



## **ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

**19 JUNE 2023**

<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>DEVELOPMENT OF A WIRRAL PARKING STRATEGY</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report provides Members with an update regarding the on-going work to develop a parking strategy for the borough and sets out the results of phase 1 of public and stakeholder consultation. The report also seeks approval to undertake phase 2 of consultation.

A further report will be submitted to this Committee in December 2023 for consideration of the feedback from the phase 2 consultation and seeking approval for the adoption of a parking strategy.

The Wirral Plan 2021-2026 sets out the Council's vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. This proposal directly supports the following key themes within that plan:

- A cleaner, greener borough which celebrates, protects and improves our environment and urgently tackles the environmental emergency;
- A prosperous inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations; and
- Safe, vibrant communities where people want to live and raise their families.

This matter affects all wards within the borough.

This matter is a Key Decision.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to:

Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to undertake further consultation in Summer 2023 on the potential interventions (as identified in Section 3.11 of this report) to be considered for inclusion in a Wirral Parking Strategy.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 The development of an effective parking strategy is critical to align with and support other Council strategies and plans to encourage and support sustainable economic growth and regeneration of the borough, including the emerging local plan, Birkenhead 2040 and the environment and climate emergency declaration.
- 1.2 A parking strategy will play a critical role to support efficient management of the highway network within the wider context of sustainable economic growth and regeneration.
- 1.3 A parking strategy is required to support the development and implementation of future parking policies and interventions for all modes.
- 1.4 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is developing the Local Transport Plan 4 for the region which will set out plans, policies and ambitions for transport services and transport investment in the city region until 2040. The Council's parking strategy will be one of the strategy documents to support the transport plan for the region.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 The Council could decide not to progress with the further work and consultation to develop a parking strategy. This is not considered an appropriate option as a parking strategy is an important framework to support the management of the highway network and support sustainable economic regeneration. If a parking strategy was not in place this could impact on the success of the Council's regeneration plans and the ability to support the environment and climate emergency declaration.
- 2.2 The Council could progress the development of a strategy without undertaking further consultation. This option is not considered viable as it is recognised that the views of the residents and stakeholders are of critical importance to support future decision making.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 A report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services titled "Car Parking Charges Options" submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee on 7 October 2020 informed Members of considerations for the reintroduction of the current car parking charges in Wirral in 2020/21 and alternative options for parking charges in 2021/22 and beyond. Several Members of the Policy and Resources Committee expressed concern at the prospect of re-introducing charges at a time when Covid cases were on the rise and many local businesses were struggling. As a result of this the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee appointed a working group to consider these options and inform the report.

3.2 On 3 December 2020 the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee received the report of the working group which resolved that (amongst other matters)

(1) the findings of the Working Group ...be noted and the recommendations be agreed:

- Members support the upcoming transport strategy and recommend that any future transport strategy consults with Members, businesses, communities to ensure that it is environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.
- The panel also recommends that a comprehensive review and survey is undertaken in Wirral as to the local impact of car parking charges on footfall and spend in retail areas and the high street.

3.3 In Spring 2021 a tender exercise was undertaken to secure a consultant to support the work and in April 2021 Royal HaskoningDHV was appointed and commenced the initial survey work to analyse the parking provision and usage in the borough. The objectives of the commission were to undertake a study to support the development of a parking strategy which should aim to:

- Help support businesses and communities across the borough;
- Manage traffic (particularly through main centres);
- Improve current car parking facilities;
- Ensure the right type of parking is in the right place for residents and local people; and
- Improve access to and the ability to use more sustainable modes of transport.

3.4 The study covered public parking only as this is within the direct influence of the Council and included a review of:

- Cycle parking;
- Electric vehicle (EV) charging and parking bays;
- On-street and Off-street (car park) parking;
- Enforcement and management of parking;
- New technologies for parking; and
- Parking charges.

