.7.3 and Action Plan measure S1.

3. Detail

Background and Consultation

- 3.1 These objectives and the associated action plan have evolved from a detailed analysis of the current town centre car parking provision within Swindon, which has been undertaken for the Council by Regeneris. The output from this work is the Evidence Base and Strategy Report which has been appended to this report (Appendix 1). This included an audit of the available car parking, consultation with retailers, businesses and Council officers and Members on the car parking provision, and an analysis of likely future trends in car parking demand based on current usage and forecast land use changes within the town centre and across the Borough.
- 3.2 With the demolition of the Wyvern and Carlton Street car parks, and the construction of the Whalebridge car park, the current parking capacity in the town centre is estimated to be around 6,900 spaces, split between public and private car parking.
- 3.3 The consultation undertaken by Regeneris consisted of interviews with a range of business groups with an interest in the town centre, including the major retail centres, InSwindon, and Business West. This consisted of an "issues and options" consultation, seeking to identify the priorities of these business groups in relation to car parking provision and management within the town centre.
- 3.4 The input from business groups was invaluable in allowing the key objectives of the Car Parking Strategy to be set and the specific measures within the Action Plan to be identified and prioritised. Subject to Cabinet approval of the draft Strategy, it is recommended that a further round of consultation be undertaken with business groups and a wider audience prior to the formal adoption of the Strategy as part of the Transport Strategy Review.

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

Car Parking Strategy Objectives

- 3.5 The over-arching objectives of the draft Town Centre Car Parking Strategy which Cabinet is invited to approve for consultation purposes are as set out below:-
- 3.5.1 **To support the town centre economy** within Swindon by ensuring that the town centre car parking offer is sufficiently attractive and well managed so as to encourage people to visit the town centre in preference to competing locations.
 - 3.5.2 **To support the delivery of Town Centre Regeneration Projects** as set out in the Central Area Action Plan and Town Centre Masterplan.
 - 3.5.3 **To complement the Town Centre Movement Strategy** by ensuring that car parking is located and signed so as to minimise the amount of car traffic circulating within the core town centre area.
 - 3.5.4 **To support the local economy and businesses at peripheral locations** at the edge of the town centre, including Old Town, Gorse Hill and Rodbourne / Outlet Centre.
 - 3.5.5 **To provide an income stream** to the Borough Council that can be re-invested in transport projects and services that will support the delivery of the Council's Vision, as set out in the Council Plan and the Local Transport Plan.
 - 3.5.6 **To provide easy accessibility to the town centre and its facilities** for people who are reliant upon a motor vehicle for their personal mobility, and specifically those people with a disabled parking blue badge.
 - 3.5.7 **To minimise the impact of town centre car parking upon surrounding residential areas** and ensure that adequate car parking provision is available for residents living within the town centre.

Action Plan

- 3.6 If Cabinet approves the draft strategy for consultation, Members will also be invited to approve, for consultation, an Action Plan to address its objectives. The Action Plan identified for the Town Centre Parking Strategy is separated into immediate, short, medium and long term actions. It is recommended that the immediate actions be taken prior to the outcome of the strategy consultation as these are not dependent on the outcome of the consultation. The Action Plan reflects a number of factors, notably:
- 3.6.1 The need to further enhance the data available on parking patterns within the town centre to support the management of the town centre car parking estate.

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

- 3.6.2 The need to co-ordinate car parking changes with the pace of Town Centre Regeneration Projects, recognising that these will be phased over several years.
- 3.6.3 The need to work with partners to assemble the funding required to deliver some measures contained within the Car Parking Strategy, such as the construction of the new Railway Station Car Park at North Star.
- 3.7 The Action Plan measures identified within the Strategy Report are grouped under the following four objectives:
- 3.7.1 Strengthen evidence base and develop business cases – ensuring that the Council's parking data management systems are improved to provide better quality information to support car parking management decisions.
- 3.7.2 Address capacity challenge and make better use of parking stock – addressing capacity issues associated with the railway station, and ensure that car parks are used to the maximum efficiency.
- 3.7.3 Improve the quality of the car parking experience – tackling anti-social behaviour and other environmental factors to make Swindon's car parks more attractive to use. This will involve the allocation of increased resource to support the delivery of enhanced cleansing regimes with the town centre car parks, and to support homelessness initiatives that will address the underlying issues contributing towards the anti-social behaviour that can occur within town centre car parks.
- 3.7.4 Provide an on-going revenue stream for SBC – annually review charges to ensure that the car parks are efficiently used, and to ensure that revenue is generated that will support both the future management of the car parking estate and other associated Council activities.
- 3.8 The following table summarises the recommended Action Plan measures contained in the Strategy Report:-

