

SUBJECT: PARKING STRATEGY REVIEW

DIRECTORATE: COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide a summary of the Parking Strategy and Delivery Plan and recommend approval from Executive.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The provision of adequate and efficient off street and residents parking in the City is crucial in helping ensure Lincoln successfully continues in its role as the key urban centre for Lincolnshire and the wider area. The last Parking Strategy was produced in 2015 and the city has changed significantly since that time, so a new strategy is required that meets the needs of residents and businesses now and into the future.
- 2.2 Officers have been working on a review of the Parking Strategy and production of a Parking Delivery Plan and these two pieces of work have now been completed. The delivery plan effectively sets parking service priorities and policies to be delivered by the Council over the next 5 years. It should be noted that the strategy predominantly focuses around off-street parking provision in our car parks, but also covers the City Council's role in connection with on-street residents parking too. It does not cover the majority of other on-street parking provisions /restrictions -these being within the remit of Lincolnshire County Council.

3. Background

- 3.1 The management and operation of Car Parking is a challenging and is a high-profile area for the Council particularly given that the Council has two roles; one as a car park operator and one as a strategic policy maker. It is a difficult task to strike a balance between ensuring the Council's revenue stream from car parking income is maintained and at the same time providing and encouraging people toward a using a more sustainable modes of transport.
- 3.2 The Council operates 22 car parks which provide a total of 3,563 spaces within its boundary. The last Parking Strategy produced in 2015 through the use of external consultants and obviously, since that time significant changes have taken place in terms of development within the City and transport and planning policy at both national and local levels. Such changes warrant the need for the production of an updated Parking Strategy which the Council can take forward with confidence.

4. Previous Parking Strategy

- 4.1 The last Parking Strategy and accompanying Parking Delivery Plan was adopted by Executive in March 2015. The Delivery Plan set out 3 Priorities for Car Parking via 3 Action Plans:

Action Plan 1: **Improve Parking Supply**

Action Plan 2: **Improve Efficient Access, Use & Visitor Experience of Parking**

Action Plan 3: **Develop Proposals for Encouraging Measurable Modal Shift**

- 4.2 The previous Parking Strategy also set the following vision:

“The City of Lincoln Council will deliver a truly inclusive and sustainable parking strategy which delivers reduction in carbon emissions whilst supporting the growth ambitions of the City”.

5. Parking Strategy Review Process

- 5.1 An internal Parking Strategy officer steering group was established to oversee and steer the work, chaired by the Director for Communities & Environment. A scoping paper setting out the brief for the review and the key issues to be covered was agreed in October 2022.

- 5.2 The first phase of work involved undertaking a review of progress made in delivering the measures set out in the 2015 Parking Strategy Delivery Plan. Significant progress has been made in delivering a number of measures set out in the delivery plan. The most obvious and high profile of which was the development and delivery of the new Lincoln Central car park which opened in November 2017. Other measures delivered include:

- Expansion of residents parking zones **-completed and further zones now being assessed**
- Investment in ticketing machines and electronic payment methods **-completed**
- Roll-out of electrical charge points in City Council owned car parks – **completed but with further opportunities being assessed**
- Discounted parking fees for low emission vehicles **–in place**
- Park & Ride scheme at Waitrose – **continue to fund and officers sit on steering group for this scheme**
- Improved signage-**completed**
- Investment in staff training-**completed**
- Investment in improved security features-**completed with significant re-investment in CCTV and physical security on site**

5.3 Factors for Change Since 2015

The factors which set the parameters for the review of the Parking Strategy included the following:

- Climate Change and Sustainability

- Contribution of Parking Income on Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Impact of Covid
- Technological advancements in Parking
- Parking Pricing
- Innovation and Future Proofing
- Rationalisation of car park assets

5.4 These factors helped in turn to set the overall scope of the review of the Parking Strategy. The agreed key issues to be covered were as follows:

