

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: CABINET	REPORT NUMBER: BCa/21/16
FROM: Councillor Elisabeth Malvisi - Cabinet Member for Environment	DATE OF MEETING: 02 August 2021
OFFICER: Cassandra Clements - Assistant Director for Environment and Commercial Partnerships	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB305

THE CREATION OF A PARKING STRATEGY FOR BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The approval of the Joint Area Parking Management Plan (JAPMP) and the subsequent Babergh District Council Car Parking Study Report in February 2021 (BCa/20/31) highlighted the increasing need to develop a parking strategy for the medium to long term (5-10 years).
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to start the formulation of a parking strategy for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 To continue without a parking strategy – this option is not recommended due to the clear need for a joined-up strategy that looks at all elements of parking; everything from on-street and off-street, through to the economic, environmental, and community impacts.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the start of the formulation of Babergh and Mid Suffolks first parking strategy be agreed.
- 3.2 That funding of £20,500 for Babergh's contribution towards the formulation of the parking strategy, from the Transformation Fund earmarked reserve, be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure the best possible outcomes for our communities, for both on-street and off-street parking, by looking ahead and working in collaboration with key stakeholders.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are keen to develop a parking strategy that provides a comprehensive route map with respect to the long-term approach to

parking provision across the districts. The strategy at a high level needs to reflect national policy guidance as it applies to both the future of centres/high streets and sustainable transport and travel as well as patterns of demand.

- 4.2 Ensuring the right level and types of car parking facilities, and the right controls are in place for their use, will help to support regeneration and enable development in and around the District's town centres as well as in rural villages. It is important to ensure that shoppers, tourists, visitors, residents, workers and commuters have access to sufficient, good quality, safe, welcoming parking opportunities.
- 4.3 More specifically the parking strategy needs to provide a set of detailed recommendations as to the nature of future parking provision serving both the town centres and rural villages, and how operationally they will function.
- 4.4 For Babergh District Council, the parking strategy is building on work previously undertaken in the form of the JAPMP and the subsequent Babergh Car Parking Study Report which highlighted the increasing need to for a parking strategy for the medium to long term.
- 4.5 For Mid Suffolk District Council, the parking strategy is the next logical step and again builds upon the work previously undertaken in the form of the JAPMP.
- 4.6 The Councils are committed to developing a parking strategy that aligns with its Strategic Priorities as well as the United Nations Sustainability Goals.
- 4.7 The process for developing a parking strategy is expected to take approximately 14 months commencing now and culminating in an approved parking strategy by September 2022. A detailed breakdown of the various stages to the timeline is shown in the table below.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
STAGE 1 – investigation and data collection	
Agree the Parking Strategy process with Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee	28 June 2021
Draft pre-consultation document	Jun / Jul 2021
Cabinet meeting - agree process / costs and sign off	2 August 2021
Pre-consultation / key stakeholder engagement – virtual workshops etc	30 August 2021
Data Gathering including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legislative research • previous surveys • capacity • occupancy • churn • usage • costs • fees & charges 	Aug to end Sep 2021
STAGE 2 – creation of the strategy	

Further consultation with key stakeholders	1 Sep 2021 to 31 Mar 2022
Draft strategy	30 Apr 2022
STAGE 3 – governance process	
Informal Cabinet discussion	May 2022
Public consultation – 21 days	
All member workshops	
Final draft strategy	Jun 2022
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Jul /Aug 2022
Informal Cabinet discussion (EWC)	
Full Council	Sep 2022
Report to Cabinet	

Stage 1 – which should be delivered by 30 September 2021 includes:

- Set out existing local and national policy with regards to car parking serving town centres.
- Undertake an appraisal of the current situation with regards to public car parking provision and usage in town centres. This should include data and analysis on numbers of spaces, long stay/short stay splits, usage and demand including peak months of the year, locational factors etc.
- Analysis of types of journeys being made by private cars using public car parks.
- Using the above evidence base and future parking need / demand projections i.e. dedicated permitted parking bays, residents permits, free overnight parking etc, identify the efficiencies', impacts and recommendations that would be possible across the Councils car parking stock.

Stage 2 – which should be delivered by 30 April 2022 includes:

- Recommendations as to the level and types of parking provision required and how these would be best served using existing and if necessary new provision. For example:
 - ✓ increase the number of EV charging points in line with the Councils Carbon Reduction Management Plan.
 - ✓ introduce cycle parking in conjunction with the Local Cycling & Infrastructure Plan.
- Identify any operational service improvements in managing and operating car parks. This could include:
 - ✓ the use of technologies such as Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) .
- Detailed programme of projects that will deliver service improvements.

4.8 The pre-consultation and key stakeholder engagement element of the process is purposefully open to ensure that all topics for discussion are captured. This engagement is critical to the success of the parking strategy as it enables the Councils to establish the key areas for development and focus.