Period	Measure	Comment
2017-18	Immediate	
S1	Increase resources available for cleansing operations within town centre car parks to increase their attractiveness and help address anti-social behaviour issues within the car parks.	3 FTE staff would be appointed to support an enhanced cleansing regime, and budget provision made available to address the anti-social behaviour issues within the car parks.

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

S2	Undertake additional parking surveys to fill gaps in available information.	Aim to commission surveys in Spring 2018.
S3	Review parking charge regime on an annual basis, including charging for season tickets and residential parking permits. For 2018/19, an increase in car parking charges is proposed that roughly equates to an increase of £1 for short-stay parking at the main multi-storey car parks, and 10 pence per hour at other car parks. The full charging increase proposed is included in Appendix 2.	For consultation prior to the strategy consultation, and implementation in April 2018, subject to the outcome of the consultation, and to be reviewed on an annual basis thereafter.
2017-19	Short-Term	
S4	Review car park signage strategy, including the potential for the better use of new technology, including Variable Message Signs, to better direct people to car parks, and commence implementation of changes.	Prepare signing strategy for phased implementation from 2018/19 as and when town centre regeneration projects take place and car park changes are made.
S5	Review and implement way marking and information boards for pedestrian routes between car parks and town centre destinations.	First phase of signing and information boards to be installed during 2017/18 in conjunction with existing programme of signage changes.
S6	Identify further improvements to town centre car parks in relation to lighting, CCTV coverage and other measures to enhance the quality of provision.	Approved investment programme of £250,000 per year on major maintenance works at car parks. Fleming Way – 2017/18 and 2018/19. Spring Gardens – 2019/20.
S7	Review payment and management systems to identify preferred system, making best use of new	To be completed by March 2019.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from John Seddon, 01793 465279, jseddon@swindon.gov.uk.

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

	technology.	
S8	Review Park and Ride Strategy.	To include allocated sites at NEV and Wichelstowe as well as existing sites. To be completed by March 2018.
S9	Review of peripheral parking requirements.	To include Old Town, Gorse Hill and Outlet Centre. To be completed during 2018/19.
S10	Consult upon and finalise the Town Centre Parking Strategy.	This will be incorporated within the new Swindon Transport Strategy.
2019-21	Medium-Term	
M1	Closure of The Parade and Cheltenham Street Car Parks as part of the Bus Exchange project.	Potentially in 2018/19.
M2	Closure of the Granville Street Car Park as part of the Aspen House development.	Outline planning application for Aspen House has been submitted. The car park would be lost as part of the Phase 2 development that will follow.
M3	Construction of new car park at Kimmerfields Phase Two.	Programme dependent upon pace of build-out of development.
M4	Installation of preferred payment and management systems at all Multi-Storey Car Parks.	2019/20 onwards.
M5	Implement future phases of car park signing strategy.	2019/20 onwards.
M6	Implement first phases of Park and Ride Strategy.	Dependent upon outcome of Park and Ride Review.
M7	Undertake further Parking Strategy Review to monitor progress with Action Plan delivery, car park performance, and identify future strategy options.	Programme for 2020/21.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from John Seddon, 01793 465279, jseddon@swindon.gov.uk.

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

2021-26	Long-Term	
L1	Construction of new Multi-Storey Car Park at Railway Station.	Linked to Station re-development and new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the railway.
L2	Closure of the Princes Street Car Park as part of SMAG development.	Linked to securing funding for SMAG.
L3	Implement future phases of Park and Ride Strategy.	Potential construction of Park and Ride sites at NEV and Wichelstowe. Dependent upon outcome of Park and Ride Review.
L4	Closure and re-development of Station Road and Sheppard Street Car Parks.	Follows on from new MSCP at Station.
L5	Implement further measures as identified through Parking Strategy Review 2020/21.	

