

# **Town Centre Car Parking Strategy**

**Cabinet**

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

---

## **Swindon Town Centre Parking Evidence Base and Strategy**

2 April 2017

Regeneris Consulting Ltd  
[www.regeneris.co.uk](http://www.regeneris.co.uk)

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

## 1. Introduction and Background to the Strategy

- 1.1 Regeneris Consulting has been commissioned by Swindon Borough Council (SBC) to prepare an updated evidence base and Parking Strategy report for Swindon Town Centre. The purpose of the study is to inform Swindon's strategic choices about future car parking priorities, and to identify the actions that SBC and its partners should pursue to deliver these priorities.
- 1.2 Swindon town centre is expected to see some major changes over the next few years as delivery of the Town Centre Masterplan gathers momentum. This has important implications for the demand for car parking, the supply of car parking facilities and the way the town centre is used in future. These changes bring opportunities and challenges, and the need for a new car parking strategy. Amongst the main drivers of change will be:
- **More Jobs** – New developments will bring additional jobs to the town centre, and with them additional demand for parking spaces for employees and for business-to-business purposes.
  - **More Visitors** – Encouraging greater numbers of people to shop and spend leisure time in the town centre is a key strategic objective for Swindon's economy at a challenging time for the retail and leisure sector. This too would generate increased demand for parking facilities.
  - **New Residents** – The development of new homes in and around the town centre has an important contribution to make in revitalising the area. Parking provision will also need to respond to the requirements of new residents, in accordance with SBC's adopted parking standards.
  - **Changing Patterns of Transport Use** – Swindon is planning for longer-term change in transport use, and the Parking Strategy will be an important component of a wider movement strategy for Swindon.
- 1.3 In discussion with SBC, it was agreed that the area covered by the research should extend beyond the core town centre area, and that it should address car parking in Old Town. New development in Old Town, the need to support the area's businesses and the continuing challenge of better linking shoppers' use of Old Town and the town centre provide the rationale for this. Similarly, parking linked to Swindon railway station, leisure and business use at North Star mean that they should also be considered as part of the study.
- 1.4 This is the draft final report to SBC which will take forward its findings into the work that is now underway on a new movement strategy. The report is structured as follows:
- **Policy context** – A summary of the main policy drivers for the Parking Strategy including key national and local strategies.
  - **Evidence base** – An overview of the main findings from the separate evidence base report prepared as part of the commission.
  - **Strategic priorities** – The key priorities and strategic objectives that have emerged out of work on the evidence base and dialogue with SBC and its partners.
- 

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from John Seddon, 01793 465279, [jseddon@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jseddon@swindon.gov.uk).

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

- Indicative action plan – A description of the proposed actions for delivering the strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation – Guidelines on how SBC should capture the progress it makes in delivering the strategy.

## 2. Policy Context

- 2.1 Local planning authorities are no longer formally required to prepare parking strategies as part of their local transport plans (LTP). As such, there is no current guidance on developing a Parking Strategy in the way that formal guidance is for many aspects of preparing LTP or local plans more generally.
- 2.2 However, there are a range of statutory responsibilities that relate to parking and which are typically addressed both through LTPs and specific parking strategies. For example, the Road Traffic Regulation Act (1984) requires that local transport planning authorities 'secure the convenient and safe movement of traffic, and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities'. The Traffic Management Act (2004) provides for the civil enforcement of parking contraventions, and operational guidance (most recently issued in 2015) sets out the policy and procedures that local authorities should follow to implement it.
- 2.3 At the same time, an area's approach to parking is an important part of economic development and regeneration strategies for urban areas, and is one component of the wider concept of place making. In this section, the study summarises the local policy context in which Swindon is preparing its parking strategy. The scope of the Parking Strategy and the strategic choices that Swindon makes will be directly and indirectly informed by a range of policies and strategies, but will also shape new strategies currently being prepared by the Council.

## Existing Policies and Strategies

---

### Local Transport Plan 3: 2011 - 2026

- 2.4 Swindon's LTP3 recognises the direct connection between parking provision and its usability, and the town's economic performance. The balance between an adequate supply of parking and objectives relating to public transport use and sustainability are identified as important to central Swindon's accessibility and support for economic development. The role of car park charging and shopper's use of businesses is also acknowledged.
- 2.5 The LTP3 describes three main parking related challenges for the town. These are the pricing and location of car parks and the way they attract people into the town centre; under-utilised park and ride facilities; the dispersed nature of employment around Swindon and the town centre, which discourages long-stay parking use. In addition, the LTP3 clearly states that parking provision at the station is an inhibitor to increased rail use.

---

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from John Seddon, 01793 465279, [jseddon@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jseddon@swindon.gov.uk).

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

- 2.6 The Plan identifies seven outcomes to address the transport challenges it identified:
- Improved journey time reliability for all forms of transport
  - Improved road safety
  - Increased overall share of journeys for public transport, walking and cycling
  - Reduced need to travel and reduced dependence on the private car
  - Improved accessibility
  - Improved local environment and quality of life
  - Improved access to the town centre.
- 2.7 The LTP3 identifies a number of specific parking interventions, with those most relevant to this study including:
- a town centre Parking Strategy that will encourage long-stay retail rather than short-stay or day-long parking;
  - flexible parking standards that do not discourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport but which cater for demand at journey origins;
  - new park and ride sites of an appropriate scale and at appropriate locations; and
  - real-time car park information.
- 2.8 The strategic priorities and emerging actions set out in this study reflect the findings and proposed interventions outlined in the LTP3.