4.9 We are committed to being fair and consistent in our approach, to provide all involved the same access to engagement in line with the Councils values.

4.10 We anticipate significant stakeholder engagement including, but not limited to the following:

- Officers – in the form of a project group involving employees from across the Councils including Planning, Communities, Communications, ICT, Housing, Economic Development and Regeneration etc
- Local residents
- Local businesses – including Tourist Information Centres, local bus & coach companies, park & ride services, taxi operators
- Members
- Town and Parish Councils
- Voluntary and Community Groups
- Local town vision boards
- Energy suppliers
- Network Rail / Greater Anglia
- Local Chamber of Commerce / Central Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
- Mid Suffolk Disability Forum / Suffolk Disability Forum
- Emergency Services including local hospitals & out of hours services
- Other car park owners
- Other local authorities - Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council, West Suffolk Council

4.11 External consultation expertise will be required to support the Councils and their Officers in preparing the parking strategy to ensure that a quality level of consultation is achieved. They must have significant experience of formulating this type of strategy for a Local Authority. The main output will be the parking strategy itself and included within it, must be a robust analysis of the current situation in the town centres based on data gathered by the consultancy, with recommendation for future actions and projects that will consider demand management and emerging technologies for a car park service that is fit for the future.

5. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

5.1 The Joint Corporate Plan identifies six strategic priorities as set out in the visual below. Parking is intrinsically interlinked with the strategies that underpin the other five priority areas of Housing, Communities, Well-Being, Economy and Customers. Specifically:

- Thriving, sustainable and connected Communities
- To value, enhance and protect our Environment
- Development and Regeneration
- Local Transport



6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The development and production of a parking strategy document is expected to cost £41,000 excluding VAT and will be shared equally across the two Councils. The cost

is for the external consultancy expertise required as detailed in section 4.11 of the report.

6.2 It is recommended as detailed in section 3.2 of the report that expenditure for consultancy expertise be funded as follows:

- Babergh – Transformation Funding of £20,500.
- Mid Suffolk – Growth and Efficiency Funding of £20,500.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Any changes required to Traffic Regulation Orders as a result of this process will be dealt with independently in accordance with the correct legislative process.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council’s Significant Risks: No. 8 - Decline in our key towns impacts upon economic prosperity of the districts; No. 13 - We may be unable to react in a timely and effective way to financial demands; Risk No. 14 - The Council may be perceived to be untrustworthy and have a poor reputation; and Risk No. 18 - The Council will not be carbon neutral by 2030.

8.2 Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Unable to influence motorist behaviour into more environmentally friendly methods of transport resulting in traffic congestion and poor air quality – threatening Council’s Climate Emergency declaration and its aim to become carbon neutral by 2030.	1 - Highly unlikely	2 - Noticeable	Ensure that the Council has a wide range of education and engagement tools and materials in place.
Imbalance in policy, charging, town centre vitality, leisure, etc. impacting on visiting footfall in our towns and the economy.	1 - Highly unlikely	3 - Serious	Research has found that availability of parking, rather than charging, tends to impact town centre vitality and viability.
Inability to understand and prepare for future growth needs e.g., housing, businesses etc	1 - Highly unlikely	4 - Disaster	Work with colleagues across the organisation i.e., planning to ensure that any housing and business growth is fed into future plans.
If relevant stakeholders with decision making responsibilities do not actively engage, this could negatively impact what we can do with the strategy.	2 - Unlikely	2 - Noticeable	Ensure that there is ample opportunity for engagement using various methods and that we are fair and consistent in our approach

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 No formal consultation has been undertaken to date.
- 9.2 Officers attended Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 28 June 2021 to discuss the process outlined above.
- 9.3 A significant amount of consultation is required for the creation of this strategy.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 10.1 In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Councils' statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Following its Climate Emergency declaration, the Council must look at ways to influence motorist behaviour. A small but simple change in motorists' behaviour could make large improvements to air quality, impact positively on biodiversity and reduce both congestion and CO₂ emissions.
- 11.2 The Councils Carbon Reduction Management Plan says that we will review the Councils' existing parking policies to encourage a modal shift in transport from cars to other sustainable transport options including cycling.
- 11.3 To encourage drivers to consider other more environmentally friendly methods of transport, wherever possible, the Council needs to take into consideration the following points:
 - Traffic congestion, air quality and the availability of other modes of travel are key considerations in setting the quantities of parking available, the location, the restrictions or controls applied, and parking tariff employed.
 - Support for low-car and car-free developments, cycleway improvements, support for other Active Travel initiatives and lower provision of car parking in appropriate areas.
 - Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in shoppers and residential car parks encourage alternatives to internal combustion engine car travel, reducing air pollution at the point of use.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 12.1 BCa/20/31 Babergh Car Parking Study report – 4 February 2021
BCa/19/39 Joint Area Parking Management Plan – 11 February 2020