

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 23 December 2019

**Report Title**

Rotherham Town Centre Parking Strategy

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Boston Castle

**Report Summary**

A Town Centre Parking Strategy has been developed and is proposed for adoption by Cabinet.

The Broad Policy Statement is as follows:

- That the Council will maintain an appropriate level of parking provision which is commensurate with the environmental, development and economic needs of the Town Centre and its businesses, visitors and residents.
- That the Council will undertake the enforcement of parking activities in a fair, consistent and proportionate manner.

**Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet formally adopt the Town Centre Parking Strategy.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment – Initial Screening  
Appendix 2 Rotherham Town Centre Parking Strategy

**Background Papers**

White Young Green document "Rotherham Car Park Impact Assessment"

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 20 December 2019

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Rotherham Town Centre Parking Strategy**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Parking has a significant role to play in the town centre and the Rotherham Town Centre Parking Strategy, included as Appendix 2, sets out the ways the Council will manage parking in order to achieve the wider aims in terms of transport and regeneration. The aim of this strategy is to demonstrate the Council's commitment to providing an appropriate level of parking provision, to meet the economic and development needs of the town as it moves forward in line with the Town Centre Masterplan, and to support the needs of businesses, residents and visitors to the town.
- 1.2 Parking provision, tariffs, enforcement, maintenance and availability will all be considered in decision making around future developments and transportation issues such as congestion and sustainable modes of transport
- 1.3 **Capacity and Occupancy**  
The Council's Parking Services currently manage 1,250 off-street and 360 on-street town centre parking bays. Occupancy levels vary depending on the proximity of the spaces to the core town centre. Occupancy of the off-street car parks is relatively healthy, with approximately 80% of the capacity utilised. There is currently a waiting list for pre-paid, reduced rate parking permits.
- 1.4 **Tariffs**  
Parking tariffs are set taking into consideration adjacent competitor's parking rates and also neighbouring Local Authority schemes. In 2016 the Council introduced a competitive off-street tariff with all day parking costs in the core town centre being reduced from £6.50 to £3.50. This resulted in a significant, sustained increase in all day parking sales.
- 1.5 **Enforcement**  
The Service manages parking activities by undertaking enforcement under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and endeavours to carry out this duty in a fair and transparent manner. During 2018/19 the Council issued 11,758 penalty charge notices (PCNs). Of these, a total of 1,371 were cancelled as a result of a successful challenge / appeal (12%). The total amount of PCNs paid in full is 8,131 (as at 16/08/2019) with collection procedures ongoing up to and including the allocation of cases to Enforcement Agents.
- 1.6 **Blue badge Fraud**  
The Council supports people with disabilities to access appropriate parking through the promotion of the legitimate use of Blue Badges and provision of 176 designated disabled spaces in the town centre. Rotherham Council has been nationally recognised for its work in combatting the fraudulent use of blue badges. Since 2010 the Council has prosecuted in excess of 130 cases involving drivers using badges registered to people who were not present or deceased people.

## 1.7 **Car Parks and Developments**

Several car parks owned by the Council have been identified as development sites. These include: Forge Island, Sheffield Road (public and staff) and Riverside, off Corporation Street. The development of Forge Island is due to commence during the Autumn of 2020 and it is planned to retain public parking in at least half the site footprint for as long as possible. Upon completion the site will offer a 350 space undercroft car park and it is intended for the Council to manage this facility.

## 2. **Key Issues**

### 2.1 **Strategic Principles**

The strategy has been developed with consideration being given to the following principles:

- Access
- Mobility
- Regeneration
- Sustainability
- Competition
- Revenue.

### 2.2 **Access**

The Strategy recognises that parking performs a valuable economic and social function for the Town Centre. It supports businesses by enabling consumers to access shops. It allows employees to access their workplaces and enables citizens to reach education establishments and other services.

The strategy aims to ensure spaces are available in the right locations, at the right price, for those who cannot reasonably use other modes of transport. This will reduce the time users spend searching for car parking, which, if unmanaged, can contribute towards congestion and have a significant impact on visitors' return trips.

