WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL	**Executive 28th June 2017**	**Agenda Item No. 7**

Title	Draft Car Park Strategy
For further information about this report please contact	Paul Garrison Project Manager - Car Parks Tel 01926 456333 Email paul.garrison@warwickdc.gov.uk
Wards of the District directly affected	All
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	N/A
Background Papers	None

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	No
To be included within the scope of the strategy document	

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	**Date**	**Name**
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	06/06/17	Bill Hunt
Head of Service	01/06/17	Rob Hoof
CMT	06/06/17	Chris Elliott, Bill Hunt, Andrew Jones
Section 151 Officer	06/06/17	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	06/06/17	Andrew Jones
Finance	06/06/17	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	07/06/17	Cllr Moira-Ann Grainger
Consultation & Community Engagement		
To be undertaken within the next 6 months		
Final Decision?	No	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below) 6 month consultation with key stakeholders and residents to be completed December 2017. Proposed final Car Park Strategy to Members January 2018.		

1. Summary

1.1 The draft Car Park Strategy considers the current level of car parking provision in the district, the issues that the service faces, the opportunities and challenges going forward and sets out the Council's proposed approach to managing its off-street car parks in Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick and Kenilworth.

1.2 This report proposes that the draft strategy is put out for public consultation and that further detailed dialogue is held with the County Council, Town and Parish Councils and other key stakeholders before a final Strategy is approved later in the year. This consultation period would allow the findings of the Task & Finish Group on off-street car parking charges, considered elsewhere on this agenda, to be explored in detail. A further report on the outcomes of this process will be brought back to Executive.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Executive approves the key principles underpinning the draft Car Park Strategy:

- Ensuring car parks support the Council's Vision for Warwick district - "A Great Place to Live, Work and Visit".
- Ensuring sufficient car parking capacity is provided across Warwick District's town centres to meet the current and future demand for parking.
- Ensuring safe, quality car parking options are provided, that are well-managed and effectively promoted, to meet the demands of our residents, visitors and stakeholders.
- Ensuring sufficient car parking provision is available to support Warwick District Council's key facilities and premises.
- Pursuing opportunities to reduce the environmental impact of car parking in existing car parks and new developments
- Considering opportunities to support regeneration projects and development within our town centres through alternative use of our car parking assets

2.2 That Executive approves the draft Car Park Strategy, attached as Appendix One, to allow a public consultation exercise and detailed consultation with a wide range of stakeholders to be undertaken.

2.3 That Executive notes that the consultation process would allow detailed exploration of the proposals within the Task & Finish Group's report on Off-street car parking charges set out elsewhere on this meeting's agenda, to be considered subject to the decisions made in respect of that report.

2.4 Executive should also note that any review of the methodology for the setting of car park charges, as proposed by the Task & Finish Group, would not be possible in respect of charges for the next calendar year due to the timescales involved in ensuring new charges can be implemented from 1 January 2018.

2.5 That Executive notes that a further report will be brought back to Executive, later in the year, once the consultation exercises have been completed.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

3.1 The draft Car Parking Strategy has a number of complex, interdependent elements, which impact on residents, businesses, visitors to the district and the local economy. The Strategy, therefore, needs to be fully aligned with the Council's Vision – to make Warwick District a great place to work, live and visit – and it is proposed that this should be the over-arching principle that underpins the remainder of the Strategy.

3.2 Beneath this over-arching principle it is proposed that the Strategy contains 5 main principles that will govern how the Council directly provides car parking provision within the district and/or works with other stakeholders to ensure adequate provision in maintained in the future. These principles, set out in recommendation 2.1, are discussed in further detail in section 8 below.

3.3 Subject to agreement of recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 it is proposed to undertake a public consultation exercise on the draft Strategy, the results of which will be brought back to a future Executive meeting, together with any proposals to amend the Strategy in the light of the consultation comments. It is proposed to start the consultation in July 2017.

3.4 In parallel with the public consultation exercise dialogue will be held with a range of key stakeholders and their views fed into the development of the Strategy. These stakeholders will include, but not be limited to:

- Town and Parish Councils
- Warwickshire County Council
- Local Chambers of Trade and the sub-regional Chamber of Commerce
- Leamington Business Improvement District
- Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Private car park operators
- Local retail businesses and shopping centres, tourist attractions, leisure providers, major employers

3.5 It is proposed that these parallel exercises will be completed by December 2017, to allow a final version of the Strategy, amended as appropriate, to be adopted in January 2018.

3.6 Members will be aware that there is a report, elsewhere on the agenda, from the Task & Finish Group on off-street car parking charges which makes a number of recommendations. Subject to the Executive's decisions on the contents of this report the process set out above will enable full consideration of any recommendations that are approved.