## Local Plan

- 2.9 Swindon's Local Plan 2026 provides the overarching strategic planning policy framework for the borough.
- 2.10 Swindon town centre and the borough's economy feature prominently in the key opportunities and challenges at which the Local Plan is directed:
- Jobs growth, meeting the needs of an expanding population, good quality infrastructure and climate change are amongst the key issues in creating sustainable communities.
  - The town has strong potential for economic growth, but the town centre's performance is poor in terms of its retail and office offer and needs improving.
  - Significant new infrastructure will be required to support new development and the town's growth.
- 2.11 These are carried through into the Local Plan's vision for Swindon which seeks to establish it as a place where people choose to live, visit and invest. The town should be an established regional centre and should be attractive and well equipped, with high quality public realm. It should be one of the UK's best business locations, providing residents and people from a wider catchment

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

area with a high quality of life. New jobs will be created offering opportunities for all communities.

2.12 Balanced and sustainable growth which tackles the impact of climate change, together with regeneration and green infrastructure are identified as development priorities. These are echoed in the Plan's 10 strategic objectives.

2.13 Policies which are particularly relevant to the preparation of the Parking Strategy are summarised below:

- The town centre area needs a 'step up' in quality, with the central area the focus of new office development and potentially higher education uses (Policy EC1) and new and enhanced retail and leisure provision (Policy EC3).
- In a total of 22,000 extra dwellings planned for from 2011-26 (Policy SD2), an allocation of 1,000 is earmarked for Swindon's Central Area, meaning new population and parking demand in and around the town centre.
- The Plan sets a jobs growth target of 19,600 additional jobs in the borough from 2011-26, with town centre employment growth having an important contribution to make to achieve this target.
- Transport policies emphasise the development of sustainable transport networks in Swindon, with Policy TR1 targeting reduced congestion, consistency of journey times and trips to and from the town centre. Long-term priorities to reduce carbon emissions from Car travel are also identified, with the objective of reducing travel by car featuring in both sustainable transport policies and supporting text.
- The Plan specifies that leisure and cultural developments should focus on Swindon's Central Area, and this is part of Policy SC1 (see below)
- High quality design in the built environment, public realm and green infrastructure are the focus of policies DE1 and DE2.
- Swindon's Central Area is the focus of Policy SC1 whose extensive scope covers retail, leisure and cultural development, regeneration, access to the town centre and the role of specific locations within this area, including Old Town. The Policy points to substantial new development including 53,700 sq. m of comparison retail space, 90,000 sq. m of office space, 1,000 homes, a new bus interchange and a 1,000 space station car park.

2.14 On parking specifically, the Local Plan includes several direct references to parking standards and requirements.

- Car park safety (Policy TR1) with the supporting text explicitly referring to entrances to multi-storey car parks.
- New developments are required to meet the Council's parking standards, unless there are acceptable alternatives proposed (various policies).

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

- The sub-division of housing and homes in multiple occupation should not generate excessive additional parking pressure (Policy HA4).
- A Parking Strategy must underpin Swindon's transport strategy (para. 4.192).
- Car parking in the Central Area will enhance accessibility and supporting economic development in the area (para. 5.1).

## Swindon Central Area Action Plan

- 2.15 The Swindon Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) provides the policy framework for delivering the regeneration of Central Swindon. The area encompasses; the Town Centre, the Railway Village, Great Western Railway Works, North Star, Old Town and surrounding residential areas.
- 2.16 Several objectives set by the CAAP need to be supported through the town centre element of the Parking Strategy focused on the regeneration of the town centre:
- The co-ordination and delivery of high quality and accessible services and facilities that are needed to support the communities living in or adjacent to Central Swindon.
  - The delivery of high quality and innovative design.
  - The provision of wider opportunities for Central Swindon living.
  - The delivery of commercial and employment generating development that contributes to the continued economic prosperity of the Borough.
  - The creation of safe, convenient, user-friendly and attractive routes into, out of and through Central Swindon, to help develop a vibrant and active community.
  - The enhancement of existing areas of public spaces and delivery of new public spaces
- 2.17 Whilst the car park strategy will have a strong focus on movement and transport, it will also need to act as a tool for the wider regeneration and economic development of Swindon town centre.

## 2011 Parking Strategy

- 2.18 Although it was not adopted by SBC, the 2011 draft Parking Strategy outlined principles and headline objectives which are likely to remain consistent with the focus of the new parking strategy:
- Regeneration of Swindon town centre as a key driver
  - The need to support development and not create perverse incentives to develop out of the town centre
  - The related role of parking provision in pump priming and kick starting development
  - Parking's role in place making by improving the town centre environment

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

- The need for parking policies that are not restrictive (so working against redevelopment and regeneration).
- 2.19 The 2011 strategy was intended to set out key policies including:
- Public off-street parking
  - Quantity of parking spaces
  - The role of the Council as a parking provider
  - Public on-street parking
  - Private non-residential parking
  - Park and ride provision
  - Rail station parking.
- 2.20 A review of the evidence base linked to the 2011 strategy suggests that its focus was on the supply of parking provision in the town, usage levels (for example, occupancy data) and forecast provision. The forecast evidence outlined in the 2011 strategy is now out of date, having been produced in 2002, 2005 and 2006.

## Emerging Policy Framework

---

- 2.21 The new Parking Strategy will need to be consistent with and/or inform a range of plans and strategies on which work by SBC and its partners is ongoing.

## Economic Strategy Review

- 2.22 Swindon's Economic Strategy is currently being reviewed. The new strategy will replace the existing 2013-26 strategy, extending the period it covers to 2036. Focusing on the town's continuing economic growth, the strategy will provide the overarching economic framework for the range of economic development and regeneration initiatives being pursued in Swindon, including the Town Centre Delivery Plan. The town's ambitious employment growth target of 19,600 net additional jobs is likely to be retained.
- 2.23 The final version of Swindon's Parking Strategy will need to demonstrate how the priorities and actions it identifies contribute to the objectives set by the new economic strategy.

