

SUBJECT:	CAR PARKING STRATEGY - UPDATE
DIRECTORATE:	DIRECTORATE OF COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	SIMON WALTERS, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 As requested by Performance Scrutiny Committee, to provide an update on progress with the strategy to improve the City Council's public car parking offer in the city.

2. Background

- 2.1 In August 2018, the City Council developed a strategy to improve the car-parking offer in the city. This strategy not only underpins the income targets set for car parking, but also recognises the role car parking provision has on the overall vibrancy of the city centre.
- 2.2 It should be noted that whilst the city council is a significant operator of car parks across the city, it is not the only operator with others such as NCP having a large footprint also.

3. Progress with the Strategy

3.1 Car Park Improvements

This strand focusses on making our car parks the preferred choice for commuters, shoppers and visitors. All our car parks continue to be very popular, but there is always more we can do to invest in our car park stock. Such investment will enhance the feeling of security and convenience of particularly our multi storey car parks.

Actions proposed in the strategy included:

1 – Recruit to vacant posts within the car parking team to provide a visible reassuring staffed presence. These staff to be ambassadors for the service and city.

2 – Explore the introduction of CCTV into Broadgate and Lucy Tower Street Car Parks

3 – Enhance the ticket machines to provide contactless payments across the stock and rectify the connection issues re paying by card

4 – Improve the physical security at our two older Multi Storey car parks. Explore

introduction of access control

5 – Trial the token validation system where shops can give discounts to shoppers parking in Central car park

3.2 Progress under this strand has been significant:

1 –The vacant car park attendant posts that were available at the time the strategy was developed have been recruited to. We therefore have an increased visible presence across many car parks to assist our customers. Currently we have only one vacancy.

2 –CCTV will be introduced to Lucy Tower Street car park and Broadgate car park. Designs are being finalised and in addition, the installation contractor has offered some additional technology that will make it much easier for customers to find a parking space. It is envisaged the schemes will be installed and operating by the end of the financial year.

3- The ticket machines are being replaced presently. New connection technology has been deployed at Lucy Tower street car park which enables more effective card and contactless payment options. Customer feedback is this works much better and so is being rolled out to Broadgate car park presently. Ticket machines on our surface car parks are also being replaced to aid connectivity and hence enable pay by card options. This replacement programme will again be completed by the end of the financial year.

4 – Access control is being re-assessed presently. The area of most concern is one staircase on Broadgate car park. Officers are assessing options to gate this staircase off to remove the very localised Anti-social behaviour occurring in that stairwell. At the same time we need to still facilitate pedestrians exiting the car park at this staircase to comply with fire regulations for the car park.

5 – The discount-parking scheme with a local retailer is working very well with positive take up. We hope to encourage other retailers to adopt the scheme over the coming months.

3.3 Permit Parking

There has to be a careful balance between shopper, visitor and commuter parking, as filling our car parks with permit commuter parking removes the capacity for these other types of users to park their cars.

But there is potential to bring in some additional permit parking. Early discussions have taken place with a number of large employers in the city.

Actions:

1- Approach major employers in the city and ascertain if they have or are likely to have contract parking requirements

3.4 Progress under this strand has continued and permit parking has increased so far in 2019/20 by 12% *for the first quarter* over 2018/19.

We continue to balance the needs of permit parking with the needs of other city centre stakeholders who prefer to see a higher turnover of spaces during the day and so bringing more customers into the city centre.

3.5 Residents Parking

There is clear evidence that a number of commuters are parking in the Sincil Bank area of the city. This strand looks to introduce residents parking across a range of areas including 22 streets closest to the city centre in the lower high street area.

Clearly if successfully implemented, it will encourage commuters to ideally modal shift (to commuting by public transport, cycling or walking) or if they require their car, move into car parks nearer the city centre be they city council or competitors. Overall, the city council does anticipate an increase in city centre parking as a result and hence officers are planning for this.

Actions:

1. On street car parking survey completion for Sincil Bank area to determine the level of commuter parking
2. Resident surveys in Sincil Bank re Residents Parking Scheme
3. If yes vote, roll out residents parking in 2020/21

3.6 Progress under this strand has included:

1 – The kerbside survey of commuter parking in the Sincil Bank area has been completed and confirmed that the streets in the northern part of the area do experience significant commuter parking. If a residents parking scheme were implemented this will result in traffic volumes decreasing by up to 30% in peak times from cars circulating the area looking for spaces. This project therefore seeks to give those streets back to the local community by removing commuters. This will also have other benefits such as improved air quality and the potential for further environmental improvements moving forward such as redesigned traffic flows in the area and creating green corridors for pedestrians and cyclists.

2 & 3- The resident survey is due to close on 23rd August 2019 and once evaluated by the County Council then a decision can be taken on whether to progress or not. 50% or more of those voting need to be in favour for it to move to the next stage.

3.7 Promotion of the City as a Destination

Clearly there is a direct link between activity in the city centre and parking. People do not visit the city centre simply because the parking is great - it's a factor but not THE factor. The city centre needs to be vibrant which in turn attracts customers.

We therefore will explore a new relationship with businesses and event promoters in the city to maximise visitor numbers.

Actions:

1. Explore a different model with Business Improvement Group, Visit Lincoln (VL), and other event promoters, where additional income generated from events is put back into hosting further events
2. Support key events in the year: late night Christmas shopping evenings, Uphill “village in the city” promotional events, steampunk etc.
3. Support tourism related activity, particularly by VL, to attract new visitors to the city

3.8 Work on this strand will be a focus next year. With the capacity we have available, 2019/20 has been focussed on the other strands above.

1. Conversations have taken place to explore ways of funding further events in the city centre to generate footfall. These will be progressed over the year ahead
2. The City Council continues to support key events through the year by aligning car parking offers and encouraging people to come into the city to enjoy the events
3. When the City Council takes over the operation of the Tourist Information Service in April 2020, we will revisit the opportunities this presents to explore offers to the tourism sector

3.9 Asset Rationalisation

The strand looks to achieve the outcomes of the overarching strategy for car parking provision in the city. This strategy advocates concentrating parking on bigger city centre car parks and removing from the stock the much smaller flat surface car parks dotted around the city centre. The rationale is that customers will move to the larger car parks and the city council can then redevelop these smaller sites for a new purpose that further helps maintain the vibrancy of the city centre.

Actions:

1. Identify those car parks in council ownership that could be re modelled
2. Develop an options appraisal for each

3.10 Limited progress has been made on this strand yet. The County Council are developing a Transport Strategy for the city and this needs time for agreement to be reached on the outcomes with a range of stakeholders. This strategy will be vital in determining how people will access the city and city centre in the future.

Once this is published, we can reflect on how its findings affect our provision of car parks across the city. This is clearly a project for 2020/21 and beyond.

4. Strategic Priorities

4.1 Let's drive economic growth

Provision of parking is vital to the vibrancy of the city centre – offering a safe,

secure and accessible way for people to access the area using their car.

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Finance

Members will note the performance of this strategy within the Quarter One finance report, featured as a separate item on this agenda.

6. Recommendation

6.1 Members are recommended to :

- i) Note the contents of the report and progress in delivering the strategy
- ii) Offer any further comments and observations as appropriate

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? None

List of Background Papers: None

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