

HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report To: Cabinet
3 July 2018

Subject: CAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS SCHEME

All Wards
Portfolio Holder for Governance: Councillor Mrs I Sanderson

1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 To provide a review of the Council's existing car park estate and to seek approval for capital investment to improve the quality of service offered to our resident, business and visiting customers.
- 1.2 The scope of the review into the existing car park estate was limited to off-street pay and display car parks and required an investigation into possible solutions to ensure car parks are customer focussed, modern and attractive. The review was not about car parking charges or civil parking enforcement.
- 1.3 The review included feedback from users which suggested that car parking bays were too narrow, pay machines were old and had limited payment methods. Feedback was also obtained from the Northallerton BID and Stokesley Town Council. The Council has also received periodic requests from residents living next to its car parks who are seeking to reduce charges associated with parking or remove the need to purchase a daily display ticket through either a resident permit or season ticket.

2.0 EXISTING CAR PARK ESTATE:

- 2.1 The Council operates a range of car parking facilities across the District including long and short stay car parks, free car parking at facilities such as the Civic Centre and Leisure Centres and disc parking within the Market Towns. Pay and display parking charges currently apply Monday to Saturday inclusive, 8.00am to 9.00pm, including bank holidays. Sunday is free of charge. Market Place, Thirsk and Applegarth, Northallerton both offer free parking for one hour. Facilities receive over a million uses per year.
- 2.2 The car parks are branded in the old HDC branding on the signage which is about 9-10 years old. Signage is provided at the entrance to each car park, with information signage around the car park and at the pay and display points. Further directional signage is provided on the public highway network to direct visitors to the off-street car parks. Whilst the car parks are maintained the general appearance is typical of a public car park with high throughput usage and street furniture is dated.
- 2.3 Current parking bay layouts in off-street car parks are based on a 4.8m x 2.4m parking bay. The length of parking bays is difficult to increase as there is a requirement to maintain access roads at 6.0m to allow vehicle manoeuvres. HDC car parks do not generally have marked safe pedestrian access routes through them.
- 2.4 Pay and Display car parks were implemented in October 2009, which is the point at which the pay machines were installed. Parking charge payment options are limited to cash payments at the pay and display machine or long and short stay parkcard which offer concessionary parking charges. Pay and Display ticket machines are plentiful in number at all locations and are well signed. They do however show, in the majority of cases,

wear and tear consistent with their age and are expected to experience increasing failure rates as the machines start to exceed their designed lifespan. As tariffs have increased, the machines are seeing an increased input of change which results in the machines requiring more frequent and additional emptying. Current machines require external service provision to provide regular software upgrades, which has resulted in issues at the machine at upgrade times.

- 2.5 Electric vehicle charging is not available in any of the Council's parking facilities. Whilst this is reflective of the little provision across the district (the national charge point registry shows a single public charge point in Northallerton) there is a move towards more electric vehicles, supported by national government.
- 2.6 Two car parks within the review currently do not have any CCTV coverage – Showfield, Stokesley and Auction Mart, Bedale. The remaining car parks operated by Hambleton District Council are considered to have good CCTV coverage, with cameras working on a tour pattern to capture most of the car parks at some point within their tours. Pay machines are captured within those tours. The Applegarth car park at Northallerton is the one with the most potentially limited coverage due to its size and cameras being positioned at either end of the car park. The Safer Hambleton Co-ordinator has advised it may benefit from a further camera in the middle of the car park, as the furthest camera is also used to monitor the play park area and walkway to the back of the arcade. In terms of reported crimes or requested reviews, most incidents relate to car bumps rather than theft from vehicles for all of the car parks with CCTV. If further cameras were to be considered they would have to satisfy requirements by the Surveillance Camera Commissioner to ensure that there is a pressing need for the cameras and that they were proportionate to the risk that is trying to be minimised by having them.

3.0 PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

- 3.1 Recommended improvements to the car park estate to achieve an improved offer to the customer are as follows:

3.2 Flexible Parking Payments

- 3.2.1 The most significant improvement that could be made across the car park estate is to introduce flexibility into parking payments, allowing customers the option to choose to pay via smartphone/mobile technology; card technology (wave and pay) or season tickets. It is, however, essential that an option to pay by cash is retained. New payment machines need to be installed that support this range of payment options and they must be easy to operate and user friendly.

