

Strategic Parking Review

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Baxter
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
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Wards Affected	All but with specific implications in the resolutions for Bromsgrove Central, Lowes Hill and Sanders Park wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Infrastructure
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RESOLVE that:-

- 1) The Business Case and Service review in respect of the delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement Service (CPE), as detailed in the appendices to this report, be noted.
- 2) The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property Services considers the future use of Churchfields Multi Storey, School Drive and Stourbridge Road car parks within the development of the new Town Centre Strategy.
- 3) Following the review of delivery options for Car Parking Enforcement, and the impending changes arising from Local Government Devolution, and subject to the agreement of resolution 4, the Assistant Director of Environment and Housing Property Services in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services to agree to extend the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Wychavon District Council for a period of 3 years and 7 months resulting in an end date of 31st March 2030.
- 4) The Assistant Director of Environment and Housing Property Services in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services amend the SLA with

Wychavon District Council for Parking Enforcement to include a minimum of 25% of patrol time to be undertaken outside the town centre.

- 5) The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Property Services works with partner organisations including Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council to establish a Parking Working Group in order to work through and consider the range of options contained within the Appendices to enhance the opportunities for better enforcement across the District.
- 6) The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Property Services following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration develops a detailed implementation plan including all technical surveys and full costs to install, where practicable and affordable, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems to Recreation Road South, St Johns and Windsor Street car parks and to also investigate other car parks under the ownership of the Council.
- 7) One of the following options relating to the Shopmobility service be approved:
 - a) To cease the operation of the Shopmobility serviceOR
 - b) To review the provision of the service following the outcome of the Town Centre Strategy Review and the outcome of where the enforcement team are relocated.

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-

- 8) The Director of Resources includes in the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2025/26 a capital budget of £100k for ANPR systems to Recreation Road South, St Johns and Windsor Street car parks.
- 9) A revenue budget of £15k per annum be included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan from April 2026 for the maintenance contracts for the ANPR installations.
- 10) A revenue budget of £335,160 for Car Parking Enforcement be included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan from April 2025, which is to include an annual inflationary uplift, determined by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

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2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 14th February 2024 Cabinet resolved to seek a Strategic Review for Parking Services including on and off-street enforcement. The review would also provide a Business Case, based on options that would consider agreement of a longer-term SLA with WDC, tendering the service and in house delivery of the service.
- 2.2 Waterman Infrastructure and Environment were commissioned by Bromsgrove District Council to undertake the Strategic Review. This proposal was based on a brief that was discussed and agreed, in consultation with, the Cabinet Advisory Group on 8th May 2024 and included three key deliverables.
- **Strategic Review** - A review of existing parking requirements including supply and demand for now and in the future. This needed to review all sites on a site-by-site basis with options to address existing parking issues. It also needed to be linked to the wider Worcestershire Transport Strategy because of regeneration objectives to increase town centre living and footfall to support retention of the existing traders. The review was also to include Leisure Centre users and a review of the Shopmobility service.
 - **Car Park Management** - A review of car park management arrangements with solutions identified to reduce the need for off street parking enforcement including an outline of costs, together with operational and enforcement issues. Also to be included were recommendations for time and day of restrictions to address existing parking issues and assess enforcement requirements for identified parking management design options.
 - **On-Street Enforcement** - Review of On-Street Enforcement to be carried out to address member and resident concerns around coverage of activities. A review of concentration of enforcement and hotspots for law breaking/nuisance was to be undertaken, focusing on repeat offences. A variety of thematic options were to be recommended, emphasising the comprehensive approach the study had taken to reviewing car parking supply, usage, location and the land use planning and transport agendas that were shaping it.
- 2.3 The three reports covering these deliverables are contained within **Appendices 1, 2 & 3** respectively.
- 2.4 Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) operates a number of fee charging car parks and also a number of free car parks and has also taken responsibility for the enforcement of On-Street Traffic Regulation

Orders (TROs) since Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) was introduced within BDC on 30 May 2013. This has allowed a more consistent approach to traffic enforcement, as staff are able to enforce both On-Street TROs and Off-Street Parking Orders for car parks owned by the District Council.

