

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO:	JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	REPORT NUMBER: JOS/22/8
FROM:	Cabinet Members for Environment – Elisabeth Malvisi and Jessica Fleming	DATE OF MEETING: 19 September 2022
OFFICER:	Fiona Duhamel, Director – Economic Growth and Climate Change	KEY DECISION REF NO.:

SCRUTINY AND REVIEW OF BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLKS PARKING STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Developing a parking strategy is the next logical step and builds upon the Joint Area Parking Management Plan (JAPMP), the subsequent Babergh Car Parking Study Report and the councils’ climate emergency declaration. All of which have highlighted the increasing need to develop a parking strategy for the medium to long term.
- 1.2 This paper sets out the progress and steps taken by the councils to deliver a parking strategy which is a key means of enhancing our already strong and vibrant districts and reinforces the importance of everyone having access to sufficient, safe, and easy to use parking facilities for cars and other vehicle types, at suitable hours of the day (or night).
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to discuss, provide feedback and recommendations to Cabinet on the process used to develop the councils’ first parking strategy.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 To continue without a parking strategy. This option is not recommended due to the previous Cabinet decision in August 2021 to pursue a clear and joined-up parking strategy that looks at all elements of parking, everything from on-street and off-street, through to the economic, environmental, and community impacts.

<p>3. RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">3.1 That the contents of this report be noted and taken forward as part of the report to Cabinet on 3 October 2022.3.2 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the contents of this report, provide scrutiny and, where appropriate, provide written and/or verbal recommendations to Cabinet.3.3 That officers provide an update report at a future Overview and Scrutiny committee meeting to review progress of the parking strategy implementation plan.

REASON FOR DECISION

To inspect thoroughly the process undertaken to deliver the councils first parking strategy, with the ambition to shape the future growth of the districts, enhance the quality of the local environment, and provide a prospectus for investment.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 It is important that the parking strategy at a high level reflects national policy guidance as it applies to both the future of town and village centres, sustainable travel, and transport as well as patterns of demand. The parking strategy must also align with the councils' Strategic Priorities, the United Nations Sustainability Goals and those of Central Government e.g ten-point plan for a green industrial revolution, to ensure consistency.
- 4.2 To achieve the councils' parking ambitions, it is important to introduce measures that:
- ensures everyone has access to sufficient, good quality, safe and welcoming parking opportunities.
 - will make a real difference to the way we plan for the future,
 - supports economic growth aspirations,
 - reduces the impact of our activities on the environment
- 4.3 Developing the parking strategy to this point has taken 14 months and involved a number of different stages which are outlined in sections 4.4 to 4.20 of this report. A detailed timeline is also shown in Appendix A of the report

INVESTIGATION AND DATA COLLECTION

- 4.4 **Benchmarking** - an exercise was undertaken to determine how both Babergh and Mid Suffolk's parking offer compares to that of neighbouring authorities and locations that share similar characteristics such as type of town offering, size, population, and provide key trip generators at a district level.
- 4.5 **Car park condition surveys** - each car park was assessed against a list of criteria to help inform recommendations for inclusion in the parking strategy.
- 4.6 **Vehicle occupancy surveys** were undertaken across all council operated car parks on different days of the week (including Saturday), and at different times of the day to understand parking behaviours and demand.
- 4.7 Both surveys took place during August 2021 when the impact of Covid-19 was still present.
- 4.8 **Forecasting and the future of car parking** – using the parking survey data collected from council owned car parks as the baseline, it is possible to determine the growth in car parks over a 20-year period.
- 4.9 The Department for Transport has developed a programme, called TEMPro, that supports the forecasting of future transport growth. The programme is designed to estimate growth in traffic and is based on predictions which include future housing, population, car ownership, trip rates and employment levels. The software produces growth factors based on a specified baseline and future years.

- 4.10 **Stage one engagement** - the first phase of engagement was a fact-finding opportunity, allowing anyone with an interest in parking to comment on the councils' existing parking arrangements through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was open for seven weeks from 31 August to 15 October 2021 and received a total of 1,248 responses.
- 4.11 In addition to the online questionnaire, key stakeholders which included district, town and parish councillors, transport and business groups, education establishments, leisure providers etc. were invited to attend virtual workshops to share their thoughts on what parking issues are important to them.

