

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER 2017
PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL PARKING CAPACITY
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES
(Contact: Claire Locke, Tel: (01993) 861344)

1. PURPOSE

To consider the policy options relating to the growth in demand for parking capacity identified in the Council's Car Parking Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee gives consideration to the contents of the report and makes such recommendations to the Cabinet as are considered appropriate.

3. BACKGROUND

In December 2016 the Cabinet adopted a Parking Strategy which identified two key themes;

- (a) The need for additional parking capacity in specified larger settlements.
- (b) The need for a review of on-street restrictions in certain locations.

Based on existing demand and anticipated future growth from residential and commercial development, it is predicted additional spaces will be required in the following key settlements:-

Settlement	Number of additional spaces by 2031
Burford	200
Chipping Norton	120
Witney	600
Woodstock	150

Funding of £35,000 was allocated to support the delivery of on-street changes and a process for prioritising locations has been developed based on issues and risks and locations will be reviewed one at a time, on a priority basis. The capacity and on-street issues are linked; in order to improve on-street provision and reduce congestion in certain high demand on-street locations, additional off street long stay parking will also be needed.

On 21st June Council allocated £50,000 for a Parking Strategy Implementation Reserve. As additional staff resources will be essential to deliver the Parking Strategy as the existing shared team have a heavy workload this funding could be used to secure a fixed term member of staff who would be dedicated to delivering on-street reviews and, if relevant, delivery of increased parking capacity.

Delivering additional Parking Capacity

The Council has a policy of free parking so there is no direct income stream to support the acquisition and development of new parking facilities. Any new site is likely to require very significant capital investment without a financial business case to support it. It is however possible that a strategic plan for some settlements, such as Witney, could enable capital receipts to be generated from the sale of an existing car park(s) enabling the acquisition of another site(s) to increase parking capacity. In some cases a mixed use development with car parking and residential or commercial use may be attractive and provide some capital to fund parking, however this design option is likely to impact on the footprint available for parking and limit the net gain in parking spaces. The viability of these options can only be assessed once specific sites are being discussed.

The Council has a number of policy issues to consider:

- (i) **Target figures** - whilst the Parking Strategy identifies the number of additional spaces needed to support Local Plan Growth, the Council could decide that it will take a different approach and could set a lower figure, which it will then aim to deliver.
- (ii) **Direct delivery** - the Council can take direct action to deliver additional capacity, proactively identifying sites which could either be developed to provide decked parking or in acquiring new sites to be developed as surface or decked car parks. If this approach is taken the Council will need to prioritise settlements and investment as it is highly unlikely it could deliver all of the additional capacity required in Witney, Woodstock, Burford and Chipping Norton. Broadly, in addition to significant feasibility, design and planning consultancy costs, a decked a car park will cost in the region of £13,000 per space to build (however replacement of existing spaces will also cost £13,000, so a 200 space car park, decked to create a total of 600 spaces would cost in the region of £7.8M). This cost could easily increase depending on factors including the construction method (which will be shaped by ground conditions, archaeology, flood risk etc.) and the design and construction materials. In addition delivery of this option would require additional staff resources as neither the Legal and Property services or Car Parking teams have sufficient capacity to fully support a project of this size.
- (iii) **Partnership delivery** - the Council could decide to invest in parking capacity but on the basis of partnership delivery and wait for third parties to bring forward proposals for consideration, considering each on its business case and the extent of private sector funding that would be levered in. This would require some additional staff resources but this could be supported by consultants on a project specific basis. This option provides significant benefits as the costs and risks would be shared in the initial feasibility stage, design and Planning application stage and Construction phase.

There are multiple agreements that may be secured to deliver additional parking through a partnership which would include the Council securing S.106 or CIL contributions, delivering other development such as housing on part of the site which it then sells/transfers to a partner or leasing or selling its own parking sites to a third party on the condition that additional parking was delivered.

- (iv) Third party delivery - the Council could decide to leave delivery of additional parking capacity to the private sector or the relevant Town Council. This is likely to result in business models where charges are imposed by a third party which would enable the costs involved in site acquisition and development to be recouped. This is only likely to be viable where pressure for parking has become so significant that motorists have no choice but to pay for parking, once all available free parking reaches capacity. This may also be more palatable in locations where peaks in demand are created by tourists, who would normally expect to pay for parking.
- (v) The Council could decide to adopt a policy that it will not dispose of car parking assets unless any future development on that site:-
 - (a) provides suitable alternative parking during development, so there is no loss of overall provision, and,
 - (b) replaces any loss in parking spaces, within the development, and,
 - (c) meets the demand for parking generated by the development itself, onsite (this will not necessarily be a Planning requirement but could be a condition of site disposal)

Officers recommend that the Council adopts a policy on the on the Strategic approach to parking capacity that incorporates the provisos at (v) above and the delivery of parking capacity through partnership to mitigate the cost implications for the Council.

4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

The Council could choose not to adopt a clear policy approach with regard to the delivery of additional parking capacity and the disposal of parking assets however this may make later decisions more difficult and may result in an inconsistent approach which does not consider wider Strategic implications of development. It will also make requests from key settlements for additional parking, difficult to respond to.

Lessons learned at CDC highlight that forward planning with strategic sites is essential to avoid missed opportunities as once a site is sold or developed there may be limited options in the future to acquire suitable alternative sites for parking development

5. RISKS

The Council needs to consider the following key risks:

- Failure to deliver additional parking capacity may impact on the economic viability and development of some locations in the future. Whilst this is difficult to prove, traders in Cirencester consider the difficulty in finding a parking space is now impacting on their businesses, so the same may be seen in the future in Witney and the other key settlements.

- Failure to adopt a policy on this issue may result in a piecemeal approach, which could include sale of assets which are later considered to have been suitable for car park expansion or more suited to other development types.
- Failure to adopt a policy also raises expectations that the Council will directly deliver additional parking capacity in the key settlements, despite the Parking Strategy highlighting that this will not be the case.
- Failure to suitably plan, taking advantage of opportunities to generate Capital receipts or to enter in partnerships to deliver more parking may have a longer term impact if the Council cannot afford to invest in car park development itself.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial impacts associated with this report as this would be covered by individual reports relating to disposal, acquisition or development.

However, it is worth considering the likely overall cost to deliver all the Parking Capacity set out within the Parking Strategy. Whilst costs will be site and design specific, it is estimated a minimum cost would be £13,000 per space and the more realistic cost would be £15,000 per space for construction of a decked car park on an existing car park site. This cost also applies to the spaces in the existing car park, which would be the footprint for the development. These are estimates now and they would increase with inflation, material cost increases, planning fee increases etc.

In Burford, where there may be an option to secure land neighbouring the existing car park, an extension to the surface car park may be viable, which is why this cost is significantly lower.

Settlement	New Spaces	Existing spaces	Total spaces	Cost to increase capacity
Burford	200	167	367	£200,000
Chipping Norton	120	141 (New St)	261	£3.915M
Witney	600	300 (Assumption)	900	£13.5M
Woodstock	150	116	266	£3.99M
Total estimated costs to deliver all parking capacity				£21,605,000

In addition to these capital costs there would be an increase in the on-going revenue costs to run (utilities), maintain, repair and manage (enforcement) these facilities. If decked parking is provided additional costs associated with lift maintenance and security will also need to be considered.

7. REASONS

Protect and enhance the environment of West Oxfordshire and maintain the district as a clean, beautiful place with low levels of crime and nuisance; and be recognised as a leading council that provides efficient, value for money services.

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