

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 13th June 2017

A place-based approach to town car parking and access

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| Accountable member | Councillor Andrew McKinley, Cabinet Member for Development and Safety |
| Accountable officer | Mike Redman, Director of Environment |
| Ward(s) affected | All |
| Key/Significant Decision | Yes |
| Executive summary | <p>Parking is an emotive subject for both residents and visitors to Cheltenham and a significant source of income for the council. This report discusses the proposed parking strategy that will guide the council's approach to managing its parking estate and guide the decision-making process for all parking considerations over the next fourteen years.</p> <p>The report discusses the background to developing the strategy and the risks of having either a poor or no strategy to support our parking considerations. It also makes reference to the decision to select a specialist consultant to develop the strategy on our behalf.</p> <p>The overall output from the consultant comprises:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a report summarising the strategy; and 2. a detailed and evidence based recommendations report. <p>The strategy is supported by a baseline survey report, detailing the current parking estate, a report summarising findings from the public consultation that has been undertaken and site specific recommendations.</p> <p>The strategy also contains an action plan identifying priority activity to be undertaken over the next 5 years, with an indicative timetable to guide early action-planning, subject to resource availability.</p> |
| Recommendations | <p>Cabinet is recommended to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve and proceed with the implementation of the parking strategy as recommended by Ove Arup and Partners Ltd (Arup) in their Car Parking Strategy: Recommendations Report (see Appendix 4); 2. Adopt the indicative 5 year action plan, as detailed in the parking strategy at Section 9.1 (Figure 21); 3. Approve the deployment of existing capital budgets of £287,100 |

already set aside for parking projects, to be used to assist in the delivery of identified priority actions, including upgrading the parking system at Regent Arcade;

4. Authorise the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Development and Safety, to develop and implement the first five years of the parking strategy within available resources, including where necessary, use of the parking revenue reserve.

Financial implications

The proposed strategy outlines a need for some priority improvements / actions; these are improvements to the Regent Arcade payment system and a refresh of the payment machines across the estate. £287,100 is being requested to finance these improvements, funded from reallocated capital funding previously identified for car parking improvements, which has not yet been used. These are under codes CAP202 and CAP206. This will allow for the first phase of improvements to take place and for the strategy to be progressed. Any future improvements, in line with the strategy laid out in the report, will need to be reviewed yearly and budgeted for accordingly.

The broad intention is that investment in environmental improvements will complement the Place strategy and where this links specifically to an uplift in the quality of council-owned car parks, this will be funded through growth in parking revenue.

