HITCHIN COMMITTEE
14 JANUARY 2020

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: NHDC PARKING STRATEGY DRAFT PARKING OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - REGULATORY

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING & TRANSPORT: COUNCILLOR PAUL CLARK

CURRENT COUNCIL PRIORITY: ATTRACTIVE AND THRIVING / PROSPER AND PROTECT / RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

NEW COUNCIL PRIORITY: BE A MORE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COUNCIL / BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES / RESPOND TO CHALLENGES TO THE ENVIRONMENT / ENABLE AN ENTERPRISING AND CO-OPERATIVE ECONOMY / SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF GOOD QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE HOMES

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of the Draft North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Operational Guidelines 2019 – 2031 is to detail how the Council proposes to implement the policy framework set out in the adopted North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Strategy 2019 – 2031 (January 2019). The document outlines the necessary guidance and assessment criteria to be followed to enable officers to deliver the Strategic Action Plan, as well as review and update the guidelines as required throughout the life of the Parking Strategy in consultation with the Executive Member and Deputy for Planning and Transport to reflect changes in parking trends, and ensure that these are aligned with the Council's priorities.

1.2 This report seeks the approval of the Council's Parking Operational Guidelines 2019 - 2031, as well as agreement of the associated Parking Issues Reporting Pack at Appendix A, B and C respectively.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee agrees and recommends the Draft North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Operational Guidelines at Appendix A to Cabinet in March 2020 for consideration and adoption.

2.2 That the Committee agrees and recommends the draft North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Issues Reporting Pack Part 1 and Part 2 at Appendix B and C to Cabinet in March 2020 for consideration and adoption.

2.3 That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that delegated authority is given to the Service Director - Regulatory to approve minor amendments and format changes to the draft Parking Operational Guidelines as required in consultation with the Executive Member and Deputy for Planning and Transport.

2.4 That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that officers proceed with the work associated with the key projects listed in the Parking Strategy Strategic Action Plan using the Parking Operational Guidelines to implement the policy framework.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The draft Parking Operational Guidelines will provide the necessary guidance and assessment criteria for the Parking Strategy policy framework for managing parking across the District in a most cost efficient way that accords with the Council's Corporate Objectives and its Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 Due to the concerns raised by Members and stakeholders regarding the apparent lack of guidance within the Parking Strategy on how the policies would be implemented, not producing a Parking Operational Guidelines document was not considered a suitable alternative option.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1 Regular meetings have been held with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport and their deputy to ensure that the draft Parking Operational Guidelines aligns with the adopted Parking Strategy and documents are representative of the Council.

5.2 Contact will be made with town centre managers in the towns, Royston Town Council, Hertfordshire County Council and the Garden City Heritage Foundation in early January 2020 to seek their views and comments as they were involved with the stakeholder engagement project of the Parking Strategy.

5.3 Parish Councils will be made aware of the draft document and will be given the opportunity to make comment in January whilst the document goes through the Area Committees.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 Given that this report will be referred to Cabinet for consideration in March 2020, it will contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 6 December 2019.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1 The Council's role with regard to on-street car parking is one of the management and enforcement of all on-street parking restrictions in the District. This management and enforcement role also includes the off-street car parks that the Council owns and/or manages. NHDC is also the local planning authority responsible for parking standards for new development.

7.2 In respect of on-street parking (public roads and streets) enforcement, the Council acts on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council (as the Highway Authority) under the terms of an agency agreement between the two authorities. The Council's agreement with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) does not include the implementation of other on-street parking controls that are intended to address safety or public amenity issues.

Any parking initiatives that the Council may wish to introduce that may impact on the highway will require the agreement of HCC as the highway authority.

7.3 The Council's parking policies must comply with the law (particularly the Traffic Management Act 2004); and have regard to the Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions, issued in 2014.