- Particular focus on the next 5 years to protect income streams, maximise contributions from those not already directly contributing income to the city's infrastructure and/or adding pollution, and to start the transition (whatever form that ultimately takes) to 'greener' forms of transport measures.
- Links to relevant updated strategies e.g. Local Plan, Lincs Transport Plan, Bus Improvement plan, Lincoln transport strategy, Rail strategies etc. Navigate the tension between city centre parking and modal shift towards Park and Ride/Mobility hubs
- Understand how city centres are going to change and how the council should respond to that through exploration of the future function of the city centre (building on the work of the High Street Taskforce) and the role parking will play in that.
- Further invest in existing stock in accordance with its life cycle
- Exploration of new parking opportunities across the city, working with key partners
- Explore charging tariffs to achieve a balance between maximising income whilst encouraging modal shift
- Create a long-term vision taking us to 2035 – embracing all the changes above and how they will impact on the council's vision for the services and providing that long term direction of travel
- Production of a 5-year action plan
- Introduction of an annual review in such a dynamically changing environment

6. Future Mobility Workshop

- 6.1 As part of the review, it was important to understanding the major shifts which have taken place in national, regional and local transport policy planning. Consideration of future approaches to transport, movement and the integration of parking within wider transport initiatives is crucial going forwards. External advice therefore was sought from consultants -WSP's Future Mobility team and a workshop was held in April 2023 with the officers from the Parking Strategy Steering Group and two members of the WSP team.
- 6.2 The workshop was designed to consider the drivers of change within the wider policy context and identify how space could be repurposed or optimised to cater to changing user needs and respond to the pressures brought on by the climate emergency.
- 6.3 As an overall summary, there is potential for the council operated car parks to be used for more than simply spaces for car parking e.g. space for mobility hubs, EV charging hubs. However, these will need to be introduced in the appropriate way

and very carefully to ensure the vitality of the city centre would not be adversely affected either during or after transition.

7. Stakeholder Engagement

- 7.1 In order to inform the update of the Parking Strategy, 4 workshop sessions were held in June 2023 with key stakeholders from across the City. The sessions involved officers from the City Council's internal Parking Strategy Steering Group and representatives from organisations including Lincolnshire County Council Highways, Public Transport, Further & Higher Education and Business & Tourism.
- 7.2 The full write-up from the workshops is contained within Section 5 of the Parking Strategy report but it was clear that the various stakeholders found the workshops useful and during all the sessions participants provided constructive comments and input.

8. Public Consultation

- 8.1 Between July-August 2023, a parking survey was undertaken with the survey being accessible via a QR code which was located on all City Council car park ticket machines. The survey was publicised on the Council's website and via social media. The response rate for the survey was good with a high of 520 respondents per-question.
- 8.2 The full write-up from the survey is contained within Section 6 of the Parking Strategy report but in summary, overall, the results from the survey reflect positively on the quality of council operated car parks. The quality of the car parks, prices charged generally, and sense of safety felt by users were clearly reflected in the survey results.

9. Member Engagement

- 9.1 Members were invited to a workshop to consider this strategy and action plan on 24 July 2024 and the report was considered by Policy Scrutiny Committee on 29 July.(See Appendix 3) Key themes emerging from these sessions have been incorporated into the final resulting strategy and delivery plan where appropriate.

10. Key Implications on the Parking Strategy Moving Forward

- 10.1 The Parking Strategy needs to reflect and respond to the speed and nature of change that has happened and is happening in the city since the last parking strategy was completed. It is also clear from evidence based on current car parking performance and from stakeholders, that the demand for parking remains and is substantial. The strategy is therefore based on the fact that the car parking service is of good quality and is in demand, and this will likely remain the case over the initial 5-year duration of this plan.
- 10.2 With the pace of change, it makes sense for the strategy to focus on the next 5 years but also be cognisant of the longer-term horizon with reference to future changes on the horizon, for example any proposals to make changes to the highway network in the city centre, which would have a significant impact on council car parking operations.

- 10.3 The strategy needs to acknowledge that there is a delicate and sensitive balance in the City to provide sufficient parking to maintain and support residents and businesses in Lincoln whilst at the same time encouraging modal shift from a carbon reduction perspective. Getting this right represents the single biggest challenge over the duration of this strategy. This balance is achieved to an extent in this first plan period by continuing to encourage the move to electric vehicles to cut emissions, and then seek over the full term of the strategy to reduce overall car volumes entering the city centre, and hence influencing other wider strategy documents such as the City Centre masterplan review and Lincoln Transport strategy.