- 2.5 Wychavon District Council (WDC) have been contracted under an SLA to manage the Parking Service on behalf of BDC for the last 11 years. At the Cabinet meeting on 14th February 2024, it was agreed to maintain the services of WDC for a shorter period of 18 months whilst the options of alternative delivery models were considered and reported back to Cabinet as part of this report.
- 2.6 In the interim period officers from BDC and WDC have worked together to review the concerns of members, including, primarily, the out-of-town patrol time, whilst also ensuring that a full quota of CEOs are maintained in order to deliver the service effectively. Data on patrol time, and PCNs issued is collated monthly and has generally shown two key trends, increased levels of PCN activity, as well as more, proportionally, patrol time spent in the Parishes.
- 2.7 WDC's responsibilities include Overall Management of the Parking Service for both On and Off-Street enforcement and liaison with County Council Highways together with the following non-exhaustive list:
- Recruitment, management and training of the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) (5.5 posts)
 - Full administration service including general enquiries, challenges, appeals and adjudication (2.5 posts)
 - Recovery of the outstanding Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) (including warrant instructions)
 - The management of Residents' Parking Schemes (RPSs)
 - Monitoring equipment used to include parking machines to ensure continued usage including restocking machines with ticket rolls
 - The day-to-day operation of the Shopmobility service including servicing of scooters and liaising with customers
 - Issuing Parking Dispensations
 - School Patrols following liaison with school staff
 - Disabled Blue Badge inspections
 - DVLA Audits
 - Various reporting including car park usage and PCNs issued.
- 2.8 **Shopmobility** – As part of the Strategic Review, Members requested that the Shopmobility service be incorporated into the business case as it is based in Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park, next to Asda. Shopmobility is currently open Mon-Sat (9.30am to 1.30pm) (bookings

only). The service used to be open Mon-Sat (9am to 5pm), however since COVID and the closure of the Multi-Storey Car Park demand has been low.

- 2.9 The SLA in place between Wychavon District Council Parking section and Bromsgrove District Council forms part of a contract with Environmental Services, for facilitation of the car parks and civil enforcement service. When originally set up, there was a charge for disabled car parking, and it was seen as a service that supported these customers. Since June 2024, car parking has been free for disabled drivers.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Strategic Review

- 3.1 Car parks were assessed across a number of factors including capacity, condition, usage, proportions of blue badge parking bays and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging bays, safety and security, accessibility, and convenience and usability. The results of these are contained in Appendix 1 and are collated in Table 10: Summary of Recommendations.
- 3.2 In general terms the condition of car parks is good which is borne out of the investment in resurfacing, new lining and new machines that have been installed over recent years. The recommendations vary across the Car Parks but include improved signage, potential opportunities for fee charging on free car parks and introducing ANPR across a number of the car parks.
- 3.3 The car parks at School Drive and Stourbridge Road were identified as satisfactory with both being underutilised. These sites occupy potentially valuable land and therefore these underutilised car parks may be better used for other needs. Consideration of the future use of these car parks will be included within the forthcoming Town Centre Strategy review which is designed to provide a clear vision for the town centre in terms of what it should look and feel like for residents, businesses and visitors and guide decisions in relation to the use of Council owned land, including car parks.
- 3.4 Churchfields Multi Storey Car Park, at the time of the survey, was decommissioned. However, the projected demand for car parks appears to be met by current capacity, not including Churchfields. Therefore, the recommendation is to consider demolition of the Churchfields car park and / or to repurpose the structure/land. It is envisaged that proposals regarding this car park will be addressed within the Town Centre Strategy review.