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| <p>Legal implications</p> | <p><u>General Considerations:</u> The Authority is required to comply with relevant legislative requirements when setting fees and charges. In particular, councils cannot set fees and charges for the express purpose of creating a surplus. Any changes to the car parking charges will require an order to be made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA 1984).</p> <p>Consultation: In addition to the consultation obligations under the RTRA 1984, the Council is required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, when exercising their functions. Protected characteristics are defined in the Equality Act 2010 and include disability and it is important, therefore, that meaningful consultation is undertaken.</p> <p>Process (Parking): Any changes to the Authority's Off-Street Car Parking Order as a result of adopting the strategy will require a variation of the Order to be made under the RTRA 1984; and compliance with the procedure set out in the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. The procedure will require a formal 21 day consultation period which would commence when Notice of the Council's intention to vary the order is publicised in a local newspaper. The legal procedure requires consultation with statutory consultees, as well as the public. Appropriate consideration needs to be given to any objections that are received as a result of the 21 day consultation; however, particular consideration needs to be given to any objections made by the statutory consultees. At the end of the 21 day period and if all objections have been appropriately dealt with, the variation order can be sealed. The publication of an additional Notice within a local newspaper confirms the date that the variation is to take effect.</p> <p>Property: With regard to any disposal, the Authority has a general obligation to obtain the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained (s.123 Local Government Act 1972). "Best consideration" has been judicially considered and, briefly, can be represented by money or by anything that has a quantifiable monetary value. Where a proposed disposal is at less than best consideration, the consent of the Secretary of State is required. A General Consent has been issued where the disposal can be shown to be for the social, economic or environmental benefit of the inhabitants of the Borough or any of them. Additionally, if there is a disposal at an undervalue, State Aid requirements may affect this and would have to be carefully considered and, where applicable, complied with.</p> <p>Procurement of Goods and Services: the Authority will be required to comply with the Contract Rules, as set out in the Constitution.</p> <p>Contact officer: Shirin Wotherspoon shirin.wotherspoon@tewkesbury.gov.uk 01684 272017</p> <p>Contact officer: legalservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk</p> |
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| HR implications (including learning and organisational development) | <p>The proposed strategy outlines the current shortfall in staffing resource within the parking team and makes suggestions as to how this can be addressed, both in the short term and in the longer term through partnership working.</p> <p>HR input will be required in relation to any structural changes and advice will depend on the arrangements which are taken forward to implementation.</p> <p>Staff and Trade Unions will be fully consulted on any proposed structural changes.</p> <p>Contact officer: Georgie Pugh, Georgie.pugh@cheltenham.gov.uk</p> <p>07899 060926</p> |
| Key risks | <p>If the car parking strategy does not effectively support access to the town by car, Cheltenham risks losing customers to competitors, with an associated impact on the local economy.</p> <p>If car parking provision is too plentiful and/or too cheap, this may lead to increased congestion, poorer air quality and a reduction in the use of more sustainable transport modes.</p> <p>If car parks are of poor environmental quality, they will detract from the visitor experience of Cheltenham and impact on the town's reputation.</p> <p>If the car parking strategy results in a reduction in income, it will have a direct financial impact on the MTFS and the authority's ability to invest in its car parking provision and related discretionary environmental activities aimed at optimising access to the town and its facilities, including the promotion of sustainable travel options.</p> |
| Corporate and community plan Implications | <p>The parking strategy project aims to comprehensively review our strategic approach to parking provision within the Borough of Cheltenham, to optimise support for the local economy, whilst supporting sustainable transport modes and retaining or increasing current income levels. The project forms part of the PED Transformation project (VFM1) to deliver MTFS savings, smarter working and the ambitions of the Place strategy.</p> |
| Environmental and climate change implications | <p>The parking strategy supports the reduction of unnecessary car usage within the town centre, through proposals to improve wayfinding, rationalising tariffs and optimising CBC parking facilities, to help minimise carbon emissions and promote good air quality. The strategy also proposes environmental improvements to surface car parks that provide the opportunity for greater urban biodiversity.</p> <p>The strategy will therefore be supporting delivery against the Cheltenham place-making vision, helping to create a town where everybody has the opportunity to thrive.</p> |

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| Property/Asset Implications | <p>The strategy considers each of the council's current parking sites and highlights the potential, subject to detailed business case analysis, for disposal and or redevelopment of certain car parks.</p> <p>Any such disposal will need to have careful regard to the council's overall asset and investment management strategies, as well as the objectives of the parking strategy. As such, any proposal will be subject to consultation with the Asset Management Working Group.</p> <p>Contact officer: David Roberts, david.roberts@cheltenham.gov.uk</p> <p>01242 264151</p> |
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1. Background

- 1.1 In 2015, a car parking member working group (CPMWG) was formed to develop a shared understanding of current parking related issues and scope for positive changes to the current provision. However, the parking service, with no dedicated managerial lead and a lack of specialist technical and managerial expertise has been unable to progress project related work in relation to parking, to feed back to the CPMWG for decision making.
- 1.2 A position statement and discussion paper was taken to SLT on 19th April 2016, where it was acknowledged that any current or planned car parking related changes or improvements should be considered as part of a broader, overarching car parking strategy. It was agreed that Cheltenham Borough Council would commission a consultant to develop a comprehensive parking strategy for Cheltenham.
- 1.3 As part of the Place and Economic Development Commercial Transformation Programme, a cabinet report was approved on 12th July, 2016. The need for a dedicated focus and resource on car parking was identified as a priority workstream. Parking generates c£3.5m gross revenue per annum and is one of the council's largest income streams, yet there has been no strategic planned review of the authority's approach to parking for some time. Parking is also a key component within the council's approach to place-making, which is also being considered within the Commercial Transformation Programme.
- 1.4 The budget for the commissioning of the development of the strategy was approved as part of the Financial Outturn 2015-16 report considered by Cabinet on 12th July 2016 and which specifically approved the use of £60,000 from additional car parking income.
- 1.5 On 27th June 2016, a position statement was submitted to Overview and Scrutiny, detailing the status of the development of the parking strategy. The report can be found in background documents (no. 7)
- 1.6 The procurement of a consultant was completed in November 2016 and the contract was awarded to Arup, supported by Parking Matters, who commenced work on developing a parking strategy for Cheltenham, in line with the council's brief, in December 2016.
- 1.7 The project is required to deliver a strategy that will at least maintain the current level of revenue from parking anticipated within the 2016 MTFS, undertake appropriate levels of consultation and complement Gloucestershire County Council's local transport plan and on-street parking strategy.
- 1.8 The strategy is required to cover a period up to 2031 and will be accompanied by a five-year

action plan.