7.4 The Council adopted the NHDC Parking Strategy in January 2019. The main focus of the Strategy is to provide the Council's policy framework for managing parking across the District. It sets out how parking issues are currently dealt with and identifies a number of objectives and proposed actions for which future investment may be required. These objectives are reflected in the overall policy framework which covers four areas:

- *Management and resources to deliver the strategy*
- *Management of on and off street parking within town centres*
- *Management of parking within residential and non*-town centre areas
- *Management of parking at new developments*

The Strategy also seeks to embrace new technologies in making provision for electric vehicle charging in new developments and the potential to install public on-street charging points. The adopted Parking Strategy can be viewed ion the Councils website at:

https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/parking/parking-strategy

7.5 There will be a number of ongoing parking challenges that the Council will need to address in future years, and careful management will be required to ensure that new parking provision and controls are aligned with the Council's economic, social, planning and transport priorities. It is often the detailed way in which parking policies are applied at the very local, street-by-street, level which requires the most careful consideration and generates most debate.

7.6 In order to enable officers to deliver the policies and Strategic Action Plan in the Strategy, reference is made to the preparation of a separate document 'North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Operational Guidelines'. This document is to be read alongside the Parking Strategy and outlines the necessary guidance and assessment criteria to be followed.

7.7 In order to facilitate the process it will therefore be important that the Operational Guidelines document remains a living document alongside the Parking Strategy which adapts to emerging issues and provides a flexible approach to identify opportunities to review the actions and ensure that the they become deliverable in the future in the light of available resources.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

The Draft Parking Operational Guidelines

8.1 The detail of how the Council proposes to implement the policy framework is contained in a separate document, the 'NHDC Parking Operational Guidelines' which sets out the necessary guidance and assessment criteria to be followed. Having these guidelines contained within a separate document will enable officers to review and update the guidelines as required throughout the life of the Strategy in consultation with the Executive Member and Deputy for Planning and Transport to reflect changes in parking trends and ensure that these are aligned with the Council's priorities. The NHDC draft Parking Operational Guidelines can be found in Appendix A.

8.2 The draft Operational Guidelines document follows the structure of the Parking Strategy Document and is broken down into three sections:

Section 1: Introduction, Context and Objectives

Section 1 outlines the purpose of the document, the national and local policies that should be considered in conjunction with the document and the objectives of the Parking Strategy and Parking Operational Guidelines.

Section 2: Policy Framework and Operational Guidelines

Section 2 outlines the detail of how the Council proposes to implement the policy framework set out in the Parking Strategy and states the necessary guidance and assessment criteria to be followed to enable officers to review and update the guidelines as required throughout the life of the Parking Strategy.

Section 3: Appendix

The Appendix includes the Parking Issues Reporting Pack.

8.3 As well as enabling the Council to approach parking issues in a fair and consistent manner, new opportunities to manage the parking stock across the District and generate additional income have been included in the draft Parking Operational Guidelines. These include:

- Other Services in Council Car Parks: In line with modern car park operations, there is potential for other services to be provided in off-street car parks in the District. Where appropriate some of these services may benefit car park users and the Council will consider opportunities on a case-by-case basis. The full criteria that the Council will use to consider providing other services and temporary uses within its car parks are set out in Policy 7.

- Charging for On-street Parking: whilst on-street parking in town centres is generally free, this is an anomaly given that off-street parking for the same duration is generally charged. The Council will consider the case for on-street charging on a case by case basis. The Parking Operational Guidelines now includes a number of categories the Council may consider to implement charges for, such as parking bay suspension requests from utility companies. The full criteria are set out in Policy 9.

- Employee Parking Schemes: The Council may consider proposals from employers and other organisations such as the BIDs representing employers in any of the town centres in the District for an employee parking scheme. The criteria for an employee parking scheme are set out under Policy 17.