- 3.2.2 Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) utilises camera technology to recognise vehicles entering and leaving the car park and can be used to support cashless payment methods. Customers pay on foot at exit from the car park which allows users to pay for the period parked rather than being time constrained through a pre-purchase ticket. Installation of ANPR is possible in car parks that have defined access and egress points and is proposed for:

- a) Bedale: Auction Mart, Bridge Street
- b) Northallerton: Forum, Crosby Road, Long Stay Applegarth
- c) Stokesley: Showfield
- d) Thirsk: Marage, Millgate, Nursery

The short stay parking area at the Applegarth, Northallerton has a public highway frontage and would require the construction of a barrier between the public highway and the parking area to limit access and egress to the car park.

3.2.3 To install and embed a range of payment options and new technology is expected to take up to 24 months.

3.3 Layout and Signage

3.3.1 As cars become larger it becomes more difficult to negotiate public car parking spaces. Increasing the bay width accommodates larger vehicles and promotes easier access to the vehicle for users. By increasing each bay width to 2.6m an extra 40cm is provided between vehicles. This would result in a loss of 108 (8%) of spaces across the whole estate, this does not however equate to an 8% reduction in income, as reduction in numbers of spaces would only have an impact if a car park was ever 100% utilised.

3.3.2 Feedback suggests that some Parent and Child car parking provision would be expected, however this cannot be legally enforced. It is proposed that this specific provision is not installed and that the increased bay width would support greater access.

3.3.3 Providing marked walkways to enhance user safety would provide additional benefit for Parent and Child users as well as those with accessibility requirements.

3.3.4 Improving the overall appearance of the car parks through the introduction of additional landscaping and renewing street furniture would enhance the customer experience. As would replacing the signage at the entrances to the car parks and the car park information signage with new signage reflecting the changes in Council branding; regulatory information on the signage and at the pay and display machines should be simplified and condensed. Additionally, feedback has suggested that the directional signage on the public highway network is enhanced so that visitors are certain of how to reach our off-street car parks. This work would need to be carried out in conjunction with North Yorkshire County Council as highway authority.

3.3.5 Changes to car park layout and signage is expected to take 9 to 12 months.

3.3.6 Dynamic visitor information can be provided through the introduction of Digital Totems and an invitation to explore their use as a trial in Northallerton has been received from Northallerton BID. It is possible that such schemes could receive funding from the Digital Advantage Scheme.

3.4 Electric Vehicle Charging Points

3.4.1 Promoting greener technology would support the national move towards supporting mass market electric vehicles and it is recommended that different types of charging points are installed across the district. Recommendations are for nominal numbers to be introduced at initial installation but the infrastructure for future expansion is included. The number of charging points would be reviewed and increased in line with demand in future years. It is recommended that electric vehicle charging infrastructure is initially focused on Northallerton and Thirsk on the basis of fast charging, with further roll-out as follows:

- a) Bedale: Auction Mart, Bridge Street
- b) Northallerton: Applegarth (Short and Long stay)
- c) Stokesley: Showfield
- d) Thirsk: Market Place, Marage/Millgate
- e) Easingwold: Galtres Centre

3.4.2 Alternative models to operating car parks could enable access to funding for electric vehicle charging schemes, for example in offering an overnight charging scheme for local residents.

- 3.4.3 Although outside of scope, it is also recommended that the electric car vehicle charging element of this scheme is broadened to include provision (where grant funding can be obtained) for Council operated workplace parking at:
- a) Civic Centre
 - b) Evolution
 - c) Springboard
 - d) Leisure Centres

3.4.4 Full implementation of the electric vehicle charging points is expected to take between 12 and 18 months.

3.4.5 As new car parks are developed electric vehicle charging points will be part of a baseline provision like designated disabled parking bays. It is also recommended that Officers investigate options for the service charge model of electric car charging provision and evaluate if there is a commercial prospect for the Council in this regard.

3.5 Security

- 3.5.1 Security in car parks is paramount in encouraging usage and whilst car parks across the district are considered to be of a safe design and have good CCTV coverage, it is possible to improve through:
- a) Introduce CCTV coverage at Showfield, Stokesley and Auction Mart, Bedale
 - b) Implement an additional camera to the Applegarth, Northallerton.

