

TITLE OF REPORT: HITCHIN PARKING REVIEW - POTENTIAL SCHEMES

REPORT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, HOUSING AND ENTERPRISE

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report summarises parking issues identified to date in Hitchin by Councillors, members of the public and other organisations. This report seeks the Committee's views on priorities and which parking management schemes to proceed with.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This Report contains a key recommendation that was first notified to the public on 1st June 2009 for the NHDC Car Parking Strategy Review.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's Parking Strategy Action Plan identifies Hitchin as the next town to be considered as part of the Area Wide Review process (i.e. in financial year 2011/12).
- 3.2 A number of potential parking schemes have been identified in recent years and are listed in Appendix A.

4. ISSUES

- 4.1 The parking strategy proposes reviews of parking management in each town on an area wide basis. Hitchin is due to be considered in 2011/12 but there is limited resource with regard to delivering schemes so priorities need to be identified.
- 4.2 The Committee is asked to consider the parking issues set out in Appendix A, whether there are any missing from the list and, taking into account available resources, what the priorities are. Officer comments and priorities are included in Appendix A.
- 4.3 With regard to funding, the Area Review will be able to draw on £65k of NHDC funding. There is also £12k of s106 money available for at least one project (see scheme A in Appendix A) and Area Committee discretionary funding (see scheme F in Appendix A). Other sources of funding may become available (i.e. additional s106, Growth Area Fund (GAF) or other NHDC discretionary funding) but at this stage no assumption is made about any additional funding.
- 4.4 Priority 1 issues are those that are regularly brought to officers' attention and/or are areas without controls and potentially suffering from displaced parking from elsewhere.

This includes a review of Town Centre on-street parking in light of comments from members of the public and the Council's decision to consider the introduction of Sunday and evening charges in off-street car parks. Scheme A will be funded by s106 funds and has to be delivered by December 2012 so is within priority 1.

- 4.5 The priority 2 issues (scheme F) could be packaged to help keep costs down. It includes those junction protection measures referred to JMP and to which the Area Committee has committed £5,333.
- 4.6 The total cost estimate for priority 1 and 2 issues is £82k. This means all £65k of NHDC's funding is estimated to be used. At this stage schemes listed as priority 1 and 2 can be progressed with available funding.
- 4.7 Priority 3 schemes vary from reviews of existing CPZs (schemes I to K), extension of existing controls (scheme H – albeit with potential to become a larger project involving adjoining residential area) and the significant scheme G. Scheme G covers a large area and number of properties. This is a complex area and although it adjoins the town centre, there has not been a significant complaints from residents regarding space being taken by non-residents.
- 4.8 Priority 4 schemes have the potential to be considered by HCC alongside other traffic management schemes that the Hitchin Urban Transport Plan may promote. Scheme L is a parking restriction and does not restrict movement of vehicles along roads in Hitchin as a weight limit would do.
- 4.9 Any of the schemes listed as priority 3 or 4 could potentially be brought forward but the Committee is advised that a priority 1 or 2 scheme would have to drop out as a consequence.
- 4.10 This review will take a minimum of 18 months. The first 6 months includes investigatory work and initial consultation with local residents and businesses. Subject to the outcome of this work, proposals can be consulted on and then designed with a view to be implemented over the following 12 months.
- 4.11 The Committee should be aware that once initial consultation has been undertaken officers will be able to identify a clearer picture of the full scope of projects and costs required to deliver them. At this stage the agreed programme (based on Appendix 1) could potentially be refined.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 NHDC's agency agreement with HCC permits the management of on-street parking and creation of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to manage parking as the Council considers appropriate. The Committee will be advised of any TROs required to deliver the Area Review at the appropriate time.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Appendix A sets out cost estimates for each scheme. At this early stage cost estimates are aligned with the available budgets for the Area Review.
- 6.2 Cost estimates include assumptions about consultation, survey, Traffic Order and lining/signing work that will be required to deliver schemes. As the physical scope of several proposed schemes is difficult to quantify at this stage estimates should be considered 'at risk'. Where more detail emerges following prioritisation, the Committee will be advised of any implications for the programme.
- 6.3 There is existing s106 funding that will be used for scheme A. Other s106 funding received could be used for some of the proposals and, potentially, a limited amount of Growth Area Funding if necessary. Area Committee discretionary funding is assumed for scheme F.
- 6.4 A key risk is that the priorities are not set and the process is delayed. The programme for delivering all schemes is planned to be a minimum of 18 months so it is important to prioritise the programme as soon as possible.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The ongoing work on this project will be undertaken from existing staff resources. There is potential to use private survey companies where budget allows. In addition there is potential to use HCC's consultant to draft TROs where budget allows.
- 7.3 The Council will need to consider the resource implications of administration and enforcement as schemes progress and consult staff on any proposed changes to working patterns.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND MEMBERS

- 8.1 The Cabinet Member for Transport has been consulted throughout the process to date. Ward Members and the Committee will be briefed in detail on the proposals as they progress.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Area Committee agrees the Hitchin Area Parking Review priorities for progressing in 2011/12.
- 9.2 The Area Committee receives regular updates on progress with the Hitchin Area Parking Review from the Transport Policy Officer.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 In order to progress the Hitchin Area Parking Review project towards implementation.

11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

11.1 A number of issues and schemes have been considered and prioritised in Appendix A.

12. APPENDIX

12.1 Appendix A – Hitchin Area Parking Review list of potential schemes

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14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 None.