

# **FOR PUBLICATION**

## **MONITORING OF PROGRESS ON PARKING REVIEW**

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MEETING: ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE

DATE: 6 OCTOBER 2015

REPORT BY: CULTURAL AND VISITOR SERVICES MANAGER

WARD: ALL

KEY DECISION REFERENCE: N/A

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BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR PUBLIC REPORTS: Report on Review of Parking Policy Medium Term Strategy 2013/14 – 2015/16  
Report by Scrutiny Project Group on Review of Parking February 2013

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### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To provide a progress report on the recommendations resulting from the review of parking, which was undertaken by the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in February 2013.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 To consider the progress report on the implementation of Scrutiny's recommendations to enhance the quality of current parking facilities in Chesterfield town centre, given the change in circumstances in the intervening period.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 In 2011 a fundamental review of the Council's parking policy was carried out by Drivers Jonas Deloitte. Linked to this review the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee set up a scrutiny project group to develop a set of recommendations to enhance the quality of current parking facilities within the town centre.

3.2 In March 2013 Cabinet approved a parking policy for Chesterfield town centre which aims to provide:

- Competitively price car parks with simple charging structures and convenient payment methods
- Modern car parks that are consumer friendly, secure and with convenient opening times
- Accessible car parks that optimise usage, minimise congestion and encourage footfall

3.3 Cabinet also approved that the recommendations of the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee be supported through the implementation of the medium term parking strategy. These recommendations were:

- That the barrier system of parking control, which gives change, should be extended to include other car parks
- That improvements be implemented that bring Beetwell Street multi-storey car park up to a modern standard
- That improvements to signage across the town centre and at key entry points to off-street car parks be undertaken

3.4 A medium term parking strategy, covering the period from April 2013 to March 2016 was developed, which set out a number of key actions that would help deliver the Council's aims and address the recommendations of the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

### **4.0 PROGRESS TO DATE**

4.1 Following on from the adoption of the parking policy a number of changes to the operation of the Council's car parks have been implemented. These have included:

- The introduction of free parking for residents, at certain times of the day, in 12 town centre car parks
- The introduction of all day parking charges at multi-storey and fringe car parks
- The provision of parking facilities for Blue Badge holders was reviewed and changes were subsequently introduced to reflect demand
- Wider bays for parents with young children were introduced in Rose Hill and Soresby Street surface car parks and Beetwell Street multi-storey car park
- The pay by bay system of payment was removed in all car parks where it was operational
- Some improvements to information signage at entry points to car parks have been introduced

4.2 Some of the other actions, contained within the medium term strategy, including Scrutiny's recommendations were not, however, acted upon for a variety of reasons, which are explained below.

## **5.0 CIRCUMSTANCES IMPACTING ON DELIVERY**

- 5.1 Pay on foot (barrier) ticket systems are currently installed at the two Council multi-storey car parks and at both Rose Hill and Soresby Street surface car parks. After discussions with the Highway Authority it was discovered that, because of the necessary highway requirements, it is not possible, for technical and financial reasons, to install pay on foot ticket systems in any of the other town centre car parks. The only exception to this would be at Holywell Cross car park but because of the uncertain future use of this development site it is not proposed that such an investment is made at this time.
- 5.2 When Scrutiny made its recommendations in February 2013 about the improvements to Beetwell Street multi-storey car park it was based on the understanding that Saltergate multi-storey car park would either be rebuilt or completely refurbished as part of a potentially retail led development on the Northern Gateway site. Circumstances have changed within the retail market and the future development of this site may now be leisure led and may not be able to contribute financially towards any improvements to the multi-storey car park. Subject to funding being made available, improvements now need to be made to both the Council's multi-storey car parks.

5.3 Improvements to information signage have been undertaken at some of the town centre car parks, as recommended by Scrutiny. However, because of the financial pressures on the Council, the introduction of a variable message signage system, which would direct drivers to car parks with spaces, is not a priority and has not progressed.

## **6.0 FUTURE PROPOSALS**

6.1 The medium term strategy for the implementation of the Council's parking policy ends in March 2016 and is now in the process of being updated.

6.2 A parking management strategy has been identified within the town's masterplan as being an important element in improving how the town centre operates for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors to Chesterfield. It supports an investment in both multi-storey and surface car parks and the provision of cash-less payment mechanisms at all car parks for efficient and convenient use of visitors.

6.3 The principles as outlined in paragraph 3.2 of this report will remain the same and will be reflected in a report, which will be presented to Cabinet in November 2015 which will detail a set of actions which will help deliver the Council's parking policy over the next 5 years. The outstanding recommendations, which were put forward by Scrutiny and are still viable, will be addressed within this report.

6.4 It will be proposed in the November Cabinet report that the ticket machines in all car parks, including Beetwell Street multi-storey, should be replaced. They incur relatively high maintenance costs, are no longer supported by the supplier and in 2017 when the new £1 coin is introduced some of the machines will not be able to accept them. The new machines will be more customer friendly and will be able to take card payments and will have a facility to pay by phone.

6.5 Pay and display ticket machines do not normally give change for a number of practical reasons including the size of the machines required to house all the necessary coins and the risk of theft. However, in order to deliver Scrutiny's recommendations, it is proposed that within the tender documents a request for the provision of ticket machines which give change will be included. An assessment can then be made as to whether the purchase of such machines, if they exist, is practical and financially viable.

6.6 A full options appraisal, including an intrusive structural survey, on Saltergate multi-storey car park has been commissioned. A report which will include a fully costed options/potential solutions for the

regeneration of Saltergate multi-storey car park will be submitted by the end of November. This report will provide the information necessary to enable the Council to make an informed decision on the level of investment required at both multi-storey car parks.

- 6.7 The November report will also recommend that that all signage within car parks should also be improved, giving clear opening times, tariffs' information on contraventions and other parking advice. In addition, it will be recommend that some work should be done to assess if a variable message signage system is appropriate for a town the size of Chesterfield and to provide costs for an on street directional signage system.
- 6.8 The Cabinet report will contain other recommendations which will make the car parks more customer friendly, secure and accessible. However, members will have to approve both the recommendations and a funding package to implement the proposals. Given the Council's current financial situation this will be challenging and, even is approved, may require a phased approach to its introduction.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 To consider the progress on the implementation of Scrutiny's recommendations to enhance the quality of current parking facilities in Chesterfield town centre, given the change in circumstances in the intervening period.

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You can get more information about this report from Bernadette Wainwright (Tel: 01246 345779).