3.6 Programme Delivery and Other Considerations

3.6.1 To implement the recommended changes will require amendments and variations to the existing parking orders, a process that will take approximately 12 months to respond to changes across the whole estate. As part of an amendment order it is proposed to change the car park plans in order that future changes to car park bay layouts can occur without the need for a change to the parking order. This can be achieved by removing the individual parking bays from layout plans in the order and replacing with a boundary designation to the parking area. Other proposed variations include:

- a) To retain the current pay and display operating periods Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm.
- b) To retain current short and long stay designations of car parks.
- c) In car parks offering short stay parking change the absolute time limit to allow users to extend their short stay parking period. This would link with smartphone parking applications which would warn car park users when they are nearing the end of their paid parking period and give them the opportunity to extend their stay.
- d) The extended parking period would be at the short stay parking hourly charge rate, this premium rate would be a disincentive to use the short stay parking area for long stay parking. Allowing short stay users to extend their parking stay will allow them to dwell longer or complete business.
- e) It is proposed to exclude Market Place Thirsk where the two hour parking time limit will be retained, options will be explored to allow users to extend an initial one hour free parking period by purchasing an additional one hour of paid parking.

3.6.2 Feedback is regularly received from users requiring disabled parking, in response to this, the following is recommended:

- a) Introduce free time-limited disabled parking bays
- b) No change to free disabled parking in disabled bays
- c) Distribute bays across long and short stay car parks

d) Retain charges in standard bays

3.7 The different elements of the scheme can be implemented concurrently with the whole programme expected to complete within a 24 month period.

4.0 LINK TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

4.1 Improvement to the Council's car park estate will support the Council's priority of driving economic vitality. More specifically it is a key foundation to improving the vibrancy and vitality of our market towns and is therefore intrinsically linked to the Vibrant Market Towns programme.

5.0 RISK ASSESSMENT:

5.1 There are no significant risks associated with approving the recommendations.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 In 2017/18 the Council's car parks achieved an income of £760,000. Total expenditure to support delivery of the car parking service was £350,000. The generated surplus received by the Council is allocated to the general fund where it is used to provide Council services.

6.2 Capital expenditure allocated in the Capital programme 218/19 to 2027/28 is £719,552, itemised as follows:

Capital Scheme	£
Car Parks – Reinstatements	50,000
Car Park Restatements	374,552
Car Parks – P&D Machines Replacements	140,000
Bedale North End Cobbles	120,000
Northallerton Depot – Access Road Resurfacing	35,000
Total	719,552

6.3 The existing capital allocations in the capital programme can be re-profiled to support the project but there will need to be additional funding put back into the programme for future maintenance of the car parks in the order of £400,000.

6.4 Predicted increases in demand show an expected income of £801,020 in 2019/2020.

6.5 Capital expenditure estimated for this proposed Car Park Improvement Scheme is £550,000.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 Parking Orders will need to be amended or varied to reflect the recommended changes.

8.0 EQUALITY/DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The recommendations suggest improvements to the parking offer for users of the blue badge disabled parking scheme, as such consideration has been given to equality and diversity issues.

9.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

9.1 Health and Safety issues have been considered and as such all works undertaken will follow both statutory compliance and the relevant Council health and safety arrangements. An element of the proposed scheme is to introduce marked walkways within the car parks to encourage identified safe routes, this is in response to health and safety consideration of car park users.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION(S):

10.1 That Cabinet approves and recommends to Council that:

- (1) An additional £400,000 is allocated into the Capital budget for future maintenance of the Car Parks.
- (2) The Car Park Improvement Scheme is allocated Capital budget of £550,000 and authorised to proceed with the following scheme elements:
 - i. Offer more payment options
 - ii. Utilise ANPR
 - iii. Change car park layout and widen bays
 - iv. Improve signage
 - v. Install Electric Vehicle Charging Points
 - vi. Install additional CCTV to enhance security
- (3) The following considerations related to the Car Park Improvement Scheme are approved:
 - i. Advance or Season Ticket payment options be developed for long and short stay parking to replace the Parkcard concession
 - ii. Parking Orders are amended to reflect changes to tariffs and layouts
 - iii. Disabled Parking
 - iv. Parent and Child Parking is not introduced
- (4) Officers are authorised to develop a trial programme for new technologies such as 'Digital Totems' with the Northallerton BID
- (5) Approval is given to ensure the improvements listed here become the minimum standard for any future pay and display car parking provision

HELEN KEMP

Background papers: None
Author ref: HK
Contact: Helen Kemp
Director of Economy and Planning
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