## Transport Strategy Review

- 2.24 Work has commenced on the review of Swindon's Transport Strategy which will lead to the production of a new strategy in 2018. The Parking Strategy and action plan will be one component of the new strategy, which will cover the full spectrum of modal issues, infrastructure and service priorities across the borough.

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

## Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan

- 2.25 The key driver of the Parking Strategy is Swindon's town centre masterplan and the delivery plan that will guide its implementation. Parking provision needs to support development, both in terms of meeting the requirements of specific developers and occupiers, and the wider transformation of the town centre that Forward Swindon Limited and the Borough Council are seeking to achieve.
- 2.26 The Delivery Plan sets out a series of priority interventions and development priorities across the town centre, extending from the Outlet Village and Railway Quarter to the core of the town centre, Kimmerfields and Aspen House.
- 2.27 The Delivery Plan is clear that connectivity and accessibility to the town centre, and improving the town centre for residential, retail, leisure and cultural uses are central to what is described as 'good growth'. The Plan also describes the need to achieve a better balance of road infrastructure and vehicle movements in the town centre, which it suggests disconnect the town centre's districts and quarters.
- 2.28 Delivery of a number of the Plan's development priorities will have direct and significant impacts on car parking in the town centre both in terms of demand and supply for parking spaces, including:
- The development of new retail, leisure and cultural facilities which should attract larger numbers of visitors into the town centre and surrounding area.
  - Provision of new car parking linked to the Railway Station.
  - The Kimmerfields development, which has the potential both to provide new car parking to enhance the town centre's supply of spaces and offset the loss of others.
  - New residential development and new employment in the town centre will also generate increased demand for spaces and require land that will impact upon Swindon's existing car parking facilities.
- 2.29 This study has considered the implications of the Delivery Plan as part of the evidence base. The strategic principles and actions it sets out are also consistent with the Delivery Plan's focus and development priorities.

## Movement Strategy

- 2.30 Work is also underway on wider movement strategy for Swindon town centre and the surrounding area. This will deal with the important issues about how access into the town centre can be improved, with SBC needing to balance the continuing use of cars to travel to central Swindon with measures to ensure that economic growth does not result in vehicle traffic dominating the town centre.
- 2.31 The Parking Strategy will inform the priorities and actions set by the movement strategy both directly and indirectly. Changes to traffic movements on Fleming Way and the bus exchange



# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

project will create opportunities and need to remodel car parking in that area. Action to ensure that increased numbers of town centre visitors are easily able to navigate to car parks mean better planned routes and signage into the town centre, issues that the movement strategy is expected to address.

## Summary

---

- 2.32 Local policy and strategies in Swindon identify a clear set of priority objectives for Swindon town centre and the surrounding area. New jobs, residents and visitors are part of regeneration and development objectives to strengthen the town centre's economic performance and ensure that it functions more effectively for people who live, work and invest in the town.
- 2.33 At the same time, SBC has recognised that there are a broader set of objectives which centre on the way that people access and move around the town centre, and which see vehicle use change in the long term through investment in public transport, modal shift linked to carbon emissions and wider sustainability priorities.
- 2.34 Car parking has a supporting role in economic growth objectives for Swindon, and is an integral part of the town centre's transport mix. Redevelopment of the town centre is generating opportunities to better manage and use the land and facilities for parking in across the town centre, Old Town and the surrounding area. However, it also poses challenges to the way that SBC's parking provision is managed, repurposed and improved as demand for parking changes.

## 3. Evidence Base

- 3.1 To inform the parking strategy, Regeneris Consulting were commissioned to compile an evidence base report which focuses on current and future demand, provision and revenue generated by car parking in Swindon. This involved:
- a review of SBC's detailed data on its parking stock, including usage and revenue;
  - consultations with SBC officers, members and external organisations to provide qualitative insight into parking in the town centre and surrounding area;
  - a review of parking in other locations, including strategy and pricing.
- 3.2 This section of the report provides a summary of the full evidence base. The final evidence base report is a standalone document which is intended to be read alongside this report.

## Current Provision and Revenue

---

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

- 3.3 There are currently 20 public car parks with a capacity of over 5,100 spaces<sup>1</sup> within Swindon town centre and Old Town. There are over 4,800 public spaces within the town centre and 320 in Old Town.
- 3.4 There are also a number of private car parks, which provide an estimated 1,678 spaces<sup>2</sup> (although 60 are due to be lost in the near future). The estimated total number of car parking spaces including both SBC and privately owned spaces is estimated to be 6,778.
- 3.5 Car parking is an important source of revenue for SBC, generating c. £4.8m of revenue, which equates to 4% of non-grant funded income for the council. The income data suggest that revenues from 2015/16 decreased by 4% from the previous year.
- 3.6 It is estimated that on average around £1,230 is generated per public space per annum in Swindon town centre. However, there are a number of public car parks that generate significantly less per annum.

## Demand for Parking

---

- 3.7 Actual occupancy data (i.e. spaces occupied) was only available for SBC's multi-storey car parks where there are barrier entry/exit systems in place. The remaining data for surface car parks was limited to data based on tickets purchased, which only provides an indication of the length of stay and not actual behaviour. To help provide a more accurate picture of demand and occupancy across town centre car parks *adjusted estimates*<sup>3</sup> were used.
- 3.8 It is estimated that on average around £1,230 is generated per public space per annum in Swindon town centre. However, there are a number of public car parks that generate significantly less per annum. The adjusted data shows that the peak time for parking (outside of the Christmas period) within the town centre is between 12:00pm and 2:00pm, where the occupancy reaches approximately 47%. However, the average occupancy between 9:00am and 5:00pm is 39%. The adjusted estimates suggest that a number of car parks reach full capacity during 9:00am and 5:00pm.
- 3.9 Of the multi-storey car parks Brunel West Main has the highest occupancy during weekday peak times with 66% of spaces occupied, this is followed by Brunel North (50%), Brunel West Nest (46%) and Fleming Way (37%). The evidence base research pointed to some widely-recognised pinch-points where demand for parking appears to exceed capacity at specific times during the day. Railway station parking was highlighted at peak times, with consultees pointing to the knock-on effect elsewhere in the town centre as rail users sought alternatives to full station car parks.
- 3.10 Parking in Old Town, including very short stays on street and early evening parking were also highlighted. It was noted that the new Corn Exchange development would reduce parking capacity in the area and the need to identify viable alternative options for this is one of the proposed actions in the action plan outlined in this report.