- 1.9** The tender requirements brief that formed part of the tender for the parking strategy work, can be found in background documents (no. 8).
- 1.10** The objectives of the project have been to deliver a parking strategy that will:-
- ensure the provision of adequate parking up to 2031, that is delivered effectively, logically and at a competitive cost, whilst encouraging access by more sustainable transport alternatives, including walking, cycling and public transport;
 - assist traffic management, minimising congestion and its associated environmental impacts;
 - enhance the visitor experience and thereby help to optimise the economic growth of the town.
 - maintain or increase current parking revenue levels.
- 1.11** The car parking strategy will form part of a wider invest-to-save initiative for Cheltenham Borough Council to optimise economic growth, whilst at the same time supporting the aims of the Place Strategy.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1** The strategic recommendations within the Arup report have been split into four categories that support the aims of the project –
- **Responding to a changing world** – the strategy should ensure it will be able to respond to parking needs of the future.
 - **A Diverse Destination** – the strategy should support the transition of the Town Centre to a quality destination, a place where people want to visit, enjoy and play.
 - **Improving Townscape** – the strategy should contribute to improving the sense of ‘place’ across the town.
 - **Supporting the Economy** – the strategy should support the economy and vitality of the town.

3. Key recommendations

- 3.1** **Parking tariffs** - It is recommended that the town’s car parks are categorised into four groupings, based on location, function and proposed charging regime, as set out in Section 8 of the Recommendations Report.
- 3.2** Parking tariffs in Cheltenham have not been reviewed for many years and Arup has modelled two options, designed to help positively influence parking behaviour as set out in Section 7 of the Recommendations Report. .
- 3.3** Whilst there is a projected uplift in revenue, this can only be a guiding estimate, as there has been no recent testing of price elasticity. Arup suggests a two stage approach, with parking tariffs firstly made consistent based on category and then revised in line with proposed investment in improvements.
- 3.4** Any changes to tariffs and other arrangements such as permits will be subject to a statutory consultation process to allow amendment of the relevant Parking Order arrangements.

- 3.5 Sustainable transport** – as a result of Cheltenham's topography, there are opportunities through investment and partnership working to increase the level of walking and cycling in the town. CBC needs to work with GCC to champion its aspirations for more sustainable travel and a strategic walking and cycling network should be defined to take advantage of funding opportunities as they arise. Cheltenham's Corporate Strategy 2017 commits to the delivery of a walking and cycling strategy and a specialist resource is currently being recruited to support the delivery of this outcome.
- 3.6 Park and Ride** – there is a role for Park and Ride in Cheltenham in improving travel choice for commuters and visitors, whilst at the same time removing traffic from arterial transport routes. However, Park and Ride sites are a significant investment and justification for individual sites needs to be made on their merits and having regard to specific business case and feasibility work.
- 3.7 Way-finding and signage** – there is a need for improvement in signage at all levels, including both within car parks for pedestrians and highway signage to identify car parks clearly by grouping. Consistency of naming conventions is critical and should be agreed between CBC, GCC and private car park operators.
- 3.8 On- and off-street parking** – no obvious case for a wholesale review of on-street arrangements which should be more expensive than off-street to reflect convenience, but evening charging arrangements should be brought into alignment. Potential efficiency and customer benefits from joining up pay-by-phone and enforcement regimes.
- 3.9 Coach parking** – the coach parking offer should be improved by formalising set down and pick up arrangements at Royal Well and Cheltenham Racecourse (which is privately owned).
- 3.10 Disabled parking** – overall level of provision is sufficient. Charging could reduce abuse and revenues could be ring-fenced for improvements. A number of options for charging have been suggested. The Car Parking Working Group was broadly supportive of bringing in charges for disabled parking, to assist with investment in improvements.
- 3.11 Motorcycle and cycle parking** – some secure cycle parking should be provided in the prime and larger car parks. Motorcycle parking should be free and replacing on-street pay and display is likely to be most effective in encouraging use. This would require a collaborative approach with GCC.
- 3.12 Management and staffing** – a dedicated senior staff role is required to implement the strategy and oversee improvements in efficiency and performance. The staffing operation overall is too small and CBC needs to find partners to help create a sustainable parking regime. As part of the transformation work relating to the Place and Economic development division, an operational manager will be appointed to oversee the parking service and implementation of the strategy will be a significant part of the responsibilities of a proposed Commercial Manager post.
- 3.13 Data and information** – there is a clear need for improvements to data collection to help provide better management information and real-time capacity information to inform customers about where they can find available parking spaces. Investment in Regent Arcade is needed to improve the customer experience and current confusion about how the system operates, which leads to queuing at peak times. There is also a need to work with the BID to ensure that digital strategies for the town and parking are aligned.
- 3.14 Processes** – parking permit arrangements should be virtualised and all pay and display machines need to be connected to back office systems to gather real time data. Working with other councils and specialist private providers could improve back office functions and improve customer service and efficiency. More performance data should be published than is currently the case.