- 3.5 These three sites were also included in the Bromsgrove Town Centre 2040 Vision which set out to support the future development of the area and provide the right level of services to meet the needs of both residents and business population. The document was founded on the need to regenerate and the opportunity to redevelop major unused or underused sites which will attract people and investment to the town centre.
- 3.6 It is acknowledged that whilst the review has centred on those car parks maintained and managed by the Council it has not taken an overarching review of all parking demand across the District. Instead, the review has concentrated on the car parks that BDC owns and operates, in order to understand the condition and future viability based on demand requirements on those car parks and the town centre. As identified across the 3 reports, there is a clear need for partnership working with all relevant stakeholders in order to identify potential solutions across the whole of the District.
- 3.7 One of the recommendations is to increase Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI). The Council have previously invested in EVCI ensuring some of the authority's car parks have these facilities. This project delivered the installations to the following car parks, Golden Cross Car Park, Alvechurch Car Park, Sanders Park Car Park, Windsor Street, North Bromsgrove (Bromsgrove Leisure Centre), Asda Bromsgrove, Aston Fields, Barnt Green Parish, Princess of Wales (POW) Community Hospital, and Webbs Hagley Garden Centre.
- 3.8 The Council has a current contract with Zest Eco Limited to expand EVCI across Council owned land primarily in the authority's remaining car parks and also office car parks. The project which covers a 15 year period, with an option to extend for a further 5 years, is assessing each of the car parks that do not currently have EVCI.
- 3.9 The supplier is required to provide fully funded EVCI at no cost to the Council. The contract allows for the supply, installation, maintenance and ongoing operational management of the EVCI across the various agreed sites. The first installations are currently being programmed for an early 2025 commencement.
- 3.10 To further enhance the ECVI schemes above, which concentrate around car parks, there is a government funded Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) scheme which is being co-ordinated by Worcestershire County Council. An allocation of £3.5m has been received and is primarily focused on delivering public charge points (predominantly low powered chargers) for residents without dedicated off-street parking at home.

- 3.11 The County Council are producing tender documents that will be released in early 2025. There is a long list of sites across the County that are being developed based on the criteria set within the funding terms. It is anticipated that once a provider has been identified the County and associated Districts will liaise with the provider to identify the most appropriate charger points across Worcestershire.

Car Park Management

- 3.12 As part of the discussions through Cabinet Advisory Group on 8th May 2024 and discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 12th February 2024, there was a clear desire expressed by Members to ensure a more equitable balance in patrols across the whole District. The SLA with WDC included a 10% provision for out-of-town centre patrol time. In order to assist with on street enforcement, the review of off-street enforcement was included.
- 3.13 As part of the recommendations for providing more patrol time for on street enforcement, ANPR has been considered within the report at Appendix 2. This system would provide monitoring of vehicles entering and exiting the car park at all times of the day, the length of stay and subsequent payment.
- 3.14 The installation of ANPR was recommended across most sites within Appendices 1 and 2. However, the preferred option is to install across the high volume and income value sites at Recreation Road South, St Johns and Windsor Street where local conditions allow.
- 3.15 Subject to Members' agreement to resolution 6, it is proposed that the outcomes of the detailed Implementation Plan should be reported for Cabinet's consideration at a later date and inform further discussions regarding possible use of ANPR.
- 3.16 As part of the Strategic Review, analysis of enforcement for on street parking in the District was undertaken. Through engagement with Members, on a local basis, as well as some residents, issues of on street parking both within centres on residential streets and outside schools, at peak times, have been raised.

On Street Enforcement

- 3.17 On Street parking enforcement, together with Off Street enforcement, is currently contracted to WDC to administer. This service is delivered with 5.5 CEOs spread across the mainly rural District which in turn brings coverage issues based on the geographical nature of the District.