Adequate parking facilities for people with disabilities will be maintained, as will the Council's position on fraudulent use of blue badges.

### 2.3 **Mobility**

The specific requirements of Electric Vehicle (EV) users and cyclists are considered within the Strategy. EV users require access to public charging points to ensure that they have the confidence to use their vehicles. Currently there are 14 EV equipped parking bays, with the intention to add to these over time.

High quality cycle provision in the town centre is a continuing commitment as the Council promotes active lifestyle through modal choice. There are currently a number of cycle routes into the town centre, with accompanying cycle storage and parking. However, the location and quantity will be reviewed to ensure that this is in the right locations to maximise usage and attractiveness.

The needs of motorcycle users have been considered and motorcycle parking is available in existing off-street car parks and in on-street spaces. Motorcycle users are not subject to charges for parking in the town centre.

## 2.4 **Regeneration**

In order to encourage growth in Rotherham town centre, it is necessary to retain the appropriate allocation of land for car parking, balanced against the benefits of other land uses. As the regeneration of Rotherham Town Centre progresses, the pressure to take full advantage of the value of town centre sites will increase. Any decisions for land use for parking will consider:

- The justification, in both access and economic terms for land to be used for parking rather than other economic uses.
- The efficient use of land for parking facilities, for example integration with new developments or decked structures to minimise land take.

The management and provision of sufficient parking will help to create the right conditions for investment and will ensure, when possible, that land is available to support development.

## 2.5 **Sustainability**

There is a fundamental link between the availability and price of parking and the use of more sustainable modes of travel. If parking is too plentiful or too cheap, car owners have little incentive to use sustainable transport (even if public transport is accessible and of high quality).

Declining public transport use, as witnessed in Rotherham, has the potential to result in cuts to bus service levels due to commercial viability which in turn would adversely affect the mobility of public transport users.

Increased use of cars exacerbates congestion on the roads, which makes journey times longer and less reliable for all road users, and increased use of high emission vehicles reduces local air quality. This means that:

- The availability and price of car parking should be balanced and set at a rate which encourages the use of sustainable transport.
- In managing the supply and cost of car parking, there must be an incentive for car owners to use public transport.
- The availability of electric vehicle charging points at Council car parks can help support the growth of sustainable modes and help to improve air quality.

## 2.6 **Competition**

On a local level, Rotherham Town Centre competes with Parkgate and Meadowhall for consumer spending and other regional urban centres (Sheffield, Barnsley and Doncaster) for employees and investment. The Strategy takes account of the parking policies of neighbouring centres to ensure that the Town Centre is not disadvantaged.

To support growth in the town centre the Council has implemented a number of parking initiatives, detailed in the Parking Strategy.

## 2.7 **Revenue**

The provision of parking generates revenue for the Council, which contributes to the wider highways service provision. There is a need for the Council to continue to run a financially sustainable Parking Service whilst at the same time seeking ways through innovation and technology to reduce the operational and management costs of the parking service.

## 3. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

### 3.1 **Option 1:** Continue to function without a formal Strategy.

Whilst the Parking Service could continue to function without a formal Strategy, this methodology would be less effective in helping inform decisions on the future of the town centre.

### 3.2 **Option 2 and Recommended Proposal:**

That Cabinet formally adopt the Strategy.

The strategy will set out the Council's approach to parking in the Town Centre and help ensure that the following key actions are met:

- Occupancy levels will be reviewed annually to help ensure that the appropriate level and location of parking provision is maintained.
- The impact on parking capacity of any new development within the town centre will be monitored to manage demand and promote sustainable modes of travel through working with developers.
- Continue to work with the Rotherham Bus Partnership, including local bus operators and SYPT, to improve Rotherham's bus offer, to encourage the use of public transport.
- Consideration will be given to the creation of additional short stay spaces. The service will identify the best locations for "priority customers", such as those with disabilities, and investigate revisions to existing on-street parking restrictions.
- The results of parking 'beat' surveys will be used to indicate where spaces are under-utilised and if they could be re-allocated.
- Annually review parking tariffs to ensure that they remain competitive.
- Explore the possibility of the introducing / enhancing the existing Park & Ride provision in relation to the Tram Train pilot.
- Continue the provision of EV charging points.
- Consider the needs of disabled users in all public owned car

parks and ensure that key destinations have appropriate levels of disabled parking availability either on or off street.