- 3.15 Payment methods** - Parking equipment should be updated to include features such as ticketless and contactless payment options. Pay by phone arrangements should ideally be aligned with those of GCC for on-street and on-line payment options for permits should be introduced.

4. Alternative options considered

- 4.1 Do nothing** – this was not considered acceptable, as without an overarching framework, the council's approach to parking provision would be ill-informed by baseline data and customer needs information, leading to a fragmented and potentially damaging long term approach to access to the town.
- 4.2 Develop approach in-house** - it was considered that officers could undertake to develop a parking strategy in-house. However, it was felt that both lack of resource and the level of specialist knowledge required would create an unacceptable delay to the delivery timescales and impact the quality of the report.

5. Consultation and feedback

- 5.1** Public Consultation has been undertaken through both an online and paper survey, organised by Arup, appendix 6, and publicised by a variety of media sources.
- 5.2** A meeting was held between Arup and St Vincents and St Georges Phoenix Centre staff and clients, to better understand disabled resident parking needs and related blue badge considerations. Reference is made to this in the Equality Statement at Appendix 2.
- 5.3** Arup, our consultant, met up with the Gloucestershire County Council Parking Manager to discuss the on road/off road parking relationship.
- 5.4** Approaches to engage the BID, disability groups and parish councils were made by Arup. Whilst these groups didn't feel that face to face discussion was required they did request access to the parking survey as a vehicle to submit their views.
- 5.5** Presentation of the draft strategy by Arup to both Car Park Member Working Group (CPMWG) and the Senior Leadership team was undertaken, with opportunity for questions and clarification.
- 5.6** The draft strategy was shared with the Planning Liaison Member Group and discussed with the Place and Economic Development Manager. Feedback was considered in developing the strategy.
- 5.7** The final draft of the strategy has been considered again by CPMWG, with broad support for the main recommendations and action plan. Input from the working group was also positive for introducing charges for disabled parking provision, to help address a number of operational issues and to help raise funding for identified improvements in provision.
- 5.8** Other comments from the working group on the final strategy draft included:-
- Strong support for investment in improved data collection and functionality to identify where customers are coming from, where we have peaks in demand and to allow real time capacity data to be provided to mobile devices;
 - Need to invest in the quality of provision and improved signage

- Need to ensure that Cheltenham's retail offer and car park pricing policy are in balance, so that we are not pricing ourselves out of the visitor market;
- Need to have a conversation with GCC about Park and Ride provision, to make sure that charging is not a disincentive – e.g. needing to pay more for multiple passengers;
- Need to improve the parking payment system arrangements at Regent Arcade.

5.9 It was agreed with the Overview and Scrutiny chairman that whilst it was unnecessary to formally report back on the status of the project, he would be updated on the output from CPMWG and draft parking strategy documentation., which was done.

6. Performance management –monitoring and review

6.1 The project team have had regular feedback sessions with the consultants to ensure their draft output has been within the requirements of the brief.