- Sale of Permits to Non-residents in Controlled Parking Zones: The Council recognises that where CPZ's were previously designed to favour residents and exclude commuters or employees and have been successful, this has in some cases resulted in under-utilised road space where there is very little use of the available on-street space during the day. In several CPZ zones the take up of permits is low and the net effect is increased cost to the Council to manage these zones, due to lower than required income to cover costs and spare space in locations where demand for parking would be high if left unrestricted. There is potential to sell permits to non-residents in each zone on a managed basis. A decision on selling non-residential permits in underutilized zones will be based on the criteria set out under Policy 23.

Parking Issues Reporting Pack

8.4 The Parking Issues Reporting Pack has been developed to introduce a formal structure for the reporting of parking issues to North Hertfordshire District Council and for making requests for measures to control parking on the public highway across the District.

The pack includes an overview of the legal process that the Council has to follow in order to introduce a new Traffic Regulation Order, and the information that the applicant will need to include before they submit their case evidencing a genuine parking issue. This process will assist the Council with understanding the reported issue and, where needed, allow a priority to be given when compared to other requests.

It is anticipated that adopting this structured approach to reporting parking issues will help streamline the Work Programme and ensure that only essential schemes are progressed which will ensure a more effective use of Council resources.

8.5 The delivery of the Strategy, associated Action Plan and the Operational Guidelines are very much reliant on the efficient use of available resources. In delivering this Strategy the Council will face the challenge of delivering value for money while maintaining and developing the parking function/service so that it remains, and is seen to be, fair, efficient, effective and responsive to change and where possible should cover the cost of providing the service. Opportunities for third party funding (directly or through grants) must also be explored where considered appropriate, for example as a part of investigating improvements to the Council's multi-storey car parks, there may be opportunities for some joint funding from town centre management as part of the BIDs and other relevant stakeholders (See Financial Implications Section 11 below).

8.6 It will therefore be important that this Parking Operational Guidelines document, alongside the Parking Strategy remains a living document which adapts to emerging issues and provides a flexible approach to identify opportunities to review the actions and ensure that the they become deliverable in the future in the light of the available resources (both financial and staffing). To this end it is recommended that Committee recommends that the draft Parking Operational Guidelines are put forward to Cabinet for adoption and that delegated authority is given to the Service Director - Regulatory to review and agree updates/amendments to the Operational Guidelines and Strategic Action Plan as required in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Under the Terms of Reference for Cabinet Paragraph 5.6.1 of the Constitution states that the Cabinet can prepare and agree to implement policies and strategies other than those reserved to Council.

9.2 Under the Responsibilities for Functions-Summary Paragraph 14.3 of the Constitution states that decisions about executive functions may be taken by Officers.

9.3 Specific legal implications of the policies within the adopted Parking Strategy and draft Parking Operational Guidelines will need to be considered as the projects commence within the Action Plan, such as the requirement for any new and revised Traffic Regulation Orders to implement changes to on and off street parking arrangements. Any parking initiatives that are likely to impact on the highway will need to be undertaken in consultation with Hertfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority and other relevant statutory undertakers as required in the Traffic Management Act 1984 (and subsequent revisions).

9.4 Should on-street charging proposals come forward then the requirements of the Traffic Management Act 1984 (and subsequent revisions) will need to be considered. This may require a review of the agreement between the Council and Hertfordshire County Council regarding Decriminalised Parking Enforcement.

10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Draft Operational guidelines have been prepared by officers and funded through existing budgets.

10.2 The main financial commitments arising from the delivery of the Strategic Action Plan in the adopted Parking Strategy for next financial year are as follows (subject to Corporate Business planning considerations):

- Completing the Letchworth and Royston Parking Reviews and addressing issues relating to existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO), such as the review of the off-street TRO and any associated implementation of lines and signs. There is an existing Town Wide Parking review reserve of £347k and an additional £89k in the lines and signs maintenance budget for this work. The town wide budget is an annual budget of £65k.