3.9 Resources will be required to enable this Action Plan to be fully implemented. The following sources of funding are currently available:-

3.9.1 **National Productivity Investment Fund** –an allocation of £50,000 has been approved for 2017/18 for the Town Centre Parking Strategy.

3.9.2 **Car Parking Revenue** – the first call upon revenue generated from car parking charges is for the maintenance and improvement of the car parks themselves, and therefore it is considered appropriate that a proportion of such revenue be ring-fenced within the Council's budget for the development and implementation of the Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan. It is therefore proposed that £160,000 be ring-fenced from car parking revenues, from 2018/19, to support enhanced cleansing regimes and homelessness initiatives aimed at tackling anti-social behaviour and making town centre car parks more attractive to use. The increase in parking charges to be introduced in April 2018 is estimated to generate new revenue of approximately £400,000 in 2018/19.

3.9.3 **SBC Capital Programme** – £250,000 per year is allocated within the Transport Capital Programme for Car Park Improvements over the period 2017/18 to 2019/20. The improvement of Fleming Way Car Park is

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

identified as the priority project for 2017/18 and 2018/19, with Spring Gardens following in 2019/20.

- 3.9.4 **Third Party Sources** – some major elements of the Car Parking Strategy will be delivered through or with developers or third parties. This potentially includes the construction of new car parks at Kimmerfields and at the Railway Station, but could equally apply to securing financial contributions from developers of town centre sites towards the implementation of elements of the Car Parking Strategy.

Improving Car Park Quality

- 3.10 In relation to anti-social behaviour, an immediate action plan has been identified that will enhance the level of cleansing taking place within the Council's car parks, provide a greater visible presence of SBC staff within the car parks, and support initiatives to tackle the anti-social behaviour taking place within the car parks which arise in part from homelessness issues. This would require additional investment of £160,000 per year which will, from 2018/19, be met from additional revenue generated from a planned increase in town centre parking charges. For the remainder of 2017/18, however, this additional investment would need to be funded from the Council's budget, to be met from the cashflowing reserve. Given that the measures would be introduced part-way through 2017/18, it is estimated that the required funding will be £100,000.
- 3.11 To improve the cleanliness of the town centre car parks, the existing cleansing regime will need to be extended with additional staff resource (3 FTE posts) being made available to enhance both the scheduled and unscheduled cleansing programme. This model retains the current 7 day week service starting from 6am, but extends cover up to 10pm. This additional resource would also enable the StreetSmart service to undertake deeper cleans more easily as required to address specific issues. The resource required to provide this additional staffing level is estimated at £90,000 in total for the three full-time posts, including the associated on-costs.
- 3.12 This investment would help to address the anti-social behaviour that makes users of the car parks feel threatened and which are a major contributor to the cleanliness issues at the car parks. To be fully effective, the enhanced cleansing regime will need to be reinforced by further measures to address the causes of anti-social behaviour within the car parks. Accordingly, it is proposed that a budget of £70,000 be made available for such measures, which will be reviewed annually and which will complement the work of the Council to support the One Swindon Partnership working with the homeless.

Outcomes

- 3.13 The outcomes to be achieved through the delivery of this Action Plan are:-

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

- 3.13.1 A thriving town centre economy, as measures through low vacancy rates for business premises, and measures relating to footfall and consumer spend.
- 3.13.2 A reliable income stream for the Council, increasing year on year.
- 3.13.3 The successful delivery of the projects outlined in the Town Centre Masterplan, with car parking capacity being provided at the right time and in the right location.
- 3.13.4 An attractive town centre environment that isn't dominated either by car movements or by swathes of parked cars.
- 3.13.5 Thriving local centres at Old Town, Gorse Hill and Rodbourne, as measured by low vacancy rates for local businesses and measures relating to footfall and consumer spend.