3.5 Appendix 1 of this report sets out the Parking Study undertaken by Royal HaskoningDHV which included the following:

- Existing baseline conditions analysis – this helps to show how each car park and on-street parking area performs at average and peak time periods;

- Future demand analysis – this helps to show the impact of the background growth as well as demand that will be generated by Local Plan developments and regeneration in the borough;
- Consultation Feedback – analysis of the Have your Say public and stakeholder consultation; and
- Emerging parking interventions – identification of parking interventions which have been developed based on the evidence and research collated as part of the study which could form part of a future short, medium term and ‘strategy plus’ parking strategy.

3.6 The emerging findings from the baseline analysis in the Parking Study report can be summarised as:

- *Some car parks are significantly underutilised and there are opportunities for rationalising these car parks;*
- *There are currently 16 residents’ Controlled Parking Zones. These cover circa 6,000 dwellings but only 221 dwellings pay a charge, which are very modest and below the UK average;*
- *The majority of demand for recreational vehicles and coach parking is focussed within New Brighton. The Council is exploring opportunities for recreational vehicle parking provision as part of the emerging New Brighton Neighbourhood Framework and Masterplan;*
- *Facilities and utilisations at train stations and ferry sites are generally good and well utilised;*
- *Data on cycle parking is limited however the available information shows that, in general, current cycle stands are ‘Sheffield stands’/hoop design, although some of these are in need of upgrade/repair;*
- *The level of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles in Wirral is significantly below LCR and UK averages and the data suggests this is suppressing the uptake of environmentally friendly vehicles; and*
- *The impacts of Covid-19 on travel patterns and hence parking demand have been profound. Motorised modes have not yet bounced back to pre-pandemic levels but walking and cycling have increased both during and after pandemic lockdowns. This raises an opportunity to build upon this momentum for walking and cycling.*

3.7 In terms of future demand the following findings were made:

- *Background growth and development, if not delivered sustainably, will generate significant new demand for parking across Wirral. Even with the various planned new transport improvements and allowing for other expected changes, there will still be an overall increase in future parking demand which the parking strategy will need to accommodate;*
- *The Council supports the Cool Wirral campaign to encourage local climate-related action. This includes adopting the ambitious targets in emissions reduction. However, from the analysis, it is clear that Wirral is falling short of these targets and will continue to fall further behind if current trends continue as they have been in recent years; and*
- *The new parking strategy provides an opportunity to contribute to the sustainability agenda, as well as other related strategies, and should be developed in order to help to meet the required climate targets.*

3.8 The Have your Say report is attached at Appendix 2 of this report. The analysis of the consultation feedback undertaken by Royal HaskoningDHV was as follows:

- *There is strong support for facilitating efficient traffic management and encouraging modal shift. This includes providing extra parking for cycles, e-bikes and e-cargo bikes to attract more visitors;*
- *New parking plans should be self-financing and help to support the rapid transition to emerging technology (e.g. electric vehicles);*
- *There is strong support for place shaping and providing improved public realm by making sure car parks are in the right place and considering alternative land uses for underused car parks;*
- *The parking strategy should look at opportunities from new technology/tariff structures and apply examples of best practice and practical evidence of successes from elsewhere;*
- *High priority should be given to the climate emergency declaration; and*
- *Greater enforcement of current parking regulations was highlighted.*

3.9 Using the baseline and future demand analysis, along with consultation feedback and evidence from other research across the country the parking study has identified a number of proposed parking interventions which could form part of a future short, medium term and 'strategy plus' parking strategy for the borough. These are set out in detail in Section 5 of Appendix 1 to this report but are summarised as follows:

*Short-term Strategy* measures proposed include:

- Pricing travel demand management measures
- Faster provision of EV infrastructure vehicles;

- Increase numbers of residential Controlled Parking; and
- Public Space Protection Orders.

*Medium-term Strategy* measures proposed include as above plus:

- Smart mobility hubs; and
- Workplace car parking levy.