- Undertaking necessary reviews and feasibility work associated with the wider actions. At present there is £53k of Growth Area Funding within the revenue budget and £285K of funds within the capital budget that has been put forward as a capital bid for 2020/2021 to fund the projects identified in the Action Plan that will require further investigation, feasibility studies and funding for implementation such as the pay-on-foot trial. Outside of these budgets future actions will require capital/revenue bids as part of the annual budget setting process, unless third party funding, either through grants or direct funding, can be secured.

10.3 Feasibility and review works are intended to help identify efficiencies or where investments can be justified to improve the service to the customer and be financially justified. Identifying financial and risk implications will form part of the feasibility/review works.

10.4 It is the intention for the Parking Strategy and draft Operational Guidelines to ensure that the costs of car parking (e.g. providing, enforcing and maintaining car parking) is efficient and covers the cost of the service and where available and appropriate to fund contributions towards other related parking initiatives and transport services identified through the Parking Strategy and the NHDC Transport Strategy. It is also possible that parking income may be in excess of the costs of running costs, initiatives and other transport services. This would reflect that charges have been set on the basis of managing demand, to reflect alternative parking locations and to encourage the use of other modes of transport.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Adoption of the draft Operational Parking Guidelines will provide the Council with the opportunity to proceed with short-term and mid-term projects as set out in the Strategic Action Plan to improve parking across the district within the context of a new policy framework.

11.2 “The Parking Service” and “Implementation of Parking Strategy” are already identified as risks on the Council’s Risk Register, although these risks will be reviewed comprehensively and reassessed to reflect the adopted Strategy following adoption of the Operational Parking Guidelines. Currently, officers have assessed “Implementation of the Parking Strategy” as a Medium risk in terms of both Impact and Likelihood.

11.3 Some of the main risks associated with the Operational Parking Guidelines and the Strategic Action Plan include:

- The management of member and customer expectations in terms of delivery of the actions;
- Income estimates or costs associated with new payment methods are significantly different from those estimated;
- Improvements to multi-storey car parks and other initiatives do not improve usage and contribute to the vibrancy of the town centres;
- Budget constraints mean that suggested priorities cannot be progressed in line with the Strategic Action Plan; and
- There will be insufficient staff resource to deliver the action plan either on time or to the quality required.

11.4 The review of risk implications associated with each specific action and the related approach to managing these risks, will form part of the delivery process and officers will update the Risk Register accordingly.

11.5 There will be a number of ongoing budgetary and parking challenges facing the Council over the lifetime of the Strategy, and it will therefore be important that the Parking Strategy and the draft Parking Operational Guidelines remains a living document which adapts to emerging issues and provides a flexible approach to identify opportunities to review the actions and associated risks to ensure that they become deliverable in the future in accordance with available resources.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.2 There are not considered to be any direct equality issues arising from this report. The guidelines provide clarity, consistency and transparency of approach for all users and officers. Any individual schemes or consideration that arises from the Strategy will be subject to appropriate review to ensure they comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. NHDC has a process for the reporting of parking issues for those who are experiencing issues.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at Section 13.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are limited resources available within the Regulatory Service to be able to deliver the Parking Strategy, Action Plan and Work Programme. However, the NHDC Parking Operational Guidelines and Parking Issues Reporting Pack will provide a structured process to determine which parking controls should be prioritised. It is anticipated that this will provide additional capacity for the Parking Projects Officer to deliver the Parking Strategy Action Plan and Work Programme.

14.2 Resourcing and training requirements will need to be considered for any changes to the Car Park Management System, new internal processes and the introduction of any technological changes. It is noted that the intention is for the service to be self financing with the revenue received from on and off street parking.

15. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix A – Draft North Hertfordshire District Council Operational Guidelines

16.2 Appendix B – Parking Issues Reporting Pack 1 – User Guide

16.3 Appendix C – Parking Issues Reporting Pack 2 – Application Form

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1 Cabinet Report – 29 January 2019 – NHDC Parking Strategy Review

17.2 North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Strategy 2019-2031 and associated Strategic Action Plan