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

<sup>1</sup> Swindon Borough Council; Car Park Information, [http://www.swindon.gov.uk/directory/16/car\\_parks](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/directory/16/car_parks)

<sup>2</sup> Estimate provided by Swindon Borough Council, Strategic Transport Team.

<sup>3</sup> To help estimate the actual occupancy of surface car parks where entry and exit data is unavailable the uplift between actual occupancy and tickets purchased within the multi-storey car parks was used as a proxy.

## Evidence Gaps

---

- 3.11 Whilst there is comprehensive data related to revenues, there are limitations relating to usage and occupancy. The most significant evidence gaps are summarised below.
- **Occupancy data** – whilst there is complete occupancy data for all multi-storey car parks, the occupancy data for each of the surface car parks is much less comprehensive. This is due to the absence of entry and exit barriers at the surface car parks.
  - **User data** – to help understand the user profiles (i.e. shopper, employee, and commuter) for each of the car parks user surveys need to be completed.
  - **Quality data** – a number of consultations suggested that the quality of car parks in the town centre are below par. To gain a further understanding about what the issues are and at what specific car parks, a user survey would be beneficial.
  - **Private provision** - a better understanding of the private supply would allow for a more holistic assessment of town centre parking.
- 3.12 To inform future strategic choices about Swindon's parking provision, it is essential that, as far as possible, these gaps in the evidence are addressed. The proposed action plan set out in this report suggests how this might be achieved.

## Future Demand

---

- 3.13 Future demand for parking in Swindon town centre and the surrounding area will be influenced by three main drivers of change:
- **Population:** there are a number of residential developments proposed across the town centre which will increase the number of residents living in the town centre and in turn potential demand for car parking.
  - **Employment:** commercial development is also proposed across the town centre, which will increase town centre employment and the number of people commuting in to Swindon town centre by car.

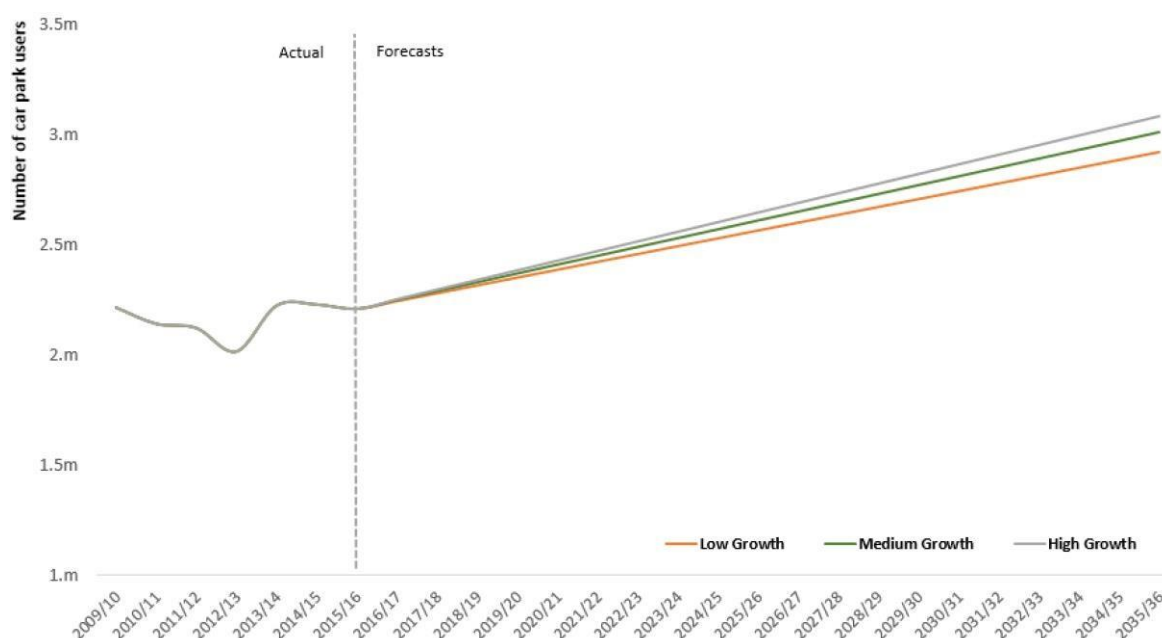
# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

- **Visitors:** proposed retail and leisure developments within the town centre aim to increase the number of visitors to Swindon town centre during the day time and evening, thus increasing the number of cars entering the town centre.
- 3.14 A range of data was used to build a picture of potential future demand for parking across the town centre.
- 3.15 Based on future population and employment growth it is estimated that the total number of car park visits per annum by 2036 could reach c. 3 million.

Figure 3.1 Historical and Future Car Park Demand<sup>1</sup> (SBC only) based on growth scenarios



Source: Swindon Borough Council and Regeneris Consulting

<sup>1</sup> Future demand estimates based on 2036 projections have been split proportionally from 2016/17 to 2030/36

- 3.16 Under the high growth scenario and based on adjusted estimates and current supply of spaces the future occupancy rates for all town centre car parks is estimated to increase to 44%% between 09:00 and 17:00. This will increase to around 53% during peak times between 12:00 and 14:00.