- 3.18 Through the course of the last 12 months, Officers have been working closely with WDC Officers to review patrols based on the feedback given by members, regarding the volume of time spent within the parishes versus the town centre. In the initial version of the SLA, there was an indication that 10% of patrol time should be spent outside of the town centre. As a consequence of the reviews of patrols, the proportion of time spent outside Bromsgrove town centre has increased. A quarterly summary of PCN information including patrol time in and outside of the town centre is also included as well as a comparison with the corresponding quarter from the previous year and is contained within Appendix 4 .
- 3.19 Across most of the ward-based engagement with Members, issues around parking outside schools at peak times was frequently raised. There is currently no uniform approach to addressing these concerns based on the different stakeholders that have a role to play in achieving more considerate and compliant parking. The Police, Schools, Local Authority and CEOs all have a role to play in promoting and enforcing considerate parking.
- 3.20 Examples of both ‘softer’ and ‘harder’ measures highlighted in the report are a social media and community engagement campaign to be rolled out, targeted at drivers, to encourage considerate parking outside of shops and schools, as a “softer measure” behavioural change campaign. Further investigation and action is needed to review and amend “harder measure” parking restrictions and increase coverage of signing and lining options (i.e. double yellow lines, designated parking areas).
- 3.21 A key element of enforcement is to have a clear line of communication and therefore one of the recommendations is for BDC and WCC to investigate the potential of developing an online tool to enable BDC residents to log parking violations and persistent offences. This would be linked to the current WCC system to report environmental concerns and problems with street furniture (i.e. street lighting, pavements). The system could be used by WDC as a measure to target resources from local intelligence.
- 3.22 There are a range of options that are listed in the Executive Summary of Appendix 3 - Review of On-Street Enforcement.
- 3.23 A key element of delivery in this context, is to ensure there is clear partnership working amongst the various stakeholders. It is therefore recommended that a Parking Task Group be established including representatives from BDC, WDC and WCC to work through the various options pertinent to each organisation.

Options Appraisal

- 3.24 In order to assess how car parking enforcement may be delivered in the medium and long term, an options appraisal identifying the positives and negatives of the three key options has been undertaken. These options are; 1. maintain the SLA with WDC, 2. tender out to external contractors and 3. delivery with internal resources. The outcomes of this options appraisal are detailed in Appendix 5.
- 3.25 The publication of the English Devolution White Paper on 16th December 2024 has provided uncertainty on the impact that this will have on BDC over the forthcoming 2 to 4 years. As such, continuity of service for parking enforcement is recommended by an extension to the period of the services delivered by WDC. This continuity will ensure compliance of service delivery during the period of the extended SLA. This will also allow officers the time and capacity to deliver the ANPR solutions for the 3 car parks identified. The strategy therefore to further enhance service delivery will include the introduction of ANPR, providing more opportunity for on street enforcement, an ongoing review and amendments to patrols. This is based on feedback given with the reports and further analysis of patrol information including both coverage and frequency across the District, analysis of data to identify existing and potentially emerging hotspots for poor and illegal parking practices, together with the key recommendations to be considered by the Parking Working Group.
- 3.26 Whilst the review of patrols is ongoing, as part of this review and working with the Parish Councils, an investigation into whether it would be viable to purchase additional time for patrols within their locations could be undertaken.

Shopmobility

- 3.27 The service currently has five customers with one customer being a regular user (once a week). The other customers use the service on an ad-hoc basis typically once every few months and then there are other ad-hoc customers who may use the service a few times per year. Pre COVID, there were more customers using the service; approximately 12-15 customers per week. Since COVID the demand has been low. This is possibly due to several factors, including the closure of the multi-storey car park and more people owning their own mobility equipment.
- 3.28 In order to assess usage, a survey was undertaken in 2021 for residents to have their say about the service. 19 people responded – 2 were current users; 4 were previous users; and 13 had never used the

service. Those who used the service either travelled by car or taxi. When asked what enables them to get out and about more easily the majority had access to a car; friends or family to rely on; or their own mobility scooter which has become much more affordable in recent years.