11. Aim & Strategic Objectives of the Strategy

- 11.1 The Parking Strategy (**Appendix 1**) has the following revised aim:

The City of Lincoln Council Parking Strategy aims to deliver high quality, good value parking which meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors alike that will help support the sustainable growth of the City and surrounding area.

- 11.2 The following strategic objectives have also been developed:

1. Continue to provide and maintain a wide choice of high-quality parking provision for residents and visitors in the city supporting Lincoln's business and visitor economies.
2. Support existing residents parking schemes and explore the expansion of residents parking where required to improve the quality of life for residents living near the city centre.
3. Only where opportunities exist, and a reducing level of demand for parking allows, carefully rationalise car parking provision and where possible reinvest any associated capital receipts back into parking services.
4. Maintain and enhance income streams from parking through diversification of services offered.
5. Support the further rollout of EV charging infrastructure in the Council's car parks

- 11.3 The Parking Strategy then sets out 6 priorities for action over the next 5 years which are set out in a delivery plan (with timescales) starting on page 24 of the Parking Strategy Report. For ease of reference the priorities are:

- **Priority 1:Re-distribute demand**
- **Priority 2:Maintain and diversify income streams**
- **Priority 3:Car park improvements including preparing for shift to electric vehicles**
- **Priority 4:Residents Parking**
- **Priority 5:Events, marketing and branding**
- **Priority 6:Asset maximisation**

- 11.4 As this is such a changing operating environment, it is proposed to review the action plan annually together with a light touch review of the overall strategy every three years.

12. Strategic Priorities

12.1 Let's drive inclusive economic growth

The Parking Strategy will help ensure the Council can provide sufficient parking to maintain and support residents and businesses in Lincoln. It is therefore a key element of maintaining the economic vitality of the city centre.

12.2 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality

The Parking Strategy will help ensure parking remains good value for money and supports an inclusive approach to non-car modes of transport for those people who cannot afford to, may not have access to, or consciously decide not to have a car.

12.3 Let's enhance our remarkable place

The Parking Strategy will help ensure the City remains an attractive destination for visitors as well as residents through the provision of accessible parking.

12.4 Let's address the challenge of climate change

The Parking Strategy seeks a sensitive balance in the City to provide sufficient parking to maintain and support residents and businesses in Lincoln whilst at the same time encouraging modal shift from a carbon reduction/climate change perspective. This can only be balanced over the full timeframe of the strategy.

13. Organisational Impacts

13.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no direct costs associated with this report. Any measures contained within the Car Parking Strategy which could have a future financial impact for the Council will be reported further at that time and factored into the MTFS.

13.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are considered to be no legal or procurement impacts directly relating to this covering strategy. Any measures contained within the Car Parking Strategy which could have a future impact for the Council will be reported further at that time.

13.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Existing and new measures contained within the Car Parking Strategy and Delivery Plan are intended to make parking provision as accessible and equitable as possible for all. The public consultation captured a number of comments in connection with disabled drivers/passengers and where possible these have been reflected in the strategy. The Full Equality Impact Assessment is attached as **Appendix 2** and provides further details.

14. Risk Implications

14.1 (i) Options Explored

Not updating the Council's Parking strategy would mean that the Council does not have a strategy which reflects current and future car parking demands as well as addressing environmental matters around climate change which could have a negative impact on the City and its residents and visitors alike.

14.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

The key risk is that whilst simultaneously seeking to achieve a range of perhaps competing objectives, the strategy instead unintendedly undermines the economic vitality of the city centre. It is considered that the strategy does mitigate this risk by taking a pragmatic and balanced approach with opportunities to review its impact at regular intervals throughout the plan period.

15. Recommendation

- 15.1 That the Parking Strategy and Delivery Plan be recommended by Executive.

Is this a key decision?	Yes
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?	3
List of Background Papers:	0

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