4 Table 3.1 Projected car park (SBC only) occupancy rates based on adjusted estimates by 2036

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

Demand Scenario	9am – 5pm	12pm – 2pm
Current	39%	47%
Low Growth	43%	52%
Medium Growth	43%	52%
High Growth	44%	53%

Source: Regeneris Consulting

- 3.17 Comparing this projected increase in demand with the supply of parking in Swindon has not suggested any significant future deficit in the capacity of the town centre to respond.
- 3.18 There is inevitably some uncertainty about how the scale and type of development that is likely to be delivered in the town centre, Old Town and elsewhere will impact upon future parking needs and the timeframe over which changing demand is likely to occur. As better information becomes available about patterns of parking usage in the town centre, this is a situation that Swindon Borough Council will need to carefully monitor. These future demand estimates should therefore be regarded as indicative at this stage.

## 4 Planned Supply

- 
- 3.19 To date, there is only limited evidence available about planned changes in town centre parking provision. Whilst the current facilities will continue to be the core component of future supply, the evidence base has also taken account of known planned provision and changes to the car parking stock.
- 3.20 A new Network Rail car park (c. 1,000 spaces) is due to be developed to the north of the railway line. This car park will replace some existing car parking provision to the south of the railway line and some spaces in the current North Star car park. A new multi-storey car park with 445 spaces is expected to be part of the Kimmerfields development. Planning permissions for Kimmerfields also identify Phase 2 provision of up to 559 spaces linked to individual buildings, giving a combined potential total of just over 1,000 spaces.
- 3.21 Both these developments are likely to service some town centre need. Whilst the new station car park is expected to absorb demand from rail users, it may also provide a parking option for visitors and employees in the town centre. The Kimmerfields development may meet demand from employees working in the new development, from new residents in the area and potentially shoppers and other business users.
- 3.22 Both the station MSCP and the Kimmerfields development would offset the losses of spaces in other existing facilities<sup>5</sup>. These losses are estimated to amount to around c. 930 spaces. Offset

---

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from John Seddon, 01793 465279, [jseddon@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jseddon@swindon.gov.uk).

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

against planned new provision, the new car parks would result in a net gain of c. +1,078 parking spaces within the town centre. Table 4.7 shows the potential future changes to car parking provision.

<sup>5</sup> Based on information provided by SBC Parking Management Team

Table 3.1 Potential Changes to Car Park Provision

Car Park	Loss	Gain
Granville Street	247	
Princes Street	119	
Turl Street	145	
Parade	114	
Cheltenham Street	102	
North Star	200	
Network Rail		1,000
Kimmerfields		1,005
<b>Total</b>	<b>-927</b>	<b>+2,005</b>
<b>Total Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>+1,078</b>	

## Comparing Swindon Car Parking to Other Areas

- 3.23 In general, the research carried out as part of the evidence base work suggests that, for **shorter stay parking** of 1-4 hours, SBC car parking charges appear in line with those of many other locations. It is noted that, in several locations, multiple car parks are available with either free, very short stay options or prices under £1.00 for 20-30 minutes.
- 3.24 For **longer stay** parking (5+ hours) there is clearly greater divergence, with Swindon's parking charges amongst the more expensive of the locations considered in the study. Given the

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from John Seddon, 01793 465279, [jseddon@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jseddon@swindon.gov.uk).

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

characteristics of the different locations, this may relate to the number of employees working in central areas of cities or towns compared with shoppers and visitors. Locations with higher concentrations of employment in and around urban centres would see more demand for parking, and we would expect to see this reflected in pricing

- 3.25 The comparative analysis of pricing is therefore consistent with some of the feedback from consultations for the research. One consultee, for example, highlighted the practice of employees in Swindon town centre leaving and returning to car parks to avoid the large step in prices at the 6 hour mark in some car parks. Swindon also appears to have bigger variation between car parks for stays of this length; £8 - £22 is the widest differential of the locations which appear above.

## Conclusions

---

- 3.26 The following conclusions were drawn from the evidence base and have shaped the strategic principles and proposed actions which are identified in later sections of this report.

### Quality of Car Parking Stock and User Experience

- 3.27 Swindon Borough Council recognises that there is room for improvement both in the exterior design of its car parking stock and in tackling issues including car park safety, cleanliness, signage and guidance to the town centre. Whilst it is not possible to determine how far this is constraining car park usage and revenue, it certainly affects the quality of the car parking experience and is likely to be a deterrent to users.

### Regeneration and Economic Development

- 3.28 Delivery of the town centre masterplan offers new opportunities to improve the design of the built environment in the town centre, and the look and feel of car parks has a contribution to the overall improvements in the quality of place that Swindon is seeking. This means ensuring that new developments contribute to a better quality built environment in the town centre. It is also about ensuring that the car parking experience contributes to Swindon's objectives to increase the number of visitors spending time and money in the town centre.

### Parking Provision

- 3.29 Future population, employment and visitor projections suggest Swindon town centre will see an increase in the number of cars using and parking in the town centre.
- 3.30 There will also be changes in the supply of car parking in the future and being able to identify precise pinch points in supply and demand is dependent on when and which car parks are earmarked for development/removal.

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

- 3.31 Whilst these estimates are based on the most comprehensive data and assumptions available it is key that a comprehensive survey of actual occupancy and ideally visitor trips is undertaken to gain a better understanding of current demand and occupancy across the town centre.

## Pricing Strategy

- 3.32 Consultation with stakeholders and benchmarking exercises has shown that current parking charges in Swindon are in-line with neighbouring towns and cities.
- 3.33 As part of the evidence base research, a number of pricing scenarios were explored, however further work needs to be done to understand the feasibility of introducing a new pricing strategy. Additional primary research should be carried to understand how changes in parking charges could impact on town centre usage.