Future Demand and Further Work

- 3.14 The analysis undertaken by Regeneris indicates that projected housing and employment growth within Swindon could potentially generate up to 1,600 additional car trips per day into the town centre. Based on current levels of demand, and the capacity changes outlined above, it is considered that there is sufficient car parking capacity within the town centre to accommodate this extra demand.
- 3.15 There will, however, need to be a re-modelling of how individual car parks are used to accommodate some of these changes. For example, the loss of the well-used Granville Street Car Park will lead to the displacement of significant car park demand, typically short-stay shopping related trips, to other car parks. This may mean that long-stay parking at other sites may need to be re-designated as short-stay parking.
- 3.16 Similarly, the amount of traffic circulating along Station Road will be reduced by altering the car parking arrangements for the Railway Station. By focussing these on the North Star site, accessed from Great Western Way, traffic generated by the Railway Station will be diverted around the town centre rather than through the heart of it.
- 3.17 Parking provision for disabled people is provided through the Blue Badge scheme, and through the identification of dedicated disabled parking bays within car parks. It is important that any alteration to the current car parking provision, either through the loss of a car park or through the construction of a new facility, incorporates a review of disabled parking provision, and, where such spaces are lost, a suitable replacement provision is identified and implemented such as, for example, through the expansion of disabled parking provision elsewhere.

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

- 3.18 The Council's current planning policy is that new residential development within the town centre should not have specific car parking provision incorporated as part of the development site (other than access for emergency and service vehicles and some provision for disabled parking). This policy applies on the basis that access on foot, by bike, and by public transport to community facilities, employment, shops and leisure attractions is easy for those within the town centre, and the car club provides access to a vehicle should this be required for specific journeys. This policy will be periodically reviewed, and the availability of town centre parking monitored to ensure that sufficient capacity continues to be available as and when new residential development is proposed within the town centre.
- 3.19 Park and Ride currently has a limited role in providing car parking capacity within the town centre. However, interest from bus operators in serving the existing Park and Ride sites using commercial bus services (rather than dedicated, subsidised, services), and the commencement of development at New Eastern Villages and Wichelstowe (both of which have provision, within their respective masterplans, for Park and Ride sites) means that it is appropriate for a review of the role that Park and Ride could play within Swindon to be undertaken. It is proposed that this review be undertaken as one of the short-term actions identified in the Action Plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 3.20 The progress in implementing the Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored through:-
- 3.20.1 An annual review of SBC car parking provision and performance, covering charges, income generation, management regimes, maintenance requirements, usage patterns and user feedback.
- 3.20.2 A regular review and update of the Car Parking Strategy to ensure that it is kept as up to date as possible, reflecting policy and land use changes affecting the town centre and local centres. The next planned review should be scheduled for 2020/21.
- 3.21 Although a potential option for the future, the outsourcing of car parking management has not been considered within the scope of this current review.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There are many alternative options available in relation to the management of the current car parking estate managed by the Council within the town centre, and especially with regard to the individual measures that could be implemented. In relation to the Town Centre Parking Strategy, the broad option is to retain the current approach. The Town Centre Car Parking Strategy identified in 2011 was never formally adopted, although elements of it have been subsequently

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

implemented, such as the construction of the Whalebridge Car Park and the demolition of the Wyvern and Carlton Street Car Parks. However, with changes to the Town Centre Masterplan, it is not considered advisable to maintain the status quo by not having an adopted strategy in place.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are significant financial implications for the Council, as car parking revenue provides a major income stream worth around £5.178 million in 2016/17 (Gross before operating costs) to the Council.
- 5.2 Closure of the car parks detailed in this paper would result in a loss of Pay and Display income to the Council of around £182,000 per annum, excluding running costs, this representing the loss of income from the North Star Car Park resulting from its transfer to Network Rail ownership, which is the subject of a previous Cabinet decision regarding the land swap involving the Carriage Works. A further £198,000 per annum would potentially be lost from the lease arrangements for the Sheppard Street Car Park, arising from the same land swap. Based on experience from the demolition of the Wyvern and Carfax Car Parks, demand from those other car parks that will be re-developed as part of the town centre regeneration will transfer to other car parks, and the revenue may not therefore be lost. In addition, were the Council to own and / or operate the proposed new car parks at the Railway Station and within the new Kimmerfields Phase 2 development then this income stream would be retained and, potentially, enhanced. However, the timing of closures and replacement is critical financially to mitigate any loss of income to the Council, as is the ownership of any new provision.
- 5.3 The short-term action plan will need further work in relation to the phasing of car park closures and the construction of the new facilities in order to better understand and mitigate the financial impact of decisions on the Council's finances. This work needs to be carried out alongside the progression of regeneration proposals including Kimmerfields, as the loss of some car parking will be dependent upon the progress made with securing funding for associated regeneration projects.
- 5.4 To maintain car park income, the Council needs to invest in the car parking estate to ensure that it remains attractive to use for people visiting Swindon town centre. Crucially, this will involve ensuring that the negative perception of some car parks in the town centre are addressed, and that investment is made in improvements to the car park environments including environmental enhancements, security measures and the provision of better information for users.