6.2 The consultants have engaged with the CPMWG on three occasions to respond to feedback on the draft report output.

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| Appendices | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk Assessment 2. Equality Impact Assessment 3. Presentation - CBC Parking Strategy 2017-2031 4. Recommendations Report (Arup Appendix 3) 5.. Baseline report (Arup Appendix 1) 6. Public Survey Report (Arup Appendix 2) |

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| Background documents | <p>SLT Position Statement S:\Special Projects\car parking\programme documents\status reports\SLT position statement 19 April\Position statement v0.3.docx</p> <p>Cabinet Report 12th July 2016 https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166&MId=2434#AI10373</p> <p>O&S Committee Report 27th June 2016 https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=267&MId=2493&Ver=4</p> <p>Parking Strategy Tender Brief ..\Consultancy brief phase 2\Parking Strategy Consultancy Brief v4 131016.docx</p> <p>Cheltenham Placemaking Vision S:\Special Projects\Place Strategy\Cabinet Council reports\27 March Council report V2.docx</p> |
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| Exempt appendices | <p>7. Specific site recommendations – (Arup Appendix 4) - exempt for commercial reasons.</p> |
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Appendix 1

Risk Assessment

| The risk | | | | Original risk score (impact x likelihood) | | | Managing risk | | | | |
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| Risk ref. | Risk description | Risk Owner | Date raised | Impact 1-5 | Likelihood 1-6 | Score | Control | Action | Deadline | Responsible officer | Transferred to risk register |
| ID002 | If car parking provision is too plentiful and/or cheap, this may lead to increased congestion, poorer air quality and a reduction in the use of more sustainable transport modes. | MR | 22/03/16 | 4 | 2 | 8 | Reduce | Investigation work undertaken as part of the strategy development identifies reasonable balance to reduce the likelihood of this risk becoming an issue. | 2022 | Parking Management team | N |
| ID003 | If car parks are of poor environmental quality, they will detract from the visitor experience of Cheltenham and impact on the town's reputation. | MR | 22/03/16 | 3 | 3 | 9 | Reduce | Public consultation has assisted understanding of the level of impact of environmental quality and focus that should be put upon it within the strategy. | 2022 | Parking Management team | N |
| | If the car parking strategy results in a reduction in income, it will have a direct financial impact on the MTFS and the authority's ability to support related discretionary environmental activities. | MR | 22/03/16 | 4 | 1 | 4 | Reduce | Key consideration of the strategy is likely impact against 2016-17 revenue level. | Dec 2017 | Parking Management team | N |
| ID010 | If car parking charges are set too high, this is likely to impact on the number of visitors to the town and could be damaging to the local | MR | 17/05/16 | 3 | 3 | 6 | Reduce | Investigation work undertaken as part of the strategy development identifies a reasonable balance to reduce the | 2022 | Parking Management team | N |

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| | economy | | | | | | | likelihood of this risk becoming an issue. | | | |
| CR68 | If there is a failure to align and manage the Cheltenham Task Force developments with the Car parking Strategy there is a risk of customer dissatisfaction and the loss of reputation and revenue. | MR | 22/03/16 | 3 | 2 | 6 | Transfer | CTFD Manager has been involved in the parking project and had opportunity to input to the draft strategy. | May 2017 | MR | N |
| ID0012 | If the council does not take on board the recommendations of the consultant then there is the risk that the project will not achieve its objectives | MR | 28/03/17 | 3 | 2 | 6 | Reduce | The project team and consultants must ensure the decision makers are fully engaged with the objectives of the project and that recommendations have a strong evidence based foundation. | May 2017 | JS | N |
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Explanatory notes

Impact – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)

Likelihood – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6

(1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)

Control - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close

Appendix 2
Equality Impact Assessment

[Parking Strategy - Equality impact assessment May 17.doc](#)

Appendix 3

CBC Parking Strategy 2017-2031

[S:\Special Projects\car parking\Strategy\Reports\CBC Parking Strategy -DRAFT \(I\).pdf](#)

Appendix 4

APP3 Recommendations Report

Appendix 5

APP1 Baseline Report

[S:\Special Projects\car parking\Strategy\Reports\APP 1 - Baseline Report \(I\).pdf](#)

Appendix 6

APP2 Survey Report

[..\Strategy\Reports\APP 2 - Survey Report \(I\).pdf](#)

Appendix 7

APP4 Site Specific Recommendations

[..\Strategy\Reports\APP 4 - Site Specific Recommendations \(I\).pdf](#)