## Revenue

- 3.34 Car parking is an important source of revenue for SBC, generating c. £4.8m of revenue, which equates to 4% of non-grant funded income for the council. However, revenues from 2015/16 decreased by 4% from the previous year.
- 3.35 It has been estimated that on average around £1,230 is generated per public space per annum in Swindon town centre. However, there are a number of public car parks that generate significantly less per annum.
- 3.36 Any changes to the supply and cost of parking in the future and the wider impacts on SBC revenues need to be carefully considered given its importance as a source of income at a challenging time for the Council.

## Information Strategy and Signage

- 3.37 As part of wider work on a movement strategy for Swindon, the parking strategy should reflect the need for improved signage and information to guide drivers both in entering the town centre and the way they are directed to the best car park for their purposes in terms of its location and pricing.
- 3.38 Beyond direction to the town centre car parks, the evidence base research pointed to a clear priority to improve both the information about and the quality of walking routes from some car parks into the town centre. This relates both to signage and to the public realm on key routes into central retail core.

## Integration with Other Swindon Strategies

- 3.39 Objectives relating to the movement of cars, public transport, cyclists and pedestrians around the town centre are a focus of the emerging movement and transport strategies for Swindon. The parking strategy and the way it influences future parking provision in the town centre will play a part in how traffic flows in and around the town centre change over time, and in the longer term wider sustainability objectives to reduce the volume of car journeys in favour of other modes



# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

## 4. Strategic Principles

4.1 The Parking Strategy is underpinned by a set of strategic principles which clearly set out what SBC should be seeking to achieve. These principles will guide SBC's approach to car parking over the next few years, shaping both how it invests its resources and how it works with its private and public sector partners.

Figure 4.1 Swindon Parking Strategy



# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

- 4.2 These principles have been explored and tested with SBC officers and Cabinet Members in consultations carried out to prepare the parking strategy. They reflect the key findings of the evidence base research, and SBC's strategic focus for the town centre and surrounding area.

## Explaining the Principles

---

### Short-Term: 0-2 Years

- 4.3 In common with many cities and towns across England, this is a challenging time for Swindon. The exponential growth of e-commerce and direct customer delivery has created significant pressure for the high-street retail and leisure sectors at a time when economic conditions remain uncertain.
- 4.4 The immediate priority for Swindon's town centre Parking Strategy is therefore to contribute to sustaining and ideally increasing use of the town centre and trade for businesses in the core of central Swindon, Old Town and at edge of town centre locations. The supply of parking spaces and their accessibility are current strengths of Swindon which enable it to attract shoppers and leisure users and this must be maintained.
- 4.5 With new investment and physical regeneration now underway through the Town Centre Delivery Plan, this is creating new opportunities to bring more shoppers and commuters to the town centre and surrounding area, but also challenges in its impact on car parking provision. The Parking Strategy must enable SBC and its partners to take advantage of opportunities to plan for new and improved provision, and make strategic choices about the future provision of parking facilities and land where current car parking facilities are earmarked for other uses.
- 4.6 An important part of this process of planning now for the future is to ensure that the Parking Strategy is fully aligned with and integrated into the emerging movement, economic and transport strategies for Swindon. Regeneration and development of the town centre require new thinking about access and movement to and around the town centre, and the Parking Strategy should inform the priorities and action that will be identified in these other strategies.

### Medium Term: 2-5 Years

- 4.7 Over the next 5 years, Swindon Town Centre together with Old Town, the railway station and the area around North Star are set to see new development which has important implications for the demand for car parking spaces and the supply of spaces. New residents, jobs, shoppers and leisure users will bring different and potentially increased demand for car parking spaces, and SBC with its partners must now gear itself to meet this demand.
- 4.8 As some car parking facilities are removed from the supply over the next few years, both the existing facilities and the development of new car parks will need to be designed and delivered to respond to these changes. In some cases, this may be about repurposing facilities so that diverted demand from closed car parks is met. In other cases, this will be about new provision which meets projected future usage patterns.

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

- 4.9 Swindon is already implementing new payment technologies in some of its town centre parking facilities. Rapid progress in the development of car parking technologies brings further opportunities both to improve the way that users access information about parking and their visit to the town, and to widen the options available to users to pay for their parking. This also has positive spin offs in the quality of the intelligence it provides about the behaviour of car park users. Where it is cost effective, SBC and its partners should therefore look to implement the latest parking technologies, designing them into new facilities and rolling them out in the existing stock.

## Long-Term: 5 Years +

- 4.10 Implementation of a new movement strategy for Swindon should see car parking provision work seamlessly as part of the options available to people travelling to the town centre and surrounding area. This means that signage and routes into the town enable users to make the best choices for them about where to park. Parking facilities serving the town centre, Old Town and surrounding area will be contributing to meeting Swindon's objectives for reducing congestion and improving the circulation of traffic around the town, whilst at the same time ensuring that businesses continue to benefit from customers who choose to drive.
- 4.11 Delivery of the Parking Strategy will have helped to ensure that Swindon has a national reputation for transport excellence and for the high quality of its parking provision. New car parks developed in the town centre, Old Town and at the station will have set high standards for urban design and functionality, and will have contributed to the step change in the quality of Swindon's built environment in and around the town centre.
- 4.12 Investment in public transport infrastructure and services, together with successful measures to encourage more residents to walk and cycle into the town centre, will be playing an important part in a long-term modal shift as dependence on car use is reduced in response to climate change. Car parking facilities and pricing will be configured in the long-term to support electric car use, ultralow-emission vehicles and driverless vehicle technology.