*Strategy Plus* measures proposed include as above plus:

- Dynamic pricing (mix of time-based and emissions-based); and
- Further additional residential Controlled Parking Zones. (CPZ's)

3.10 In order to further progress the development of a parking strategy for the borough it is considered appropriate to undertake further public and stakeholder consultation and engagement. It is proposed that phase 2 of consultation and engagement would provide the public and stakeholders with the update regarding the parking study work undertaken to date and seek views specifically around the proposed interventions.

3.11 As per the Phase 1 consultation, the proposed consultation method would include:

- Have your Say consultation portal ;
- BirkenEds Place;
- Targeted stakeholder and Member e-mails;
- Organic social media (shared across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter);
- Social media advertising.
- Media releases issued to local print and digital media;
- Press advertising;
- Wirral View news articles;
- Wirral Council Intranet articles (for internal staff);
- Residents email – Wirral View and Environment and Climate Emergency; and
- Staff email – Exec View (for Wirral Council employees).

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Current parking operations present a financial pressure to the Council in respect of non-achievement of income targets and the future strategy will need to reflect this. A budget pressure is highlighted and will be reported within the Neighbourhoods directorate.

4.2 Undertaking consultation and engagement regarding the proposed interventions will require some expenditure e.g. to support advertisements and preparation of easy read documents. The amount of this is to be confirmed however this will be within existing budgets approved for development of strategic transport projects.

- 4.3 Implementation of any of the parking interventions will have financial implications and therefore should any of the proposed parking interventions be considered for inclusion within the final strategy then further detail on the financial implications of these will be included in a further report.

## 5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has powers under sections 32 and 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA) to charge parking fees.
- 5.2 Section 46 of the RTRA makes provision for charges for the use of designated parking places on streets.
- 5.3 Section 45 of the RTRA makes provision for the designation of paying parking places on highways. Section 45(2)(b) of the RTRA states that the authority may issue permits for the use of designated parking places and that the authority "(b) ...may make such charge in connection with the issue or use of the permit, of such amount and payable in such manner, as the authority by whom the designation order was made may by order prescribe."
- 5.4 Section 122 of the RTRA imposes a general duty on local authorities exercising functions under the RTRA 1984 to "*secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking on and off the highway...*".
- 5.5 Section 55 RTRA sets out financial provisions relating to designation orders. In essence it states that there should be a ring fenced account in respect of income and expenditure in respect of parking places and that if at the end of the financial year any surplus can be applied for the following purposes:
- (a) the making good to the general fund ... of any amount charged to that fund under subsection (2) above in the 4 years immediately preceding the financial year in question;*
  - (b) meeting all or any part of the cost of the provision and maintenance by the local authority of off street parking accommodation, whether in the open or under cover;*
  - (c) the making to other local authorities, or to other persons of contributions towards the cost of the provision and maintenance by them, in the area of the local authority or elsewhere, of off-street parking accommodation, whether in the open or under cover*
  - (d) if it appears to the local authority that the provision in their area of further off-street parking accommodation is unnecessary or undesirable, the following purposes–*
    - (i) meeting costs incurred, whether by the local authority or by some other person, in the provision or operation of, or of facilities for, public passenger transport services,*
    - (ii) the purposes of a highway or road improvement project in the local authority's area,*
    - (iii)... (this only applies to a London authority)*

*(iv) the purposes of environmental improvement in the local authority's area,  
(v) in the case of such local authorities as may be prescribed, any other  
purposes for which the authority may lawfully incur expenditure;*