CREATION OF THE STRATEGY

- 4.12 **Stage two engagement** – outputs from the investigation and research as well as the engagement work has enabled a series of potential recommendations to be developed for inclusion in the final version of the parking strategy. See graphics below.
- 4.13 The recommendations, which cover both off-street and on-street parking, can bring about real change to how we travel and how we support the wider ambition for our communities and places.



- 4.14 The councils have sought feedback on the recommendations, as part of our commitment to engage at each key milestone.

- 4.15 During April and May 2022, officers from the parking service and 2020 Consultancy delivered detailed briefings to members and town and parish councils which covered the work undertaken to date as well as to seek feedback on the potential recommendations for inclusion in the parking strategy
- 4.16 A second online questionnaire, open from 13 June to 31 July 2022 aimed to establish the level of support or opposition for each recommendation. 2,004 people completed the questionnaire meaning that across both stages of engagement, 3,252 questionnaires were completed.
- 4.17 To maximise engagement and promote the second questionnaire, there were a series of in-person roadshow events held in June 2022 which 175 people attended. Details of the events are shown in tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1 – Babergh roadshow event locations

Location	Day	Date	Time	Venue
Sudbury	Tuesday	21 June	10:00 - 13:00	Sudbury Town Hall
Long Melford	Tuesday	21 June	14:00 - 16:00	The Old School, Long Melford (Chamberlain Room)
Lavenham	Tuesday	21 June	17:00 - 19:00	Lavenham Village Hall, Church St, Lavenham, Sudbury, CO10 9QT (St Peter & St Paul room)
Lavenham	Wednesday	22 June	10:00 - 12:30	Lavenham Village Hall, Church St, Lavenham, Sudbury, CO10 9QT (St Peter & St Paul room)
Hadleigh	Saturday	25 June	13:00 - 15:00	Hadleigh Pool & Leisure, Stonehouse Road, Hadleigh, IP7 5BH (social room)
Sudbury	Saturday	25 June	16:00 - 17:30	Kingfisher leisure Centre, Station Road, Sudbury, CO10 2SU
East Bergholt	Monday	27 June	10:00 - 12:00	The Lambe School Charitable Trust, Gaston Street, East Bergholt, CO7 6SD
Holbrook	Monday	27 June	19:00 - 21:00	Holbrook Village Hall, The Street, Holbrook, IP9 2PZ
Hadleigh	Tuesday	28 June	17:30 - 20:00	Hadleigh Leisure Centre

Table 2 - Mid Suffolk roadshow event locations

Location	Day	Date	Time	Venue
Woolpit	Wednesday	22 June	14:00 - 16:00	Woolpit Village Hall, Mill Lane, Woolpit, IP30 9QX
Thurston	Wednesday	22 June	17:00 - 19:00	New Green Avenue, Thurston, Bury Saint Edmunds IP31 3TG
Needham Market	Thursday	23 June	10:00 - 12:30	Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, IP6 8BB (The Green Room)
Debenham	Thursday	23 June	14:00 - 16:00	Debenham Community Centre, Gracechurch Street, Debenham, Suffolk, IP14 6BL
Eye	Thursday	23 June	17:00 - 19:30	Eye Town Hall, Broad Street, Eye, IP23 7AF
Stowmarket	Saturday	25 June	10:00 - 12:00	The Mix, 127 Ipswich St, Stowmarket IP14 1BB
Great Blakenham	Monday	27 June	13:30 - 15:30	Village Hall, Mill Lane, Great Blakenham, IP6 0NJ.

Needham Market	Monday	27 June	16:00 - 18:00	Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, IP6 8BB (The Green Room)
Eye	Tuesday	28 June	10:00 - 12:00	Eye Community Centre, Magdalen Street, Eye, IP23 7AJ
Stowmarket	Tuesday	28 June	13:30 - 16:00	The Mix, 127 Ipswich St, Stowmarket IP14 1BB

- 4.18 The parking strategy document itself will not deliver the action required to meet the councils' parking ambitions. Delivery of the proposed recommendations within the strategy will require strong support through a comprehensive, robust and focused implementation plan.
- 4.19 The implementation plan will require project support through a dedicated officer delivery group and more importantly dedicated financial support. Further details of which are included in section 6.2 and 6.3 of this report.
- 4.20 Whilst the parking strategy covers the 20-year period, 2022 to 2042, there will be a need to review in 3–5-years dependent on local economic and global factors, technological advancements etc.

5. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

5.1 The Joint Corporate Plan identifies six strategic priorities as set out in the visual below. The parking service has several links to the councils' Joint Corporate Plan, namely:

- Community capacity building and engagement,
- maximising the use of our assets,
- engage with and support businesses to thrive,
- further develop the local economy and our market towns to thrive,
- to value enhance and protect our environment,
- local transport,
- community-led solutions to deliver services and manage assets
- financially sustainable councils.



6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In bringing forward the parking strategy, combined costs for Babergh and Mid Suffolk include officer time, consultancy expertise (£41,000), venue hire for the roadshow events (£940) and costs associated with promotional materials e.g posters, social media etc (£550). A total of £42,490 shared equally between the two councils.
- 6.2 There will be financial implications in respect of delivering the recommendations included within the parking strategy. The need for a comprehensive, robust and focused implementation plan is crucial to the parking strategy's success. Where there are significant cost implications, a detailed business case will be required, and approval sought through the councils' governance process.
- 6.3 Approval of the parking strategy will provide the evidence framework needed to advocate for funding opportunities, whether that be internally through the councils' own budget setting and medium-term financial planning (MTFP) process or funding

opportunities such as external and national grants, community infrastructure levy bids etc.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no expected legal implications linked to delivery of the parking strategy document. There are, however, recommendations in the parking strategy where it will be necessary to amend or create new Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 This report is most closely linked with the councils' 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
Imbalance in policy, paying for parking, 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 regarding parking provision e.g. impact of additional 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 for parking provision.
Insufficient engagement and leadership could have a negative impact on delivering 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
Lack of financial support to deliver recommendations that provide meaningful improvements across the districts.	3 - Probable	3 - Serious	Ensure that the parking strategy is supported by a robust and comprehensive implementation plan that considers priority, timescales, costs and funding.
Unable to influence motorist behaviour into more environmentally friendly methods of transport resulting in traffic congestion and poor air quality – threatening the councils' climate emergency declaration and its aim to become carbon neutral by 2030.	1 - Highly unlikely	2 - Noticeable	Ensure that the councils' have a wide range of education and engagement tools and materials in place.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 There were a number of consultation exercises undertaken as part of developing the parking strategy. Details of which are shown in the table below.

Consultation	Date
Stage one consultation questionnaire	Aug-Oct 22
All-member briefings	Oct-21
Cabinet briefings	Mar-22
All-member briefings	Apr-22
Town & parish councils	
Other local interest groups	May-22
Stage two consultation questionnaire	Jun-Aug 22
Senior Leadership Team	Jun-22
Cabinet briefings	
In-person roadshow events	
Senior Leadership Team	Aug-22
Council leaders briefing	
All-member briefings	Sep-22

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 10.1 An EQIA was undertaken in August 2021 as part of the work required to seek Cabinet approval for development a parking strategy. This has since been reviewed and updated to reflect any necessary changes.
- 10.2 All opportunities to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact will be taken forward as part of the detailed implementation plan. For example, those with a disability (including children with additional needs) – a review of parking space allocation i.e. spaces are of an appropriate size, ensure adequate provision of disabled parking, consider accessibility as part of any planned improvements (e.g., surfaces, removing steps, improved signage considering all users).

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Following its Climate Emergency declaration, the councils' must look at ways to influence motorist behaviour. A small but simple change could make large improvements in air quality, reductions in congestion and CO₂ emissions.
- 11.2 To encourage drivers to consider other more environmentally friendly methods of transport, wherever possible, the councils' need to take into consideration the following points:
- Traffic congestion, air quality and the availability of other modes of travel as key considerations in setting the quantities of parking available, the location, the restrictions or controls applied, and parking tariffs 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

BCa/20/31 Babergh Car Parking Study report – 4 February 2021

BCa/19/39 and MCa/18/63 Joint Area Parking Management Plan – 11 February 2019

BCa/21/16 and MCa/21/15 The creation of a parking strategy for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' – 2 August 2021

13. APPENDICES

Title	Description	Location
APPENDIX A	Parking Strategy Timeline	Attached

APPENDIX A

Parking Strategy timeline

<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
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	
Consultation with key stakeholders	1 Sep 2021 to 31 Mar 2022
STAGE 3 – governance process	
Informal Cabinet discussion	Apr - Jul 2022
Public consultation inc town and parish councils	
All member workshops	
Early Warning Cabinet	Aug / Sep 2022
All member briefing	
Overview and Scrutiny	
Report to Cabinet	Oct 2022