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

- 5.5 Car park charging regimes are considered generally appropriate, but should be reviewed annually against car park usage to ensure that revenue is maximised whilst ensuring that the car parks operate at their most efficient level, with occupancy at around 90% of capacity.

The increase in staffed presence at car parks to address some of the perceptions about safety will require an additional 3 FTE posts. These could be either in the form of attendants or cleaning staff. The revenue costs of such staffing increases would be met from any additional income generated by the car parks. This approach would require one-off funding in 2017/18 of up to £160,000 to support enhanced cleansing regimes and anti-social behaviour. The overall impact on the Council's budget is summarised in the following table. Capital funding will be provided from the Local Transport Plan grant. There will be no additional borrowing costs.

Revenue	Annually from 2018/19
	£000
Expenditure	160
Income	(400)
Net	(240)

Capital	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure	250	250			
Income					
Net	250	250			

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.6 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention Rights.
- 5.7 There may be a requirement to amend existing Orders relating to car park charges and restrictions, which would require legal input, and there will also be legal input required to any land transfers or acquisitions required as part of the re-modelling of the car parking estate.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.8 A need has been identified for three full-time equivalent additional staff to provide enhanced cleansing and security within the town centre car parks. These posts will be funded through additional car parking revenue raised from the planned

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

increase in parking charges to be implemented from April 2018, and through one-off funding during the remainder of 2017/18 from cashflow reserve.

- 5.9 Further staff implications arise as a result of changes to car parking management techniques, and these will be clearly identified as part of the business case development for these individual actions as and when these are brought forward for consideration.
- 5.10 The additional staffing will provide improved security at the town centre car parks by providing a more visible staff presence, and this will help to address perceived problems in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 5.11 The re-shaping of the car parking provision within the town centre will help to ensure that the best and most efficient use is being made of Council land resources by transforming poor quality parking facilities into housing and commercial sites, by facilitating regeneration schemes such as the proposed Museum and Art Gallery, and by providing new, high quality, car parking at Kimmerfields and at the Railway Station.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.12 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has not been completed. Consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty has been made and it has identified that there will be changes to parking provision for disabled drivers arising from the re-modelling of the car parks as set out earlier. It is also noted that the general provisions such as security, lighting and improved pedestrian access will have a beneficial impact for all users.
- 5.13 There are a number of initiatives identified within the Parking Strategy Action Plan that will require a through Diversity Impact Assessment to be undertaken, and it is considered essential that these be used to help set the desired outcomes from each initiative as part of the scoping process for each individual project.

Risk Management

- 5.14 A Risk Assessment has not been completed because the individual actions identified within the Parking Strategy will be subject to risk assessment as appropriate prior to implementation.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) have been consulted on this report.
- 6.2 An Officer Group involving representatives from StreetSmart, Highways and Transport, Planning, Finance, Localities, Forward Swindon Limited and Economy, Regeneration and Skills has met on a number of occasions during the

Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6th December 2017

review, and has provided input to the Evidence Base Report and the resulting Strategy.

7. Background Papers

7.1 *The Swindon Parking Strategy Evidence Base Report*

7.2 *Swindon Town Centre Parking – Evidence Base and Strategy Report.*

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Swindon Town Centre Parking – Evidence Base and Strategy.

8.2 Appendix 2 – Proposed Car Parking Charges to be applied from April 2018.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for December 2017.