## Cross-Cutting: Increase Parking Income

- 4.13 Car parking revenue is an important source of income for Swindon Borough Council at a time when local authorities continue to see the impacts of public spending constraints. The car Parking Strategy must enable Swindon to maintain and increase the revenue its parking estate generates for the Council. It should be a reliable source of income to reinvest both in parking facilities/management and in transport provision in Swindon more generally.
- 4.14 Considering the revenue implications for SBC must therefore be an integral part of the delivery of the Parking Strategy. This means that strategic decisions about changes to car parking provision should be assessed for their revenue implications, whilst the potential impact on income measures which are likely to influence usage and payments should also be assessed before any action is taken.

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

## 5. Action Plan

5.1 This section of the report sets out an indicative action plan for the parking strategy. It groups the actions into four separate action areas. The objectives for each of these action areas are set out in the diagram below.

Figure 5.1 Four Action Areas



## Action Areas

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from John Seddon, 01793 465279, [jseddon@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jseddon@swindon.gov.uk).

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

## Strengthen the Evidence Base and Develop Business Cases

- 5.2 The evidence base research highlights important data gaps. One category of gap relates to how car parking is used in Swindon town centre, Old Town and other edge of town locations. A second relates to the evidence for specific parking facilities or services to be revised or developed.
- 5.3 Filling these gaps has therefore been identified as an action area in its own right. The indicative actions identified under this action area are both a starting point for initiatives which might be taken further down the line, and a means of equipping SBC and its partners with higher quality and up-to-date information to shape decisions about future parking provision.

## Address Capacity Challenges and Better Use Car Parking Stock

- 5.4 This action area is driven by two imperatives: i) ensuring that car parking capacity is maintained as the delivery of new development in Swindon Town Centre, Old Town, the Railway Station and North Star gathers momentum and ii) securing the parking provision to meet future changes in demand.
- 5.5 A series of closures of town centre car parks have either already been announced or are likely to occur in the near future as part of town centre redevelopment. New development in Old Town at the Corn Exchange will generate a need for replacement spaces elsewhere, and the development of a new multi-storey car park at the station will provide new capacity for rail users and knock on benefits elsewhere in the town centre.

## Improve the Quality of the Car Parking Experience

- 5.6 The evidence base research and review of how other cities and towns deliver parking highlighted several aspects of Swindon's town centre parking where improvements need to be made.
- 5.7 Specific car parks would benefit from additional resourcing commitments to improve the security, maintenance and cleanliness of those facilities. Outside car parks, better information and signage to guide users to the town centre would help to improve the overall experience of town centre parking, and there are options to consider for further encouraging and extending the use of cashless paying systems and more flexible ticketing.

## Raise Car Park Revenues

- 5.8 Over the next few years, redevelopment of the town centre, new development in Old Town and ambitious proposals for the North Star and Railway Heritage Quarter areas have the potential to increase car park use and with it, boost the revenue car parking generates for SBC.
- 5.9 This will provide opportunities to review car parking charges in Swindon and enable the town to capitalise on increased demand whilst at the same time recognising the need to balance the revenue priority with the need to support businesses in the town.
- 5.10 Whilst the simplicity of charging regimes and payment options (online/mobile technology, pay on foot) does not in itself increase revenue, moving towards more user-friendly and flexible

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

payment methods has a role to play in encouraging people to spend more time in the town centre, and more money in car parks.

- 5.11 There may also be more opportunities for the clever use of parking facilities to increase revenue in other ways, perhaps through advertising or through extending the use of car parks to 'host' income generating technologies for Swindon.

## Delivery, Timeframe and Costs

---

- 5.12 The action plan identifies the lead delivery body for each action, along with indicative timeframe for starting the action. For the majority of actions, Swindon Borough Council would be expected to take the lead, reflecting the focus on the Council's car parking estate.
- 5.13 Where possible, the action plan suggests when the action might commence and its duration. Many of the actions have 2017 or 2018 start dates. In part, this reflects the need to generate better evidence to inform decisions about the car parking estate before any action is taken.
- 5.14 In some cases, there is uncertainty about timeframes. For example, where the development of new car parking facilities is the subject of action, delivery will be dependent on the complex arrangements involved in getting on-site and the build out rate for the development.
- 5.15 As far as possible, the action plan also includes indicative costs. These will need to be firmed up by SBC as part of the process of deciding which course of action it will pursue.

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

## 6. Strengthen Evidence Base and Develop Business Cases

Objective: To provide the evidence to inform strategic choices about parking provision generally and specific investments		
Focus of Action	Description of Proposed Actions	Timeframe and Funding
Parking Capacity in Old Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assess options for replacement capacity linked to Corn Exchange</li><li>Deliver survey of Old Town businesses and car park users re on-street parking</li></ul>	2017 SBC commission c. £40k total for separate studies
Town Centre Parking Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop and deliver car park usage survey to inform movement strategy, including SBC stock, private stock and on-street parking</li><li>Survey town centre businesses to assess link between pricing and usage</li><li>Review peripheral parking requirements and usage, including Gorse Hill</li></ul>	2017-early 2018 to cover Christmas SBC commission c. £30-40k, through National Productivity Investment Fund BidCo to support business survey
Car Park Safety and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SBC to identify further improvements to specific town centre car parks to increase safety and maintenance</li></ul>	2017 SBC lead
Park and Ride Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assess business case for Park and Ride facilities including Wichelstowe and Eastern villages</li></ul>	2017-18 £10-20k SBC Transport
Future Residential Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Research to establish likely scale of car parking need linked to new residential development in town centre and options for delivery</li></ul>	2017 Internal SBC programme