3.7 Some of the recommendations made by the Task & Finish Group relate to the adoption of a revised methodology to review car parking charges. Members should note that if these recommendations are supported it will not be possible to complete a review based on a new methodology in line with the required timetable for setting revised charges from 1 January 2018. Therefore, any revised methodology underpinning charge setting could only be adopted from 2019 onwards.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 The Car Park Strategy is influenced by and influences a number of the Council's other strategies including:-

- Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Asset Management Plan
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Strategic Approach to Sustainability and Climate Change
- Air Quality Action Plan

4.2 The Council's Fit for the Future programme has 3 key objectives which are:-

Services - Maintain or improve
Money - Achieve a sustainable balanced budget
People - Enable, empower and support the Council's staff through the changes necessary to attain the above two objectives.

The Car Park Strategy will seek to strike the balance between maintaining and improving the service provided to customers, with a level of income that enables the service to be financially viable.

The strategy will need to take into account the needs of the various stakeholders, some of whom will have different expectations of the service that can/should be delivered, and how that impacts on their specific needs.

4.3 Equality impact assessments will be carried out in conjunction with the consultation process, to ensure the needs of a wide range of users are taken into account in both current and future car park provision.

5. Budgetary Framework

5.1 The council derives an income from car parking activities of circa £3m per annum. This is mainly pay and display income from car park users, but also includes income from Pay on Foot, season tickets and penalty charge notices.

5.2 The revenue costs of operating the service are approximately £2.3m, including support services and capital charges. This does not take into account any capital expenditure. Members are aware of the potential expenditure needed in future years to maintain and enhance the car parks. Hence costs are likely to increase due to planned maintenance costs, and the borrowing costs associated with provision of new multi storey car parks.

5.3 Incorporating the true cost of capital including notional interest on these assets, amounting to £1 million, brings the full cost of operation to £3.3 million. The net costs of owning and operating the Car Parking Service is a £300,000 deficit. The Memorandum Accounts were presented to the Task and Finish Group for Car Parking Charges.

5.4 The medium term financial objective for the car park service is to operate on a balanced budget.

5.5 Fees and charges will be reviewed annually in the context of the medium term financial objective. Decisions on the level of fees and charges will be made following full consideration of the balance between the potentially conflicting priorities the Council faces e.g. the need to manage supply and demand,

budget considerations relating to the maintenance and improvement of the council's car parks, the need to support town centre economies, the pressures created by town centre residential development, the parking charges in nearby town centres, the parking charges levied by the County Council in relation to on-street provision, the quality of the provision available etc.

5.6 All projects arising from the strategy will need to be subjected to a detailed business case, part of which will need to address how each project can be funded.

6. Risks

6.1 One of the main risks associated with developing the Car Park Strategy is the ability to predict long term trends in car usage and travel patterns. Multi storey car parks are designed to have a life expectancy of at least 60 years, which gives an indication of the difficulty of planning provision over this period of time.

6.2 Car parks are expensive to build and maintain and require long term investment decisions. Levels of income will be subject to a number of variables, many outside of the Council's control, such as the economy, shopping habits, fuel prices etc.

6.3 Cars are subject to continual technological advancements especially in relation to electric vehicles. Planning for growth in this area and the provision of appropriate infrastructure is key if planned investment is to be future proofed.

6.4 Car parks by their nature can often offer development opportunities in town centres with limited available space. Use of car parks for other uses needs to be balanced with retaining an appropriate level of capacity for car parking.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

7.1 Not to develop a Car Park Strategy, however this has been discounted due to the complexity of the service, the direct impact on the local economy, the long term nature of the service, the significant amount of income to the Council, and the level of investment required.

8. Background

8.1 The Council's previous Car Park Strategy covered the period 2007 to 2012, and included both on and off street parking provision and enforcement. In 2014 Warwickshire County Council took back responsibility for on street parking enforcement, which is now delivered through an external provider.
The draft Strategy, therefore, primarily focuses on the Council's provision of off-street car parking service, although it takes account of the links with other providers and wider transport strategies with which it needs to be fully aligned.

8.2 As described in recommendation 2.1 and paragraph 3.2 the draft Strategy is based on a single over-arching principle and 5 underpinning ones. The detail beneath these principles is set out in the attached Appendix but, for ease of reference, also set out here:

Key Principle 1

Ensuring sufficient car parking capacity across Warwick District's town centres to meet the current and future demand for parking.

The appropriate level of parking within the town centre has a crucial part to play in its economic vitality. However, an overabundance of parking will detract from the attractiveness of the respective town centres from an investment perspective as well as being detrimental to the urban environment. Adequate parking capacity currently exists across Warwick District to meet existing demand however this will come under increasing pressure as traffic growth is forecast to increase by approximately 17% by 2027. A partnership approach to parking management will be essential to ensure on-street and off-street parking remains effective across the District.

The location of parking has a crucial part to play in the economic vitality of town centres. Shoppers in particular want to park as close to their final destination as possible whilst long-stay users, residents and workers also need to be provided for. Meeting the needs of these different user groups are will need to be considered.

Studies suggest that additional parking capacity will need to be considered across the District as population and traffic increases and the most effective and efficient way of providing this additional capacity will need to be addressed as the need arises.