- 3.29 Attempts have been made to look to relocate the service. This has included approaching Asda, however they have two shopping mobility scooters for customers use and do not have the room to accommodate any more equipment. Age UK have a charity shop on the High Street however, they did not feel they would be able to hire equipment from there. Another option was the customer service section at Parkside however, they did not have the room to accommodate the scooters and it would have been difficult for customers to access.
- 3.30 The current budget for Bromsgrove Shopmobility is £5,000 to cover the costs of the equipment, maintenance and business rates. The cost of servicing the equipment continues to increase, particularly as the equipment is older and needs replacing.
- 3.31 The demand for this type of service in Bromsgrove seems low. With the potential plan to permanently close the multi-story car park and to relocate the staff based there, the recommendation would be to either close the Shopmobility service or to provide the service from a new location. An option may be to lease the equipment in the future as if the service was to continue the equipment would need updating.
- 3.32 In respect of the option to close the service, an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. It proposes that Officers would consult directly with the users who are potentially impacted.
- 3.33 There is £1,375 available in reserves which was donated to the service by a disability organisation at the point of closure. This money could be included within the Bromsgrove Equality Grants Scheme for VCS organisations to apply via the annual grants process.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A budget of £50k was identified and agreed at Council on 21st February 2024 for the strategic review to be undertaken. The completed works have been undertaken in line with the proposal submitted by Watermans.
- 4.2 The annual cost for parking enforcement undertaken by WDC for 2025/6 is £335,160.

4.3 Parking fee charges generate approximately £1 million per year of revenue for the Council.

4.4 The estimated capital costs for the installation of ANPR at the 3 Car Parks is £100K with an anticipated annual revenue cost of £15k for maintenance.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The legal framework for enforcement authorities in England comprises Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

5.2 In 2012, BDC applied for decriminalised parking in the District. This process included an application form submission to the Department for Transport (DfT) which was completed by WCC and BDC. WCC led on this application as it mainly focusses on On Street enforcement (public highway) although Off Street (car parks) were also included as the whole enforcement operation was decriminalised.

5.3 BDC operates a system of providing Off-Street parking for residents and visitors under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The legislation allows the Council to designate Off-Street car parks (Section 32) and regulate their operation, including the levying of charges through a Local Parking Order.

5.4 The contract for the service provider to undertake these works will be signed in due course, on final agreement of the terms and conditions. It is proposed that the new SLA is set up as a 4-year agreement with an annual review of outputs and outcomes.

5.5 Any decision regarding amendments to the SLA and / or termination will be undertaken in conjunction with Legal Services.

5.6 The Police are responsible for dangerous parking, obstruction and vehicles parked on white zig zags. Section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 makes it an offence to wilfully obstruct the highway. Regulation 103 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 creates the offence of unnecessary obstruction.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Council Priority

6.1 Infrastructure – By enabling car parking provision that is good quality, affordable and can accommodate demand it helps residents and visitors to access services within our local communities. The contents of this report therefore support the Council's priority of infrastructure.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 There are no Climate Change implications in renewing the SLA. However, by introducing the MiPermit, the virtual permit system has resulted in the reduced amount of paper required for parking tickets and permits, together with Residents' Parking Permits. In addition, the report details implications in relation to the ECVI system and opportunities in this context could have a beneficial impact on carbon emissions in the district.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 In respect of the option to close the Shopmobility Service an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. It proposes that Officers would consult directly with the users who are potentially impacted.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Risks associated with the delivery of Car Parking Enforcement are identified in Appendix 5 depending on the option taken by Cabinet on future provision of this services.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

**Appendix 1
Strategic Review (Waterman Infrastructre and Environment)**

**Appendix 2
Car Park Management (Waterman Infrastructre and Environment)**

**Appendix 3
On Street Enforcement – (Waterman Infrastructre and Environment)**

**Appendix 4
Bromsgrove PCN Information – Quarterly Summary**

**Appendix 5
Options Appraisal for Car Park Enforcement (Exempt Information).**

**Appendix 6
Consultancy Fees (Exempt Information)**