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

## 7. Address Capacity Challenges and Better Use Car Parking Stock

Objectives: To ensure that existing car parking facilities are designated and managed to maintain capacity To provide the new supply to meet current and future parking needs		
Focus of Action	Description of Proposed Actions	Timeframe and Funding
Improved Parking for Rail Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Construct new multi-storey car park at Railway Station, meeting rail use demand and adding to overall town centre capacity</li></ul>	2021+ Network Rail and Franchise Holder, £5 million +
Increase Town Centre Parking Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Complete new car park development at Kimmerfields Phase 2, positioning as car park for town centre employees and residents</li></ul>	Dependent on build out but £5 million + SBC & developer
Planning Ahead for Aspen House Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Plan to redirect Granville St. car park users to other short-stay and long-stay provision. Agree approach to directing short-stay users to additional designated spaces at Brunel North; long-stay to Whalebridge; on-street provision on Commercial Road</li></ul>	Driven by planning and delivery schedule for Aspen House project
Other Car Park Closures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assess options for redirecting traffic currently using car parks scheduled for closure: Princes St., Station Rd/Sheppard St., Parade, Cheltenham St.</li></ul>	2017 SBC Parking
Park and Ride Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Implement first phases of Park and Ride Strategy, with potential re-opening of Groundwell Park and Ride site</li></ul>	2017-18 SBC lead
Whalebridge Car Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Designate Whalebridge as a long-stay car park geared to employees and promote contract parking. Retain some short stay parking provision, especially at weekends to ensure the car park remains flexible to demand.</li></ul>	2018 SBC lead



# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

## 8. Improve the quality of the car parking experience

Objective: To provide high quality, attractive car parking facilities that enable users to make well-informed parking choices		
Focus of Action	Description of Proposed Actions	Timeframe and Funding
Clearer Signage to Car Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review all signage requirements following car park changes. Identify early actions in 2017/18 that would form the starting point for a phased programme of improvements.</li></ul>	SBC 2017-18
Better Online Information for Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Upgrade car parking guidance web pages hosted by SBC to reflect designation of car parks, ensuring mobile friendly and include 'live' capacity tool e.g. Bath City Centre</li></ul>	2017 – SBC lead £10-15k
Improved Gateways to Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review and implement improved signage and other public realm on key walking routes into Town Centre - initial focus on Whalebridge, Fleming Way, Brunel and Spring Gardens.</li></ul>	2017-18, SBC Lead £100-200k
Park & Ride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Implement later phases of Park and Ride Strategy, subject to demand evidence and planning</li></ul>	2021+ SBC
Improved Interiors and Exteriors of Car Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop and resource a targeted multi-annual investment programme for interiors and exteriors of car parks covering cleaning, security, maintenance. Start with old MSCPs</li></ul>	Section 106 capital + SBC revenue 2017-18 to 2020-21
New Car Park Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop and implement a design code for new car parking facilities as part of building design standards for Town Centre Delivery Plan</li></ul>	SBC/Forward Swindon 2018

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

## 9. Raise car park revenue for SBC

Objective: To generate resources to reinvest in parking and transport		
Focus of Action	Description of Proposed Actions	Timeframe and Funding
Car Parking Pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review parking charge regime with a view to simplifying pricing structure and adjusting pricing in response to increased demand</li></ul>	SBC lead 2017-18
Payment for Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Deliver a phased programme to shift away from pay and display to pay online/phone and pay on foot as and when the car park estate changes.</li></ul>	SBC lead 2019 onwards
Advertising Revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify digital advertising opportunities in SBC car parks, including market testing with town centre businesses.</li></ul>	SBC lead 2017
Other Revenue Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify potential to extend or develop new initiatives using car park buildings to host revenue generating technology (eg. solar panels, wifi hardware)</li></ul>	SBC lead 2018
Under-used Car Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Itemise current contract arrangements and review in preparation for targeted marketing of under-used car parking at re-development sites e.g. Turl Street, Bristol Street</li></ul>	SBC lead 2017-18

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

## 10. Outcomes and Monitoring

- 10.1 Delivery of the Parking Strategy will have both direct and indirect outcomes on the town centre and the surrounding area. The key outcomes that the Parking Strategy will contribute to are:
- A thriving town centre economy, measured by low vacancy rates for business premises, increases in footfall and increases in consumer spending.
  - Thriving local centres at Old Town, Gorse Hill and Rodbourne, again measured by low vacancy rates and increases in footfall and spending.
  - A reliable income stream for the Council, increasing year on year. The Council has suggested a headline target to increase car parking revenue by £400,000, or just under 10%. A timeframe of 3 years to achieve this will align it with the delivery of further, new development in the town centre.
  - 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.
  - A town centre environment which is more attractive to users and where car movements and parked cars have become less prominent over time.
- 10.2 Monitoring progress in implementing the Parking Strategy and delivering these outcomes will require the following to be carried out by SBC:
- Regular reviews of performance data for the car parking stock including usage patterns and user feedback on safety, maintenance etc.
  - Annual reviews of car parking income generated for SBC, which is already an established part of the Council's financial planning.
  - Resident, shopper and visitor surveys to test opinion about experiences of visiting Swindon.
  - Monitoring of changes in traffic flows into and around Swindon town centre.
- 10.3 Finally, the Parking Strategy will need to be regularly reviewed and refreshed as necessary by SBC.

# Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017

---

## Appendix Two

### Proposed Car Park Charges

Category	Current Charge	Proposed Charge	Comments
Multi-Storey Short-Stay (up to 4 hours)	£2	£3	Applies to Brunel North, Brunel West and Fleming Way Car Parks
Other Town Centre Charging Bands		10 pence increase per hour across the board up to and including 4 hours	Applies to the following car parks: Catherine St, Cheltenham St, Granville St, North Star, Princes St, Queen St, Sheppard St, Spring Gardens Multi Storey, The Parade Multi Storey, Whalebridge Multi Storey