- 5.6 The Council is therefore required to publish its parking accounts indicating how any surplus is re-invested. Officers will develop a simplified presentation format for this when future charging policy is set.
- 5.7 The development of a parking strategy will support the Council to implement new parking measures and address any legal challenges that may be received.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 Existing staff resources in the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Directorates and Communication and Marketing Team will support the consultation and engagement, supplemented by external specialist support where required.
- 6.2 There are no ICT or asset implications as a direct result of this report.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The Council has recently established a dedicated Project Management Office (PMO) to support the Regeneration and Place Directorate. The PMO will have oversight of the project and will ensure that it is aligned with the Council's corporate policy to managing risk. A Risk Register has been developed and will be updated throughout the programme lifecycle in order to assist the Council in identifying, controlling and managing risk. Any escalation of risks will be dealt with in accordance with the corporate governance procedures, but initially will be taken to the internal Regeneration Board.
- 7.2 The project risk register has identified the following key top scoring risks:
- If any or all of the proposed interventions are not supported there may be the potential for this to impact on the ability to deliver against our Climate Emergency Declaration;
  - Parking affects the majority of the population in some form and therefore it will be important to ensure high levels of stakeholder and public engagement to support decision making – this will be actively managed through the consultation process;
  - Delays in the development of the parking strategy may have an impact on the ability to implement traffic management measures and therefore negatively impact on the highway network;
  - Delays in the development of the parking strategy may impact on the timeline for any parking proposals being implemented – this may lead to a subsequent impact on budgets within the Neighbourhood Directorate.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The first phase was undertaken from the 18 July 2022 and ran until the 9 October 2022 via the 'Have your say' engagement website.
- 8.2 The public consultation was also promoted via social media and adverts to direct residents to the online questionnaire on the Have your Say site. A separate but identical consultation page was produced for the stakeholders survey which was accessed via a link included in a directly addressed email.
- 8.3 Respondents were also able to download an 'Easy Read' version of the survey, or request paper copies, help completing the questionnaire, or submit additional comments via a dedicated email address, which was published on the 'Have your say' website alongside the online tool.
- 8.4 The public questionnaire was responded to by 1081 people, 1080 through the online portal and 1 Easy Read survey was also completed, the responses were combined. No paper copy surveys were completed. Of the 267 stakeholder e-mail addresses contacted, the stakeholder survey was completed by 107.
- 8.5 Full details of the results of the Have your Say consultation can be found in Appendix 2.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Council has an obligation under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality duty (Sect 149 2011) to show due regard to the duty and show due regard to mitigate any negative impacts that may affect people with protected characteristics under the Act.
- 9.2 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.3. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this project and is published here.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impactassessments>

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The link between poor air quality, the climate emergency and emissions from vehicles is widely accepted. An effective parking strategy can have a positive environmental and climate change impacts through encouraging drivers to view alternative forms of transport, such as buses and trains, more favourably.

It can also aid efficient traffic management of motorised vehicles whilst also ensuring cycle parking is available to enable increased numbers of active travel journeys.

- 10.2 An effective parking strategy can support the reduction in energy consumption and support the Cool 2 target of 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030' to help fulfil the actions within the Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan.

## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Sustainable travel is at the heart of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and emerging Local Plan. In this context that development of a parking strategy is part of a wider sustainable economic regeneration programme to deliver a prosperous, inclusive economy to benefit local residents.

- 11.2 A parking strategy has the ability to propose measures that will improve access to key facilities for all and not just for those with access to a motor vehicle. This would help improve deprived neighbourhoods where there the number of households without access to a car is higher than the national average.

- 11.3 Through any future procurement exercises the Council will be looking to maximise further social value activity through creation of local employment and training.

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - 'Parking Study Analysis and Engagement' report (Royal HaskoningRHV)

Appendix 2 - 'Have your Say' consultation report

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

This report is being considered by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee in accordance with section (d) of its Terms of Reference:

(d) in relation to parking, including on and off-street parking and civil parking enforcement;

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Cool Wirral Strategy

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/files/cool2-strategy-2020.pdf/download?inline>

Developing a vision for Local Transport Plan 4 (LCRCA)

<https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LTP4-VISION-090522.pdf>

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	3 Dec 2020
Policy & Resources Committee	7 Oct 2020