Council priorities

- We will continually review the current demand for daytime and evening parking in our town centres against the supply and look for opportunities to increase capacity for short-stay off street parking in the town centre whilst still meeting the needs of long-stay users.
- We will consider the provision of new car parks in town centres to ensure sufficient parking capacity is provided to meet the public demand. Where a need to provide additional capacity is identified an appropriate solution will be sought that meets the needs of the town and customer whilst also being affordable and cost-effective for Warwick District Council.
- We will seek to minimise disruption to our town centres in the event of car park redevelopment by working with key stakeholders to implement effective car park displacement plans as required.
- We will endeavour to implement an effective approach to pricing in off-street car parks to ensure short-stay parking is given priority in central town centre locations without discouraging long-stay users.
- We will develop existing relationships with colleagues at Warwickshire County Council and in key partner organisations to deliver a partnership approach of data sharing and joint decision making in areas of car park charging and future parking management.
- We will work with partners to ensure that the potential impacts of any decisions taken on town centre parking does not adversely impact on residential areas adjoining the town centres and will work with Warwickshire County Council to consider the potential need for future changes to residential parking permit schemes.

Key Principle 2

Ensuring safe, good quality car parking options are provided, that are well-managed and effectively promoted to meet the demands of our residents, visitors and stakeholders.

Parking quality, safety and ease of use have a direct impact on people's choice of where they park and how much they are prepared to pay. The provision of safe, good quality car parking and the promotion of these facilities is fundamental to retaining customers and maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction within the parking service.

Customer satisfaction with the service is currently good and a recent independent study of our off-street car parks rated the overall quality of the provision to be good where measured against industry standards. This needs to maintained as a minimum and opportunities to improve quality and customer satisfaction should be sought.

Developments in technology offer new ways of communicating to customers and opportunities to make parking easier and to ease congestion in town centres through the use of mobile and online communications should be explored.

Council priorities

- We will identify opportunities to improve the quality and safety of our existing off-street car parking stock and implement robust management plans to ensure off-street car parks are well maintained and cost-effective.

- We will be proactive in looking for opportunities to bring forward technological solutions that will help residents and visitors navigate our town centres and access available on-street and off-street parking to reduce traffic congestion and improve the user experience. Consideration will be given to the benefits of parking apps and opportunities to improve on existing technology such as the Variable Message Signs in Leamington Spa and Warwick.

- We will listen to our customers and work with our internal and external stakeholders to identify opportunities to improve the promotion of parking availability and options, utilising all available channels including Twitter, social media and other online channels including the websites of Warwick District Council, Shakespeare's England and other relevant partners.

Key Principle 3

Ensuring sufficient car parking to support Warwick District Council's key facilities and premises

Parking plays a crucial role in supporting a range of key facilities and premises including our leisure centres, parks and open spaces, cultural spaces and commercial premises. It is important that users of these facilities are able to access them easily with car parking playing an essential role in the transport strategy for these sites.

Capacity and appropriate fees and charges need to be monitored and there be the need to work in partnership with Warwickshire County Council where on-street parking provides key capacity for any of our facilities.

Council priorities

- We will monitor and manage the quality and effectiveness of the parking facilities and parking management at our operational and non-operational sites.

Key Principle 4

Pursuing opportunities to reduce the environmental impact of car parking in existing car parks and new developments

This objective broadly considers the environmental impact of the District Council's operations. In the context of car parking, the environmental impact concerns the means of affecting the behaviour of road users to reduce congestion and emissions arising from vehicle use alongside opportunities to reduce the environmental impact of parking infrastructure.

Council priorities

- We will explore opportunities to work with external partners on emerging low emission vehicle, autonomous vehicle and intelligent mobility technologies, areas of acknowledged sectoral strength within the Coventry & Warwickshire economy and will actively seek opportunities to pilot development projects within the district.

- We will investigate means of encouraging the use of low emission vehicles through the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the district.

- We will ensure that environmental sustainability a key consideration as part of the car park services ongoing approach to planned preventative maintenance and procurement. This will be considered when procuring lighting and parking meters and will be a fundamental consideration for any future development.

Key Principle 5

Considering opportunities to support regeneration projects and development within our town centres through alternative use of our car parking assets

In the broader context of asset management, Warwick District Council, through its multi-storey and surface car park stock, owns a several sites in town centre and wider town locations across the District. The car parking sites should be considered strategic assets in the context of regeneration project and development opportunities and consideration should be given to consolidating car parking where the opportunities arise to use sites for more lucrative or strategic purposes.

Council priorities

- We will continuously monitor and review the District Council's off-street car park stock as part of the asset management plan with a view to identifying opportunities to consolidate car parking and release land for regeneration and development purposes.

- We will assess any development opportunities against the car park capacity baseline and include re-provision of car parking with any new development as required.

It is acknowledged that meeting each of these objectives in every decision made will be challenging but where possible Warwick District Council will aim to balance these objectives in pursuit of the overall strategic aim.