- Ensure that off-street parking facilities are clean, tidy and user friendly. A programme of works will be delivered to achieve a high standard of cosmetic finishes to the off-street parking stock. This will be the subject of a regular maintenance schedule thereafter to sustain the high standards.
- A program of “pay and display” machine replacement will be developed and funding sought to achieve a full stock of machines with debit/credit card payment facilities including contactless card payment options.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Local Authority Parking Services teams across South Yorkshire have been consulted on the proposed strategy.

South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive and Bus Operators have been consulted on the proposed strategy through the Rotherham Bus Partnership.

Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) has been consulted.

The Strategy has been presented to the Strategic Parking, Transport and Development Sub Group.

As part of the White Young Green parking impact assessment a consultation exercise was undertaken with Rotherham Vision and other key stakeholders.

Boston Castle Ward Members have been consulted.

#### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 Should Cabinet agree to adopt the Strategy the Council will implement it with immediate effect. Accountability for implementation lies with various services including, but not limited to:

- Parking Services
- Transportation
- Rotherham Investment and Development Office (RiDO)
- Asset Management

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report.

- 6.2 Implementation of the Parking Strategy does not of itself commit the Council to any additional resources. The development of the strategy is funded from within existing budgets. It is the reference point for future developments on

parking matters including pricing

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

7.1 Whilst there are no specific legal implications that arise in respect of the recommendation of the adoption of the Strategy (Option 2), the benefits are clearly outlined at paragraph 3.2. If the Strategy in Option 2 is adopted, Legal Services will continue to be consulted and advice will be sought as necessary.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 An Initial Screening document (Appendix 1) has been completed and the Council will ensure it meets its equalities and human rights duties and obligations.

10.2 With regard to equalities, the needs of people with disabilities have been given consideration. The Strategy sets out that adequate parking facilities for people with disabilities will be maintained as will the Council's position on fraudulent use of disabled persons' blue badges. The strategy includes an events protocol, which details how events such as funerals, Armed Forces Day etc. are supported. The aim of the protocol is to minimise the impact on the town centre whilst giving consideration to the needs of attendees.

10.3 A series of recommended actions are embedded within the Strategy and these include:

- The Council will consider the creation of additional short stay spaces. Identify the best locations for "priority customers", such as those with disabilities and investigate revisions to existing on-street parking restrictions.
- The Council will continue to consider the needs of disabled users in all public owned car parks and ensure that key destinations have appropriate levels of disabled parking availability either on or off street.
- The Council will ensure disabled parking bays in off-street car parks are clearly marked, of sufficient width and conveniently located close to pedestrian exit points.

10.4 These actions will help to ensure that people with disabilities have adequate opportunities to access the town centre amenities.



## 11. Implications for Partners

- 11.1 The adoption of a strategy is positive as it ensures the Council's approach to parking is linked to its higher level strategic ambitions. The development and implementation of a Parking Strategy will ensure that on and off street parking provided by the Council helps to ensure that the Town Centre remains attractive to businesses and visitors alike supporting the drive for inward investment.

## 12. Risks and Mitigation

- 12.1 There are limited risks associated with the adoption of this strategy as it provides a strategic framework within which to manage and review parking provision.

## 13. Accountable Officers

Colin Knight, Head of Highway Services  
Martin Beard, Parking Services Manager  
Simeon Leach, Economic Strategy and Partnerships Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:-

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	04/12/19
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Bal Nahal	27/11/19

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